



## CRESP/CTA Projects and Initiatives

❖ Projects with asterisks are still part of CTA

### 1971-1981 The Early Years

Ideas and people quickly gravitated to this new entity, tackling issues as diverse as migrant farm worker rights, draft counseling, the military crises in Latin America, divestment from apartheid South Africa, sustainable agriculture, environmental justice, and alternative education.

#### *Projects:*

- Commons Coffeehouse Art and Religion Program
- Agricultural Policy Accountability Project
- CIVITAS (Cornell Ithaca Volunteers in Training and Service) : *later moved under Cornell's auspices and, in 1997, became [Public Service Center](#) at Cornell*
- Cornell PIRG (Public Interest Research Group (*affiliated with NY-PIRG in 1981*))
- Law, Ethics, and Religion Program: a collaboration with the Cornell Law School
- [The Learning Web](#) (*gained own 501(c)3 in 1992*)
- [CUSLAR](#): Committee for US Latin American Relations \*
- EcoJustice
- The [Anne Carry Durland Memorial Alternatives Library](#) \*
- Death Education Project
- Alternative Energy Project
- Peace Education Project
- Mutuality in Mission (*later becomes Pax Shalom*)
- Cornell Corporate Responsibility Project
- Draft Information and Counseling Center
- Displaced Homemakers Center (*gained own 501(c)3 in 1995 and became the [Women's Opportunity Center](#) in 1998*)
- Center for Local Food and Agriculture
- Prison Research Education Action Program

### *Key Events and Activities*

- Thorpe Religion and Politics Lecture Series sponsored by CRESP and Cornell United Religious Work brought several renowned thinkers to campus including Ivan Illich, E.F. Schumacher, William Sloan Coffin, Jr., Wendell Berry, Brother David Steidle-Rast, Fr. Dan Berrigan, Fritjof Capra and Martin Luther King, Sr.
- Music events organized included the Festival of Black Gospel and a musical tribute to Harry Chapin with Pete Seeger, Mary Travers, and Peter Yarro.
- Conference topics include “Alternative Lifestyles and Values,” “Ethics at the Edge of a New Age,” “Dimensions of Wholeness,” “Alternatives to Prison,” “Steady State Economics,” and “The Tao of the University.”
- Seminars offered on “Psychology, Ethics, and Social Policy” and “Death and Dying”

### **1981-1991: Think Globally, Act Locally**

In the 1980s, growing concerns about the impending global threats described in the Carter administration’s 1980 [Global 2000 Report](#) and manifest by heightened nuclear rearmament inspired several peace-based projects at CRESP, some focused on global peace and others worked locally to defend human dignity and foster understanding.

### *Projects*

- Center Peace Project
- Global 2000 Alternative Agriculture Seminar
- Community Response to Sexual Aggression Program
- [Community Dispute Resolution Center](#) (gained own 501(c)3 in 1990)
- Citizen’s Network for Common Security
- Global Walk for a Livable World
- [Multicultural Resource Center](#) (gained own 501(c)3 in 1997)
- Diet/Weight Liberation Project
- Ben & Jerry’s Youth Scoops
- Oikos

### *Key Events and Activities*

- Guest speakers invited to campus included Donnella and Dennis Meadows, Reuben Munday, and Dorothy Cotton;
- Teach-ins organized on the assassination of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero; the threat of nuclear weapons; and a theological and ethical response to the nuclear peril.
- Organized events included a Sweet Honey and the Rock concert and a peace and nuclear disarmament festival with Bread and Puppet Theatre

- Public statements made in support for Alternatives to Jails; endorsement of a 'Sanctuary Statement' to support the shelter of Guatemalan refugees by the local Society of Friends, and a statement to the Cornell Board of Trustees about divesting from South Africa.

## **1991-2001 Rising Environmental Consciousness**

The 1990s ushered in a new era of environmental activism. Nationally, the environment was a leading issue for American voters. Locally, this rise in environmental awareness inspired several new CRESP projects.

### *Projects*

- [Learn at Ecovillage](#) becomes Thrive in 2020 \*
- Cornell Kenyan Human Rights Initiative
- United Progressives Alumni
- [Seeds of Simplicity](#)
- Food Studies Institute (*gained own 501(c)3 in 1999*)
- New York [Student Environmental Action Coalition](#)
- Out Loud Chorus becomes CommonChords
- Cornell Coalition for the Homeless
- EcoYoff becomes CRESP Senegal
- Wellness Website

