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Theresa Power-Drutis : Transcription of statements.

Justin Cudney: Transcription of statements.

TD: Transcription.

JC: Transcription.

Guadalupe House Project

Justin Cudney: The first thing I want to really talk about is your basic background and education and what previous activism were you involved with, especially at the local level, really what made you get into these kind of community involvement projects?

Theresa Power-Drutis: I was raised in Bellingham, Washington, and I was raised as part of a welfare family. It's something that I like to say because so many people have opinions about welfare recipients and I look at DSHS and say "Thank God it was there for us because our family really was on tender hooks." It's funny, people will often make comments about people who are on welfare without thinking that someone who now looks pretty middle class might have come from that background and they might be hurting them.

My family sort of fell to pieces when I was 13, and that is when I started having some run-ins with the law. I made a series of not-so-bright choices, but at that time, I am now 56, I was born in 1955, and when I was young, you could be incarcerated for running away from home, which is no longer the case. That is most of what I was caught for, but thank goodness there were other things that slipped by. It was during that time of my life between the ages of 13 and 18 when I was then considered an adult, I lived mostly on my own from the time I was 15, I mean, I lived with other people but I didn't

have a parent figure, and it was during those days that I started caring pretty deeply about people who were incarcerated and I remember sitting in my little bunk and saying "Some day I'm going to be able to do something about this."

JC: How old were you at that time?

TD: That is probably when I was 14. So, from there I went into carpentry. I went to the Samuel E. Gompers School of Carpentry in Seattle and started working for the union, then started a collective with other women called the Sliver Sisters Carpentry Collective. We were a very dedicated group of people, but there were some flaky things about us. We had no business sense.

JC: And what year was that?

TD: That would have been, I was 20, so that would have been 1975. So backing up a little bit because you asked the question about social activism, when I was very young, I was much influenced by my mother, who was an incredibly wonderful woman, and my father, who was also pretty wonderful but pretty eccentric, who both cared deeply about social justice sorts of things, even though they were very poor. And that is something that in some ways we tend to leave the social change things to the middle class, but it's nice when the people who are living at those low edges think hard enough about it to have some opinions about it.

My parents were migrant workers for a time when they first started their family. Both came from fairly nomadic families, so it was a different way to grow up. My sister became a nun. We were a good Catholic family. So my parents had a deep impact on my life, but my sister was and remains an incredibly powerful force in my life. She is 10 years older than me. Her name is Rosemary and she kind of pulled our family along when she joined the Tacoma Dominicans.

They are such a great group of women. If you ever have a chance to talk to them, they are incredible. And they are a force to be reckoned with around here too. They have

had a real hand in many of the great things that have been started in this neighborhood. They welcome our whole raggedy band of family. We're talking about kids who didn't necessarily smell good or have good grooming, who had runny noses, and were backward in many ways, and they didn't bat an eye. They took us in. Rosemary was a quick learner, and so she was able to pass for middle class pretty quickly and then she sort of helped the rest of us.

JC: And Rosemary is your sister, correct?

TD: Yeah. And she was a Dominican nun for I think about 15 years. She left over Rome's Inquisition of the Women's Orders in the U.S. which was an incredible, that's a whole other story, great book called Double Crossed about that issue. But, back to the Tacoma Dominicans, they have continued to be a force in my life. My sister continues to be, and one of the things that she did was took me to my first peace rally when I was 12 or 13 and through her, I learned about women's issues, I learned about the war, nuclear weapons. She was involved in the beginnings of ground zero here in opposition to nuclear weapons, and since my early teen years I have been a part of those things, and when I had my children, I started taping my stroller with signs to these things and I'm sure that when I'm in a walker I'll tape the signs to my walker. Does that answer that question?

JC: It does. That was something that I was curious about because your really think of the antiwar movement, '67, '68, '69 and getting pretty heavy in '70, so that would have put you at that 12 to 13 to 14 year range. Okay, perfect.

TD: I was kicked out of the Catholic all-girls high school I was going to because I was leading the other girls astray. And looking back on it, I was.

JC: What were you doing?

TD: Well, basically the biggest problem was that they would run away from home with me. I was in a foster home at that time, and when I ran away, first I ran away alone, then I ran away with another one, and then two more. So it was starting a real trend here.

JC: And these were not middle class girls, these were girls in foster homes.

TD: Yeah. So, okay, so back on track here. I was afraid I might go off track.

JC: I think we're perfectly okay here, because we really started talking about the previous activism. Now, you said that when you were 14 and lying on that bunk, you had decided that this is something you could really help others with. You said that your sister really sort of exposed you to all of this, but when did you start taking on, rather than just going along with her, when did it become part of you to the point where you started going to rallies and taking your kids, and at what point did you really say this is what I want to do with my life?

TD: Well, I actually came to that during the Vietnam War because my brother also went to Vietnam and he came back a very changed man, and I had a certain amount of hero worship for him, so it was hard. It was desperately hard to see that change, and I don't know how much that has to do with the fact that he's no longer, we don't believe he is alive. No one has heard from him for more than 10 years. We have done some searching on him. But I believe, whether he would have gone to the substance abuse and to the not-so-helpful lifestyle without his experience in Vietnam, I don't know, but I do know that there was marked change between the young man who left and the young man who came back.

