

Sister Water House of Restorative Justice Capital Campaign

Canticle Farm

The mission and vision of Canticle Farm is to build a platform for The Great Turning through the deliberate practice of living in interracial, intergenerational, interfaith, cross-class community working for social and environmental justice amidst the Great Unravelling. The community in Oakland, California, is currently home to 20 people in 6 houses, one of which is the Sister Water House of Restorative Justice, and there is also a farm in Sheep Ranch, CA, home to 4 people growing food to distribute to those who are food insecure in Calaveras County. You can learn more about Canticle Farm at canticlefarmoakland.org.

Sister Water

This house has been anchored for the past 6 years by Watani and Troy, two men who spent decades in prison, and are now community leaders organizing against mass incarceration. Each of their stories (a glimpse of [Troy's](#), and [Watani's](#)) is the epitome of resilience, transformation and courage in the face of the injustice of white supremacy and mass incarceration. Their mission for the house is supporting men like themselves who have been paroled from life sentences who are doing organizing and storytelling work for restorative justice and abolition. Ruben and Paul joined the community in June 2020. They have known each other for 40 years, both spent 30+ years in solitary confinement and were organizers of prison hunger strikes that eventually ended indefinite solitary confinement in California. Ruben works with Five Keys Navigation Center. Paul works with American Friends Service Committee; see San Francisco Chronicle story about him [here](#).

The house supports movement work for criminal justice and racial justice through providing housing security in the Bay Area to formerly incarcerated movement leaders, who are marginalized from access to secure housing (there is no “rent” in the house - solely a voluntary contribution of the residents’ choice) and through the emotional/spiritual support of a whole community, along with a space to host events and needed 1:1 support for the formerly incarcerated community. Here’s a little bit from Troy about what the support of the house makes possible: “Sister Water



allows us the opportunity to go into spaces that we wouldn't otherwise be able to go into. I was talking to someone this morning saying that because our housing is secure and because our work is supported, if I need to go and attend a conference or rally or an event or respond to something urgent in community, I don't have to wait until I get off work to do it, I can just go and do it. Our efforts are not delayed by the necessity for employment outside of this work. With that this allows me to participate in restorative justice efforts all over the country, going inside juvenile halls, going inside prisons. Our goal to abolish the prison system requires the first step of stopping the flow of bodies into the system. We can change all the laws we want to, and we're working directly with the mindsets that lead people into prison in the first place."

The capital campaign so far

This house, from its original purchase, to its operating costs and all renovations up until now, has been funded by generous donors and lenders - individuals and charitable foundations - who wish to support its mission. Many of those donors have been motivated by the imperative of reparations and wealth redistribution, and supporting the leadership of those most impacted to organize for the systemic change needed for their own communities' liberation. So far in 2020 we finished creating 3 more bedrooms on the first floor, in order to welcome three more residents in the near future. We have also installed a solar power system on the house. As of May 2021, we are midway through replacing the entrance porch and stairs, as well as repainting the house and replacing rotten siding. All of this is part of keeping the house well maintained and presented, demonstrating our commitment to just housing for the formerly-incarcerated. After these two projects and 8.5 years of work, the renovation will finally be finished!

What is needed now?

What we still need to raise (as of 12/10/21)...

- We raised everything we needed for the porch and stairs, as well as repainting the house and replacing rotten siding!
- Basic operating costs each year for the house are ~\$25,000 (property tax, utilities, basic repairs & maintenance). We would particularly be moved to hear from anyone able to make a multi-year commitment (3-5 years).
 - We have so far received commitments of \$11,000/year for 5 years, starting in 2020!
- We have \$73,490 of private debt owed on the house (as of Dec 2021), the majority of which we are making monthly payments on. Being able to pay off this debt ahead of schedule would minimize interest payments, lower the annual costs for the house and ensure its sustainability into the future.

How you can support

Donations preferred by check to Canticle Farm, 1968 36th Ave, Oakland, CA, 94601. You can also give by Paypal to canticlefarmers@gmail.com (use "sending to a friend" to avoid fees, write Sister Water in the description).

If you have a foundation, Donor Advised Fund or other giving vehicle, you may need our EIN which is 461484633. Consider nominating us for HalfMyDAF.com if you can.

If you know of any skilled contractors or carpenters in the Bay Area who could volunteer or offer a reduced rate to take a lead on any of this renovation work, or volunteer alongside others for a shorter period of time, we would love to be connected with them.

Contact info

Morgan is leading this fundraising effort. You can reach her at canticlefarmers@gmail.com or (510) 679-3097.

Photo below = Troy (at left), Watani (at right) and other Canticle Farmers, past and present, at the December 2019 wedding of Chaise and Chiara, also Canticle Farmers. We get dressed up sometimes!