### *Key Events and Activities*

- Guest speakers invited to campus included Bill McKibbin, Koigi wa Wamwere, Satish Kumar and Mark Hertzgard.
- October, 2005, in collaboration with organizations on campus and in Ithaca, we brought the Quaker war memorial, [Eyes Wide Open](#), to campus and town. The memorial primarily consisted of nearly 2,000 pairs of boots, each representing a death of an American soldier who fought in Iraq.
- Organized events included "Who is at the Table" workshops; "Activism in the Academic Setting," "Diversity and Unity Building for Student Leaders;" "The Global Economy and International Debt Relief," "Iraq: 10 Years Later;" "United Against Gun Violence;" and "The Moral Imperative of a Living Wage"
- Co-led a conference "Religion and Human Rights: Ideology, the Rhetoric of Hate and the Languages of Reconciliation." [Morris Dees](#) from the Southern Poverty Law Center was the keynote speaker.
- Organized the East Coast Simplicity Conference.

## **2001-2011 Human Rights, Wellbeing and Dignity**

In the first decade of the 2000s, we renamed CRESP the Center for Transformative Action. A renewed focus on personal and social transformation combined with the concept of social entrepreneurship attracted a multitude of projects committed to

championing human dignity and wellbeing. Transformative Action is based on our fundamental ethos of compassion. It calls on us to break the silence around injustice, build grassroots movements with patience and compassion, and reject divisive 'us vs. them' strategies as we create tangible initiative for lasting, systemic change. This [Video](#), produced for our 40th anniversary, describes the many ways we continue to manifest and have stayed true to our original purposes.

### *Projects*

- [Prisoner Express](#) \*
- [Ithaca City of Asylum](#) \*
- Books thru Bars
- [Engineers for a Sustainable World](#) (*gains own 501(c)3 in 2011*)
- Gratefulness Project
- Reading Works
- Centro de Idiomas
- [Take Back your Time](#) (*gains own 501(c)3 in 2011*)
- [Tompkins County Workers' Center](#) (*gains own 501(c)3 in 2012*)
- Theocracy Watch
- [Vitamin L Project](#)
- Positive News USA (*gains own 501(c)3 in 2011*)
- [Performing Arts for Social Change](#) (*now under Ithaca College professor Cynthia Henderson's auspices*)
- [Social Business Consulting](#) (*a Cornell student organization now*)
- [Life Writing Project](#) (*under Binghamton University professor Myra Sabir's auspices now*)
- Veterans' Sanctuary
- [Dorothy Cotton Institute](#) \*
- [Groundswell Center for Local Food and Farming](#) (*gains own 501(c)3 in 2019*)
- Open Window
- Ithaca Alternative Gift Fair

### *Key Events and Activities*

- Guest speakers invited to campus included Wolfgang Sachs, Terry Tempest Williams, Fr. Dan Berrigan, Percy Schmeiser, Daniel Ellsberg, and [Lily Yeh](#)
- Organized events included "The Ithaca Social Forum;" "The Week Against War;" "America is Still Hard to Find;" "Church and State: The Radical Religious Right in the U.S. Government;" "Abu Ghraib: Viet Nam and Empire;" "Eyes Wide Open;" "An Interfaith Service with the Dalai Lama;" and "The 13 Indigenous Grandmothers"
- Organized discussions to explore how different religious traditions understand or justify War.

- Helped organize the Dalai Lama's community service in Ithaca 2008
- 2004-2016 Ithaca Alternative Gift Fair
- Workshops held on NonViolent Communication
- Publication:
  - Wessels, A. 2003, "Displacing mothers from work and welfare." *International Social Science Journal, Moving Targets*, 175(1): 79-88.
- Anke Wessels begins teaching Social Entrepreneurship (AEM 3380) in the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell; emphasizes systems thinking and transformative action

## 2011-2022 Responding to Political and Social Unrest

To support the grassroots efforts ignited by political and social crises, CTA expands its reach across New York State and grows significantly. While our projects work across diverse issue areas and engage different methods, they are connected by a common purpose to uphold human dignity and create communities that are socially just and ecologically sound. They are all working toward building what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called "The Beloved Community."

### Projects

- [The Relationship Foundation](#) (gains own 501(c)3 in 2013 )
- Third Root Education Exchange
- [Local Investing Resource Center](#)
- Buffalo Street Bookmarks
- The Sustainability Center
- [Lyson Center for Civic Agriculture and Food Systems](#) \*
- [Human Rights Educators USA](#) \*
- Wood's Earth
- [Youth Farm Project](#) ( gains own 501(c)3 in 2020)
- [Solar CITIES](#) (gains own 501(c)3 in 2014)
- [Fund for Women's Equality](#) (gains own 501(c)3 in 2014)
- CurrentCast
- [Bike Walk Tompkins](#) (gains own 501(c)3 in 2016)
- [Discover Cayuga Lake](#) (gains own 501(c)3 in 2020)
- [Aspies for Social Success](#) \*
- [Ethical Shareholder Initiative](#)\*
- Centre d'Education Inclusif
- [Memory Maker Project](#) \*
- [Anabel's Grocery](#) \*
- Keep on Questioning
- Periwinkle Humanities Initiative
- [Climate Changers](#)
- [Queer Detainee Empowerment Project](#) \*