So, Rosemary and I had already done some things prior to that, but that kind of cemented it, and after that it wasn't that I went with her, it was that I would go to things on my own, when I wasn't causing trouble. But, there's this thread about the incarceration that has been throughout my life that includes things like working with the jail visitation program here when I was in my early twenties, working with the juvenile

detention center in Spokane when I was there with building libraries and doing mentoring, and then back to doing this with Irma Gary House, so there are little bits throughout my life.

The part that brought me to Guadalupe House, I was actually escaping the very fast lifestyle of Seattle, and I knew that I was like one of those matches that was going to burn out if I didn't get out, and so I did. I made a conscious effort. I was actually here helping the Tacoma Dominicans build a yurt.

JC: Now, when you say you were going to burn out in Seattle, I am assuming that is because of the activism, not because you were in the middle of poverty.

TD: Well, it would be nice if you could assume that it was just about the activism. It wasn't. You know, I like to think that I wasn't a bad person. I think we talked a little bit last time about the idea that no one was going to survive. I think that was having an impact on me and most of the people that I knew. There was this sense that life was going to be short, that the people who had made the decisions ahead of us had made really poor ones and we were all on this road to ruin, so while there was still this optimistic thing of working for social change, there was this almost opposite feeling to live large, not necessarily large/expensively, but live experimentally, because there might not be a tomorrow. So, that lifestyle, I knew it wasn't going to work.

I came here and I swore off partying, I swore off men, I swore off just things that I thought would sidetrack me from doing the work I felt I could do. And of course, almost immediately upon arriving here after swearing off men, I met my husband. So, Bix is the one. I keep pointing back to Bix and blaming him for almost all the trouble I have been in in my adult life, and I think that there are many people in this neighborhood who could say the same thing. [Laughs]

So, he is the one who introduced me to my husband, he is the one who when I first came here, Ed Jones and Heather Trent were this lovely couple, they came up to invite me in to work with the Hilltop Housing Project. I had been working as a union carpenter and then with the Sliver Sisters and I had made my escape and I didn't know

what I was going to do next. Even though it was this low-paying job, it came with, I had rent free, I could stay in what is now the pastor's house. It's a house that Bix had remodeled, and at that time the downstairs was used for people with developmental disabilities and mental health issues. It was a drop-in center.

So I lived upstairs and this drop-in center was going on downstairs. And it was supposed to be that the center was open and then when it closed, I had the run of the house. But what happened instead is the people kept coming back and I kept letting them in, so we started having these dinners at times and pretty soon there was almost, it was just different, it was a very different kind of lifestyle.

I had worked carpentry during the day which was for low-income people, we would help them make their own repairs or if they were unable to make their repairs, we would do the repairs. We scrounged for materials. I once put an entire roof on with all roof caps. You know the roof caps that are just the little ones that go on the top. That's what was donated to us. I can't believe I did that. When I look back at that I think "That was nuts." I mean talk about using resources that increased the time needed for the job. You know, we didn't have a pneumatic nailer at that point. We manually hammered all of them in. And I would be tied up on the roof with these people who were doing community service time and maybe had never been up on a roof before, and people who had special needs at times would be given to us as part of our work crew, and so it was a very interesting life. And Bix was the heart of almost everything that got started. He was one of the first people to start the Martin Luther King Center[1], which was where I worked when I was doing that.

JC: And what year was all of this going on?

[1] Tacoma King Center (Formerly the Martin Luther King Ecumenical Center) was founded in 1969 to provide services to the low-income families within the inner city of Tacoma, WA. The agency has evolved into the largest provider of direct services to the homeless throughout Tacoma/Pierce County. The agency operates emergency shelters, for men, women and families. The prevention programs include maternity case management and case management for teenage parents and the mentally Ill. Taken from http://snipurl.com/27ye2j

TD: I was 24? '79 is when I came here. And Guadalupe House was not Guadalupe House. It was two buildings. I moved into the lower apartment of that house and Bix and Joe lived on the upper floor of that house when I moved out of what used to be called New House, which is now the pastor's house. And this was a partying neighborhood. It was a neighborhood that was very serious about during the daytime working with people who were marginalized in almost any way you can imagine, and then at nighttime we were a partying place. There were so many people with substance abuse issues and then the rest of us were kind of, just it was woven all together. And when people started stopping, there was a really interesting transformation in the neighborhood.

So, I can't overstate the change that happened then. Not to the core values about social justice but anyone who has been through giving up something addictive can probably relate to the fact that there was a bleakness to the place for a while. There was this almost like going from a color movie to a black and white, and so there was a lot of just plotting that was happening with people as they worked through those issues.

JC: Well, when you have substance abuse issues, you have a purpose to your life, and when you give up that lifestyle, you have to reclaim a purpose in your life, and I think that is where that bleakness comes in, you don't know what to do next.

TC: Well, the interesting thing about this group, is that everyone had a thing to do next. Everyone had something they were passionate about, whether it was the neighborhood free clinic, which was started on a shoestring at that time. Gloria Hall lived with us there. I mean there have always been G Street volunteers and other people who have been attracted to the projects that go on here, but there came to be this sort of a substantial group of people who were intentionally living in community and we were drawn together because either, for me it was low-income housing and people with mental health issues. Bix, he just, you know name a vulnerable population and he is all about it. Joe was attracted here because of having those same feelings, but also because Bix was his mentor. He had almost a father-son relationship with Bix because his father died when he was young. Gloria came out of spirituality. She was much more of a contemplative

sort of person, but she was also a nurse and she got into providing healthcare. We also cooked at the Hospitality Kitchen which started out in the house I was living in. The Hospitality Kitchen started there with Mary Jo Blankish.

