

Thanksgiving 2011



Dear Friend of SEED,

Today is Thanksgiving, an official holiday, but at SEED, every day is thanksgiving, because every day, we are thankful for our supporters. And this year, we are especially grateful, because at long last, after years of planning, *we are poised to buy 20 - 40 acres of land in Taos, N.M. We couldn't have done this without you*, without all the people who have contributed time, energy and money toward our success.

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With this land base, for the first time, SEED will have the requisite ability to build a campus for a graduate institute that was foreseen in a vision years ago. Our campus of five lodges will be an interconnected village of thought, a physical representation of wholistic learning where all subjects are interconnected and any field can be informed by all other fields.

The proposed campus of five buildings will include a center building of congregation (*Spirit*), representing the core of the program, Original Thinking; and four aspects of study: *Fire* (Science and Cosmology); *Air* (Ecology); *Water* (The Expressive Arts); and *Earth* (Healing). The center building will be a circular, kiva-like structure surrounded by four rectangular buildings; and each rectangular building will in turn contain a center circle within. Below is a conceptual drawing of the campus as envisioned.



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The land we are purchasing is in a beautiful place, surrounded by mountains, near the awe inspiring Rio Grande Gorge. We are expected to consummate the deal in early 2012, but our task is just beginning with the purchase. In the coming year(s), we need to raise money for development of the campus buildings and land. The graduate program will begin upon completion of the center building while continuing to build the rest of the campus. The budget for next year is \$500,000 and for the entire campus, 3 million dollars. To raise this money, we need to increase our level of private donations from \$100,000 to \$250,000 a year mixed with tuition and public grant monies. We cannot count on grants alone for our funding, as grants are notoriously capricious. Our loyal supporters over the past fifteen years have been just that: loyal. We thank you for this, and ask for your continued support. Here's why we feel we are worthy of it.

- We are proposing a school wherein the students learn not what to think, but *how to think*.



Based in a dialogue practice that we have cultivated over the past fifteen years, students are taught to question their assumptions and seek the deeper, interconnected roots of knowledge. This philosophy represents a return to the origins of education, both in the West and in other cultures. It represents a return to wholeness as a way of life. And wholeness is healing, for self and community.

- A school of original thinking is no longer a mere alternative but a necessity.

The fact is that mainstream education is in trouble because the economics of higher education have shifted. Academic degrees no longer guarantee jobs; and these diminishing returns are in part because education has become over-specialized, creating subfields within subfields. Students “learn more and more about less and less,” as Buckminster Fuller famously said. Today, it is not a luxury but a necessity to become an original thinker with an understanding of complex, interconnected issues. It is no longer enough just to acquire information; we need original approaches that are whole, wise, and effective.

- We at SEED believe that the primary purpose of education ought to be to renew our relationship with nature, to give back/reciprocate with all of nature, including the human community.

It is for these reasons that we ask for your help in raising monies toward our dream. We hope you feel as good about donating to us as we feel in asking, because together, we are *life-givers* – watering the seeds of positive growth and change in the world today.

In the words of Lynne Twist, one of our mentors: “When you raise money with the understanding that it is giving life, health and healing to others, the money you raise is blessed, and it is filled with power.” If you are moved to contribute, we wish it to be from this perspective - *of seeding and blessing a positive future.*

There are still other reasons to support us. We have changed our mission statement, just a bit, but in a way that is more inclusive. Our old mission statement was to provide the highest quality education by bringing Indigenous and other ways of knowing in dialogue for the purpose of fostering original thinking which is increasingly inclusive, interconnected, and whole. This has now been amended to:

“Our mission is to provide the highest quality education by bringing together diverse ways of knowing in dialogue for the purpose of fostering original thinking that is increasingly interconnected, whole, wise, and effective.”

The new mission statement no longer positions any one way of knowing in dichotomy with “other” ways of knowing. While Indigenous wisdom has always been important to SEED and will continue to be so, we have made a subtle but important shift for the purpose of not delimiting wisdom from any source. We feel this greater inclusivity bodes well for our future, and we trust that you will agree.

And for the first time in 13 years, we are changing our signature conference, which has always been the Language of Spirit. The Language of Spirit conference, which brought together Indigenous and Western science in dialogue, has received great critical acclaim, being the subject of 3 documentary films and two entire issues of ReVision Journal. But we are living in extraordinary times that seem to presage the end of an era and necessitate a new (original) way of thinking about the future. And so the SEED board has decided to design a new conference, born from the wisdom of the old Language of Spirit conference, to address these changes. It is not a coincidence that the unveiling of the next format begins in 2012 with this new conference series entitled *Wisdom from the Origins*. The full title is:

Are you ready for the change?

*Wisdom from the Origins:
The Mayan Calendar and other Prophecies on the Future of Humanity*

The conference will take place September 13th – 17th, 2012, and we have secured the Marriott Pyramid of Albuquerque as our conference hotel. It is not a coincidence that the Marriott looks like a Mayan pyramid, as in fact, the late Grandfather Leon Secatero suggested it as the most suitable site for a conference on the Mayan calendar for just that reason.

We are very excited about this upcoming conference. At the time of this letter, we have already secured 7 of the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers for the conference, as well as the Head of the Mayan council, Don Alejandro Cirilo Oxlaj Perez, Tlakaelel (the last and only living person to build a pyramid in Mexico); Leroy Little Bear, Sequoyah Trueblood, James Odea; and we are awaiting answer from Kenny Ausubell, Lynne Twist, Jean Houston, John Major Jenkins and others. *Our intent in promoting this conference is to foster readiness and a renewed awareness of living in accord with the rhythms of nature.* We expect a full house of 500 people for the conference, so if interested, please see www.seedgraduateinstitute.org for more information and to sign up soon.

And finally, for me, personally, this has been an eventful year. I am back in the position of president of SEED, after taking what turned out to be a year and a half hiatus to write a book called *Original Thinking*. I am grateful to Shawn Secatero, who was president of SEED during that year and a half, which gave me time to write the book (to be released in 2012 or 2013). In his tenure, Shawn oversaw two Language of Spirit conferences, an Indigenous well-being conference, and absorbed an Indigenous elders program.

All of these changes have come about due largely to the support of private donations such as yours. We want to thank you for your past support and humbly ask that you support us again. Your donations are as always fully tax- deductible, as SEED is a 501 ©3 tax-exempt organization. Please see the reverse side of this page to make your donation. Your generosity is appreciated. **May it bless you and the world many times in return.**

Thank you,



Glenn Aparicio Parry
President, SEED Institute

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