- Friends of [Soils, Food, and Healthy Communities](#) \*
- [Mama's Comfort Camp](#) \*
- [Model Alliance](#) ( gains own 501(c)3 in 2018)
- [Cradle to Career](#)
- [Ithaca Voice](#) (gains own 501(c)3 in 2019)
- [Jahajee Sisters](#) \*
- [Inviolate](#) \*
- [Of All Trades](#) \*
- [Open Doors English](#) \*
- [Neighbor to Neighbor](#) \*
- [OPEN DOORS NYC](#) \*
- [International Center for Sustainable Wellbeing](#) \*
- [NAMI FingerLakes](#)
- [Plant Powered Metro NY](#) (gains own 501(c)3 in 2021)
- [Diversify AI](#)
- [DesignatedHealth](#)\* (model C project)
- [Christopherson Center for Community Planning](#)\*
- [Ithaca Promise Initiative](#) (gains own 501(c)3 in 2021)
- [The Worker Place](#)\*
- [The Women's Organizing Network](#)\*
- [Proven Sustainable Conversation Series](#)\*
- [Story House Ithaca](#)\*
- [Gayogoho: no Learning Project](#)\*
- [Ultimate Reentry Organization](#)\*
- [Ithaca Murals Project](#) \*
- [National Women's Defense League](#)\*
- [Rootwork Herbals](#)\* (model C project)

### *Key Events and Activities*

- 2012-2017 annual conference that took place at Cornell and the Greater Ithaca Activities Center: *The Finger Lakes Social Entrepreneurship Institute*. This 3-day conference brought together community members, Cornell students, and international visiting scholars in hands-on workshops on developing practical, innovative initiatives that uphold and celebrate the dignity of all people, of all communities, and can help transform inequitable systems. Here are [videos of our 2014 guest speakers](#) for the opening day at Cornell.
- Workshops offered on social entrepreneurship and transformative action at Middlebury College, Hamilton College and Colgate University. These workshops focused on the fundamental importance of abundance thinking, compassion, and seeing humanity in others as we strive to create tangible, collaborative, actions for systemic change through social entrepreneurship.
- ["TEDx at Cornell: Celebrating Social Entrepreneurs;"](#) with Cornell alumni who are addressing social, political, economic, ecological inequities.

- NonViolent Communication workshops for Cornell staff and community members on “Collaborating for a Shared Purpose” by Miki Kashtan.
- Story-Portraits by John Noltner on “What Brings Meaning to Your Life?”, a collaboration with the Protestant Cooperative Ministry, the Cornell Episcopal Church, St Luke’s Church, the Office of Spirituality and Meaning Making, and the Dean of Students office. [See all portraits](#) of Cornell students, faculty, and staff responding to this question.
- Social Entrepreneurship Practicum course focused on Anabel’s Grocery (AEM 3385) offered through Cornell’s Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management; emphasize systems thinking, collaborative community-based work, and transformative action.
- Presentations given at the annual Ashoka U conferences on social entrepreneurship education, transformative action, social impact, and creating transformative learning opportunities for students.
- 2016 recipient of the [Ashoka U Cordes Innovation Award](#) for CTA’s model as a fiscal sponsor of the student-run, nonprofit store that helps address food insecurity at Cornell (Anabel’s Grocery). Here is a [video](#) of us accepting the award, which describes the fundamental values of creating just, ecologically sound communities through practical actions that transform inequities.
- 2020: Oliver Goodrich, the director of the Office of Spirituality and Meaning Making, disinvites CTA executive director from regular meetings of the Cornell United Religious Work chaplains, rupturing a 50-year relationship.
- [CTA recognizes its 50 year anniversary](#) but the COVID-19 pandemic forces us to cancel celebratory events.
- Publications:
  - *Ashoka U Curriculum and Teaching Resource Guide* (2011), Wessels, A. “Social entrepreneurs, problem solvers, and innovators” syllabus featured.
  - Smith, W. K., Besharov, M. L., Wessels, A., & Chertok, M. 2012. “A paradoxical leadership model for social entrepreneurs: Challenges, leadership skills, and pedagogical tools for managing social and commercial demands.” *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 11(3): 463-478.
  - Wessels, A. et al. 2021 “[Fostering Self-Authorship and Changemaking: Insights from a Social Entrepreneurship Practicum.](#)” *Experiential Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*, 4(2).