JC: Was that New House?

TD: It was at New House. And my mother actually was cooking there. And she would just keeping making these big pots of soup and then eventually there were too many people and so they asked St. Leo's if they could use part of their old kitchen from their school building, and then eventually Joe, my husband, worked with the group of people to cut a hole in the wall. They were all sitting in the kitchen area, what is now the kitchen over there, everything that was happening there it got expanded into this other side. So, all of this stuff was going on, and there was a core of people living right in these houses here. And out of that, that was the G Street Community, so I consider that group of people the beginning of the G Street Community and Bix as the, really, he had a lot of leadership within that.

JC: He was the sun and everybody sort of orbited around him.

TD: Yeah. And then again, you're going to get the impression that I'm a very fearful person who is already running from something. I ran from Seattle. I ran from here to join the Peace Corps because I was not ready to get married and have children and Joe was a very serious kind of guy, so I made a run for it.

JC: What year was that?

TD: That was '81. And while I was there, he and Bix and Bob Gallucci[2] hatched the idea for buying those two houses, the people that owned the houses, the Johansen's,

[2] Bob Gallucci was a long time Tacoma community activist who passed away in 1996. In addition to the Guadalupe House he was also actively involved in developing the Guadalupe Gardens which is an ongoing community garden located next to the house. For more information: http://snipurl.com/27ye2t

decided they wanted to sell them. We had been living in the one house and the other house while I was gone, they opened it up as sort of a flop house for, they would just open the doors at night and everyone would leave in the morning and they closed the doors. It wasn't very well managed but it did provide an indoor space. They came up with the idea of combining the two houses. So, they started a 501C3, which was called the G Street Community, and even though I was in Africa, I was on that, even though no one had asked me if I would be on that. So, Joe came over to visit me and brought me up to date on all this, and I said "Yeah, okay, when I come home I'll get involved in that." So basically I stepped off the plane and into a construction project that was incredibly ridiculous.

Two very old houses with no foundations under them. We were living in them as we remodeled them. We had the coldest winter in the history of Tacoma I believe that year while we had everything open. It was like because we were doing so much on, it was all donated materials and donated labor and managing it, there were times when, and I got pregnant really quickly, it's a habit of mine, so I came home and we got married right away. That's a whole other story.

JC: So how long were you in Africa?

TD: Two years. I was in Botswana. But I visited Lesotho when I was there and that's the seed of another whole branch of my life. So, as we were doing the remodeling, I was pregnant, I was living in the lower half of this house that had the whole side of it ripped off, it was freezing, the pipes were freezing, when the pipes froze because we were remodeling instead of doing a proper repair, we would just cut a hole in the floor upstairs. We had pipes going, it was very strange. And everything we could do just to keep warm. So that was the beginning of that house.

JC: So why didn't you just move back over to New House and sleep there?

TD: Well, by then that house was already being using by others. I had been gone for two years.

JC: Yeah, you gave up your bunk.

TD: And around here, you give up your bunk, it's over. So, then we moved into that little cottage after, I guess, right before Rob was born, my first child, we moved into that cottage and we had a home birth, and that is where he was born. Before I went to Africa, I was up there at St. Jo's helping my oldest son's mother give birth. I was her coach. And he eventually became my oldest son.

JC: I was trying to put that genealogy together, your oldest son's mother. Helping your oldest son's mother give birth. I was trying to put that one together.

TD: That was before I went to Africa when Mike[3] was born and his mother was a young woman who had come to us through a city program that helped people who didn't have jobs to get some jobs skills and she was very young and young for her age too. She saw me more as a mother than anything. And so when she got pregnant, we were working with her to have her a place to stay in, have her have a good safe pregnancy and everything. Anyway, so he was born up there. My second child was born here, and my daughter was born in the house over there.

JC: So, somehow you wound up as part of the 501C3 G Street Community Project. You flew back and went "Oh, okay." You started building the Guadalupe House. So what was the vision for the Guadalupe House at that time outside of just an incredibly complicated construction project? What was the vision for that house?

TD: Well, it's a little bit like, do you know the idea of L'Arche, which is people living in community with other folks who have developmental disabilities? This was that idea

[3] Theresa and Joe later adopted Mike and became her oldest son.

except for with mental health issues. So, our plan was to live in community with homeless people, and mainly with homeless people who had mental health issues, to provide a place where people could come and live and not have a timeline for when they had to leave and make it as much a community as was possible, thus the G Street Community, which is actually harder than it sounds to do.

But, it was a good group of people to do it with. Even while we were building, we had some of the folks who were kind of regulars around coming and asking if they could reserve a room, that sort of thing. There are so many people that have been through there. And that is where I don't know where all the name things should end or begin, so I leave that alone. But there were a lot of people with pretty severe problems who came there and were welcomed there and we called it the G Street Community even after the houses were under construction being joined, but it came close to the time where we were going to be finished but it kept hanging on as construction projects will. And so Bix had been angling for calling it Guadalupe House. Ann Flag, who was here, she asked to be a little bit of a prequel, she had the upper floor of that house and she would invite women into the house to sleep at night. So, it was a safe haven for women, many of them who were prostitutes or who were dealing with substance abuse issues or mental health issues but she had a chair she slept in and they would have mats and she would just invite them in for the night and then they would go back to their stuff during the day. She was an incredible woman. But again she is a whole other story. But she was actually the first seed of that house because she was the first one who used that building for something like that as far as I know.

JC: So she was providing a sort of shelter for homeless women.

TD: She named it Guadalupe House when she was there. Bix wanted to maintain the name, and I said that sounds way too Catholic, and if we really want to be inviting to other people, that's a really poor choice, no matter what Ann Flag did. I loved her, but I didn't like the name of the house.

JC: So to someone who's not Catholic, explain to me how Guadalupe House would be too Catholic.

TD: Well, the story of Guadalupe is about Juan Diego, it's a totally Catholic story, Juan Diego who had a vision of a cathedral, it's a story of Mexico and the church getting founded, a cathedral being founded. It has to do with the Virgin Mary, the whole nine yards. Somehow she came to him in a vision, there were roses involved inside his coat where there could be no roses, this sort of thing. It's a Catholic tale, which could be told much better by almost any other person who was raised as a Catholic. But I was reading other books under my desk while I was in Catholic school. So he kept angling, as Bix will. He is a tenacious man, one of the most tenacious human beings I have every met, and at times if he is being tenacious about something you need, it is a blessing. If he is being tenacious about something that you oppose, you may as well throw in the towel. That man. But I wasn't ready at that point to give in.

And we got together one day and I said I am just so tired of this construction project. I want to give people a date and say we are going to have an opening on that date and then just do it and say it's over. He said, "Oh, good idea". He was all for it. Joe was all for it. He said when do you think? I said "Let's make it December 12th." Well, December 12th is Guadalupe Day, and I had no idea of course, but Bix did and when he told me that, I said "Oh, all right already." And we named it Guadalupe House. I had to give in.

JC: And you just picked December 12th?

TD: It was out of the blue. It's because I looked at the work that needed to be done and I thought we don't want to do this at Christmas time, we want to do it before Christmas time, we could get it done by this date. And we did. We had an opening, and that's how that particular chapter was born.

JC: That's funny. So let me ask you this, since this is all happening '81, '82, '83, what was the actual opening day December 12th, what?

TD: Basically, we started calling it the G Street Community probably in '82, and then the house itself was probably '83/'84 somewhere in there.

JC: So your opening day was December 12, 1983, Guadalupe Day?

TD: I think that's probably right. It was either, I'm trying to remember if Rob was born when we had the opening. And so, I'm going to say it's '84 because he was an infant at that time and you can correct that if, Joe would actually know, it could have been either of those things because life runs together when you have a tiny child.

JC: So let me ask you this, being this timeframe and you're trying to reach out to the developmentally disabled and the mentally disabled, what impact did Reagan/Social Services have on the Hilltop community?

TD: Those were some hard times. It was hard on so many levels. The need kept growing and yet there was this groundswell sort of support for Reagan from some of the people who were coming to the soup kitchen. So that was interesting. It was interesting because for some reason he seemed charismatic to them. It's odd when you're on the other side of it and you're looking, it's like when I look at Bush or Reagan and I see these kind of strutting people without much of an agenda for the people, that's my perception, they don't look appealing to me. And so it was interesting to have, okay what appeals? And I think that what appealed with Reagan for folks here was this whole, the American Dream is possible for anyone. And so you would hear people saying some of those things, the very people who were suffering because some of the things that they counted on were being cut and not making that association. But the people who were working here did make that association and each time there is a fresh set of cuts, services get really thin. You're trying to do more with less, just as it is now with DSHS stopping the

disability lifeline. Suddenly there are people who have been used to getting this small amount of money each month and they live together and share housing and that goes away, and so we have more homeless people. Then things get so bad that they start a new program. There was a lot of political activism here in opposition to those policies, and at the same time, there has been this very strong river of resistance to war and resistance to nuclear arms or any weapons of mass destruction that at times there are people who work really hard on the political side of it. There were some folks staying there who were almost completely political for a time and there wasn't very much going on in the social service side of it for that period, and again this was a couple with children.

So, that can make us kind of draw in, which is part of why Joe and I moved over there. Because you don't want to change the heart of something just because you introduce children to it. So you had to find another way sometimes to be a part of something. And, anyway, not everyone makes the same choices about that, and it's unclear to me what the best way to deal with young families within this kind of community is.

JC: Well you certainly couldn't be doing the same sort of direct action activism others were doing because you couldn't afford to be away from your children for a year or two at a time. And that really limits the amount of activity that you can do. I mean, even showing up to a demonstration and getting arrested for a day can be incredibly problematic and will call upon all kinds of Child Protective Services down on you.

TD: Yeah. So there are those issues that weigh in. Nick and Nora have two children right now. They're living in the little white house there. They're part of Guadalupe House right now. And that seems to work for them. As far as they can still be involved and not want to quash the things that have to do with more edgy side, not just politically but about the kinds of people that get invited in, and what kind of behaviors can be tolerated. People, we people, tend to be more tolerant of extremely odd behavior when

there aren't small impressionable human beings that might not get it. I don't know if I answered your question.

JC: No, you did. So lets sort of circle back. Let's talk about the G Street Community once again as a 501C3. Now, as a 501C3, were you receiving government funding as a 501C3 or is that just....

TD: No, that was just a way that people could make donations. Bix did a whole, almost all the fundraising in the early days. Bob Gallucci did some too, but Bix was the main person. He knows so many people from having lived here so long, and he was so dogged in the way that, there wasn't government funding for Guadalupe House. It was private donors.

JC: But as a 501C3 was there any sort of restrictions by the government on what you could do? Especially with the political side of this?

TD: That's part of why the Catholic Worker gave up the 501C3 because they did not want to, I read that really differently than they do, I don't think that it means the same thing. I think that I can do whatever I want to be politically active, and Irma Gary House can be a 501C3. I am careful not to push political agendas here, and I think there are people living at Guadalupe House, it's not like they are required to have political beliefs that match those who are Catholic Workers. But that is a Dorothy Day thing. If you know anything about Dorothy Day. That is one of her core values, it isn't just about whether you can be politically active. It's also about wanting people to give without expecting anything. It's a mixture of things.

JC: Those donations are no longer tax deductible. There's no ulterior motive attached to a donation any longer. It's a donation in kind.

TD: So, I have had real disagreements with them over this. This is one of those things we're a neighborhood that has a lot of core shared values and then we have these other things that get into, not mean-spirited fights, but Bix and I have gone round and round about that. Because I believe that no one, there's not enough of a benefit to make a donation to make it, no one does it just to get the write off because you pay out more than you get written off So I am not worried about people's ulterior motives, and I also think that I like the idea that my tax dollars are going towards good things, so I want the good things to be tax write-offs and I don't want the bad things to be. But there are several issues. And some of those tensions are about how much is the Catholic Worker a political organization as far as supporting people doing actions and so forth and putting out the word about political issues, social issues, and how much of it is a social service organization. I think that mainly people grapple with that and there has been a lot of good stuff that has come out from both sides of that over the years. We don't get to this happy medium where everyone says "This is it." It's more whoever is willing to put in the time puts in the agenda, just as with any organization.

JC: So, let's go back to Guadalupe House. So, we're at that point in '84 and it just opened up, what sort of resistance was there from the neighbors, from city government, and especially considering that you guys did all the construction yourself? Was there any resistance from the building inspectors? I mean the crazy plumbing that you did? I mean, and what sort of impact did St. Leo's have on sort of mitigating any of those issues that you had.

TD: St. Leo's was great. We'd sort of get into these desperate fixes and then they would rescue us with $3,000 or something to do whatever the next thing needed to be done. And the building inspector, when I came home from Africa, the construction was underway. Not in any logical way that I would have done it. There was this great architect, Bob Evans[4], who worked like the dickens. He really felt a kinship with Bix,

[4] Bob Evans – Not to be confused with the Bob Evans who held political positions in Tacoma including City Council.

wanted to help with this project, totally pro bono work, drew up, you know how long it takes to draw architectural plans. This is before autoCAD. This is seriously drawing the drawings. And Bix took the plans and started building in one corner before anything was ready, the foundation, before the houses were connected. It was like just building. And he didn't follow the plans. And I don't think it's because he couldn't read them. He actually spoke to this. He wanted more bedrooms. He wanted people to have their own space. And the requirement by law was I think 60 square feet or 80 square feet per room, and he shrank it down lower than was legal. So the first time I met with the building inspector was for him to tell me those walls had to move. And I gave him my comeback, which is I just came from Africa and 20 people can live in the space of one of these rooms in Africa. And this is the beginning of our relationship, and he looked and me and said "Theresa, you're not in Africa anymore." And he was a good guy, he gave us the slack that he could give us because he liked what we were doing. But there were things he couldn't bend on. The neighborhood itself, one of the benefits of being a shoestring organization is that everything happened at a snail's pace, so it's like that lobster that gets dropped into the boiling water versus the one that's in the warm water that keeps getting hot, people really didn't get quite what we were up to until it was too late. And all of these things had grassroots beginnings. It wasn't like a big organization came in and said we're going to plant this housing project here. It was people who gathered together, started living together, and we slowly tacked things together, and pretty soon there was something else there. And it has been that way with every project around here.

The yellow apartment building. That was just an apartment building. We didn't send out a notice that said we're going to try to do something sort of collective with this. We just started working on it. And then people got invited in and pretty soon it had a life of its own. The Keep Them Warm and Fed building was just a house that Fena, who had lived here forever and cooked at the church, it was her house, when she died and her daughter Mary moved out, their family knew about all the stuff that was going on, they had been involved, so a deal was struck. Most of the buildings around here were purchased below par because the people who had them wanted them to be used in this way.

JC: Rather than neighborhood resistance, it has been a neighborhood collaboration.

TD: And I think that it has been very intentional trying to reach out to neighbors and also because it's so slow, it's very hard to resist something that happens this slowly. We have had sort of one really large confrontational issue, and that is the Needle Exchange van. And this is a case of almost all of us living around here see it as a positive force. We have had people who have needed the clean needles. We don't want the penalty for the stupidity of shooting drugs to be death, that's just a kind of logical thing, and yet there are people who see the prevention of death as supporting drug use. It's a mystery to me.

But we actually have one couple who live right in the midst of us, who live in the yellow apartment building who are great people. Wes works over at the soup kitchen, and came in in really hard circumstances and was helped by the community and he will say that. His wife Trudy used to work at the free clinic, so they're not strangers to this, but they have a different feeling about the Needle Exchange van, so that has been something we have had to work with. And that is within this block.

JC: But they haven't been the crazy neighbor calling the cops on the Needle Exchange van either, though.

TD: No, but they have been pretty vocal about being opposed to it. Wes in particular. There have actually been some good conversations that have come up out of that. Now, the people who live two blocks away have gotten involved, and there are certain political figures who have gotten involved in trying to shut down the Needle Exchange van just because I think it's got to be, I can't think of a third reason, the two that come to mind are that they really don't understand what the danger is of used needles or they actually are using it as a political vehicle. I can't think of a third reason for being in opposition to it, but they're a strong enough opposition to it that they have had to cut down their hours. They wanted to put it some place else rather than here; as if having it here created the problem.

JC: Okay, so we were talking about the Needle Exchange van and some of the pushback from community numbers as well as neighbors. Let's sort of talk about the transition from the G Street Community to the Catholic Workers. How did that really sort of come about? Was that because the G Street Community was burnt out? Were they looking to take on other projects? Was it because of the plant expansion or just the inevitable evolution and expansion of this? You know, how did that whole thing come about? What year did the Catholic Workers sort of commence?

TD: I asked Joe that question because I knew you would ask that. It was 1988, and what happened, there was an interesting period of time there. I keep using the term interesting and I mean that. It's not like bad, it's just a lot happening. Bix got involved in some, I think he started feeling that he was too central and he has had a lot of experiments in his life with letting go of power. Because he actually is a very charismatic person and has grappled with wanting to be a collaborative person and yet having the inclination to, because he had strong opinions and feelings and drives, he wants to change the world. The man wants to change the world. And he has these warring factions of wanting to change the world and wanting to be collaborative and it doesn't always mesh.

So he came to this place of saying, there were seven of us who were involved in this, there was Janet and James Morgan and Karen Havener, Dan Blashley, Joe and myself, but we were supposed to figure out the next thing. So for a while we toyed with the idea of because of the sustainability thing, it can be really wearing to always live from kind of moment to moment, and we wanted to be able to expand our services and welcome more people in. So, we danced around the idea of being a more official home thing where we could get funding from the government to house people and we could even employ some people to do some of the work. All volunteer is a tough, tough way to go, as I'm finding some with here too, but it never really took off as that.

I think there were a lot of things going on with people's personal lives, and we did some of that for a while and Joe and I were also about the same time Bix was thinking of pulling back, we were also thinking, we had at that point we had purchased that house

and remodeled it and I was pregnant with my second birth, third child, and we just, we had adopted Mike, our oldest child at that point. And there were some real issues with his birth family, especially his birth father, so we were even talking about should we move out of this area because there were so many sort of not-so-great connections for Mike here.

So we put it up to the community, we thought these are the people who have donated to this over the years, who have donated their time and energy and funds, let's throw it out there. Let them give us proposals about what to do with the houses. But we certainly didn't want to sell the houses. What would happen with the money? And they were a cool set of houses. And it was actually, it was the property that is now the gardens and the two houses and this house, I mean the little shack, so we had some people who were writing up some things to do and Bix just couldn't let go of it in the end. He and Kevin Coley[5] hatched the plan for the Catholic Worker and submitted the proposal. Well, you couldn't have a proposal from Bix who had pretty much done everything to make it happen, I mean not everything because there were other people involved, but he was such the heart of it, and say "Well, no, we're going to go with this other idea." Plus, it really was the closest thing to what we had already been doing. So, they started the Catholic Worker and it ran with Bix being very central to it for a while and Kevin being very central to it for a while, and then Bix again wanted to pull back, and that is when he moved to Jean's House of Prayer.

But no matter what permutations that house has been in, he has never really been able to extract himself. I think that is maybe part of his plan for going to prison is to finally extract himself from that house. He wouldn't agree with that. But, I did accuse him of just wanting a vacation. Because while he's here, he definitively gets sucked into things.

JC: So, we've talked about the Catholic Workers and their coming in, at what point did the Guadalupe House go from just the Guadalupe House to all of these other houses, like

[5] Kevin Coley – Came to the G Street Community as a Jesuit Volunteer Corps member. Eventually married and settled in the area. He has become a long term G Street activist.

right now we're in the Irma Gary House, and I know that these sort of came, up as the neighbors passed away and provided houses for less than market value.

TD: Yeah. There is only one exception to that, and that's such a painful story that I will leave that for you to get from someone else. I have too strong feelings about it. But it was a real error. But maybe not. You know, things that look like errors, aren't always. But I will say this, that the initial purchase was for the five lots that included the two houses that were the joined to be Guadalupe House, the cottage, which is a euphemism for a very tiny space with shingles on it, people might get the sense of some nice English cottage, and the garden area.

JC: The shack with indoor plumbing.

TD: Yeah. True. So the gardens we started developing early on and Carrie Little[6] had a lot to do with those gardens being very well developed and she is also involved a bit with the new garden area which is known as the Gallucci Learning Garden. Notice Gallucci, who was the guy who helped us start Guadalupe House, or the G Street Community, he was one of the original four, and an activist in the community, long-term activist, teacher, helped get the People's Park started. It was just find something and you'll see Gallucci was somehow involved in the politics of it. Then the Lewis-Jones House was purchased while I was living in Spokane.

We moved to Spokane when my daughter was four, she is 25 now, this is how I do it now, that would have made it 1990. We moved to Spokane in 1990. Between 1990 and when we came back, not 16 years later because she was 4, we came back when she was 18, so 14 years later, the Lewis-Jones was purchased. Now we were coming back periodically. Sometimes to help with projects, sometimes because Bix had surgery or something and Joe would come to care for him, various reasons. Once in a while

[6] Carry Little – Additional information on this community activist can be found in the UW-Tacoma Library Community History Project.

everybody was going to be gone and we could do some respite for the community or something. And they would come over there. So we were their little…

JC: And this is when you were going to school?

TD: This is when I was going to school. We were caring for my mother, who was dying. I was teaching and we were building our house over there. That was an interesting time too.

JC: So what made you and Joe decide that you wanted to walk away from this and move to Spokane?

TD: It was mostly about our oldest son, who was having night terrors and was very frightened and would see people that were from his past. He experienced a lot of neglect and some abuse before he came to us, and we had a sense that if we stayed here, it would be bad for him. And also because Joe had a lifetime dream of the acreage and going back to the country, and so we raised our children on 13 acres outside of Cheney, Washington near Spokane and that is like a page in our book that doesn't quite go with other things. I was involved with the juvenile detention center there, but more than anything, those years were spent getting our children educated, they were the focus of our lives for those 14 years. That, and caring for my mother, who was dying. Joe just worked all the time as a nurse and on the land, so it was all about the chopping wood and we had a wood stove, and I got to design my own house which was great fun. I took an architectural class and designed a house. I got an education. I was a high school dropout, so when I went back to get the certificate in carpentry, that was my first step back into education from dropping out as a freshman in high school.

So, I thought that I didn't like education, but as an adult it was actually hot stuff. I had such a blast and it was so fun to choose to learn, to have the freedom to just expand my horizons. I was addicted. So I went and got my undergraduate. While I was doing that, I started taking some of these tech courses because I had a phobia about computers,

so I just loaded myself up with computer courses to get over it. And I did get over it. In fact, I found that I really enjoyed them, and so then I started being a teaching assistant in the tech department. By the time I got my teaching degree, they had invited me to teach some courses in the tech department, so I did that for many years. And then, because I was addicted to the whole higher ed thing, I got my master's degree in teaching. I chose special education in part because my oldest son had some of these issues and I wanted to learn more about them. But then I went on and got the master's just because it was there, I think, like climbing a mountain. And then I chose the doctoral degree in leadership studies because it was the doctoral degree that was available in my geographic locale that was my first reason. Then I went and met them, they were such a cool group of people, despite the fact that it was a Catholic university, these were really open-minded people, and I was able to focus on information communication technology and Africa and they sent me back there as a teaching assistant to Africa as well.

For three months I was over there with an exchange program, and I got back into something I didn't even know if I would ever be able to go to again once I started having children. So I went back to school as soon as my daughter started kindergarten. I started college. And I worked my hours around when her hours were, and somehow I just ended up with a doctoral degree. It was weird.

So, that's another thing I like to talk about, when I go and talk with groups about Irma Gary House or anything to do with this neighborhood, I like to say to young people that dropping out of high school isn't the end of the road here in this country. It is in some countries. It is very exciting that is as permeable, that our higher education system, I want it to remain that permeable. I don't know if it will, but what a gift. It is one of the great things about this country. I have seen enough countries where it isn't true. That if you miss that boat back here, you may as well just not think about education.

JC: So, during the time that you were in Eastern Washington pursuing your doctorate, raising you family, what was going on here?

TD: We keep coming in and out of this place, so you're going to get a better historical perspective from people that were staying here, but the Lewis-Jones House was purchased, and I don't really know the details of how that one came to be, but it's the one right next to us and it's a little ramshackle. There is nothing ever, there have been some things that have been done to it. Tom Karlin[7] has had his hand in almost, he's the phenomenal woodworker and has been involved with many, many projects in this area. He was a Catholic Worker for a time. He and his wife Laura lived in the cottage for a time. He still comes back when things go awry and he can take a piece of wood and make pretty much anything out of it.

So he keeps getting sucked into the projects, and he has done some things on the house beside us, but it still remained sort of, should I say the tackiest house in the patch, and it's not because of the people living there, it's just that that's what the house is. It's a small house. It's kind of a case management. It's long-term housing for people who are dealing with mental health issues and also one of the Catholic parish lives there, Harlan Landon[8] lives there. It was named Lewis-Jones because right around the time they got it, there was a homeless man named Lewis Jones who had a confrontation with the police, I believe it was in Wright Park, but he was killed. The naming of the house wasn't in defiance or anything, it was about this is just a sad story. And here's a man who maybe no one will necessarily remember but keeping that kind of life, we've had some other people, mental health plays really large here. Some of that is about, you mentioned the thing about Reagan. One of the things that happened during that time is they emptied out Western State Hospital and they emptied them right into our neighborhood, and we are still having the aftershocks of that, because even though at times people are gathered back in or a program comes up, it's that same group of people. It's not like all new people coming in. There are new people that come in, but there is also this constant group of people who cannot live productively in the society as it is who are going to be fringe and who need services, and we now have the policy of medicating them and

[7] Tom Karlin – He is a local community activist, Catholic Worker, and has been arrested with Father Bix during anti-nuclear protests.
[8] Harlan Landon – Has been a Catholic Worker volunteer for over 20 years as of this writing. He is currently involved in the Nativity House, one of the many houses under the purview of the G Street Community.

putting them out in the community and saying this is our transition program. And it isn't a transition program. It's a dumping program. And Lewis Jones, you know whether or not he belonged in an institution and that is another whole story. How do we live with people who don't necessarily want to be in an institution but don't have good decision-making abilities and will do really stupid things like pick up a pipe and threaten a police officer with it, or threaten to kill someone even when they have no means to do so You really get how law enforcement, one bad choice and they're the ones that are buried.

So, it's a terrible situation all the way around and mostly when I read about these things, I feel just sad, not necessarily angry, just sad that we don't have it together to deal with this in some kind of way that doesn't end up with people dying. Lewis Jones always makes me think of that. So, the fact that that house is named that is about keeping that in our consciousness, I think, that would be the way I describe it.

The Irma Gary House was purchased in, I believe it was 1999, or could have been 2000, and they took off the lid and added a second floor, took a tiny house and made it into a small house. So, this has six bedrooms and this was done, Bix was a prime motivator, but it was also a project of the Catholic Worker in general. They wanted to do something, offer something to women released from prison. So they contacted a group that was known as New Connections, it was an advocacy group, and said if we put the house together and let you use it without paying rent, will you run the program out of it, and it was agreed to do that. The architect just did a really great job of making the most out of small space and it kind of works.

New Connections, now I'm talking about myself in terms of this organization, we take care of the insurance, utilities, and those sorts of things, and they just let us stay here rent free. Then, Jean's House of Prayer. Jean was this incredible, I would butcher her last name, she was an incredible Japanese woman who lived through the times, those horrible shameful times, when we were treating our citizens just because of their ancestry like dogs, and she still maintained the most cheerful disposition you could ever find. She was a very welcoming, tiny little energetic woman, who no matter, you really couldn't tell how old she was, she got up there in years, I think she was in her nineties when she died She invited everyone into her yard, it wasn't into her house so much as into her

yard. She was always working in her yard and she knew everyone. When she was dying, Bix and the Catholic Workers were involved with her life and her family knew that, so they are the ones that really helped to get the house. They wanted that to happen. And he turned it into, he called it the House of Prayer.

He has kept almost all of her furnishings in there as a memorial to the Japanese piece of this community. It's an important piece of this community. Before that horrible time, there were so many Japanese citizens living here, and it was a thriving healthy community. It was just cut off at the knees when that happened. So, Bix remembers that. He lived through that too. So he wanted to have something that was a piece of that. There are other things. The whole visit to Japan and the Japanese peace pole and lots of things that he has initiated to keep that alive[9].

JC: And the trip to Japan, that was the 50th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, correct?

TD: Yeah. So another horrific thing. So let me think. Okay, I'm sorry I got it out of order. The white house actually came before that. The white house, which is across the street from the gardens, was purchased because it was there. If things adjoin this area, we try to think of a good reason to buy it because something will flow into it. And it has ended up being a family house for Catholic Workers. Basically, it is being used now as a house for a family that's involved with the Catholic Workers and the father in that family, his name is Nick, and he works at Nativity House, so that's another connection.

Also, Harlan, who is a Catholic Worker, works at Nativity House. The house across the way that has Keep Them Warm and Fed in it and also Mike and Dotty live in it. Mike is another Catholic Worker. When Fena died, that is the one I mentioned before it came up, they totally remodeled it. That is a story in and of itself of tearing out more walls than is logical and so the city did get involved in that and, oh my goodness. You know, the cost and time spent on making that house acceptable to the city is a little

[9] Father Bix and an inter-faith delegation traveled to Japan in August 2009 to commemorate the atomiv bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The trip is the basis of a documentary called "Free World". For more information http://snipurl.com/27ye39

astronomical. This house that the Jesuit volunteers are working in, Eva lived in this little red house and there was a man who lived with her in the house, that's the one that's painful to talk about, but in the end it is owned by the Catholic Worker and it has a house that has already been added onto. It was built like five years ago and it already has an addition on it to house the Jesuit volunteer corps.

The Jesuit volunteers have added so much to this community over the years. We have almost always had Jesuit volunteers involved. Young people with a lot of enthusiasm and idealism will come in and plug their lives in. So that is what that house is being used for. The other houses that aren't directly Catholic Worker, still have the stamp of Bix on them for the most part. The yellow apartment building, he talked somebody out of that many years ago when it was just about to fall down and he sucked all of us into working on it one way or another. And you couldn't walk by this community without him putting a hammer in your hand and saying, "Go do this." So, that is in a sense a satellite to this, but it's its own entity. The Catholic Worker doesn't own it, but it owes its life to Bix, who is here.

The house that I live in, it belongs to St. Leo's and it was a refugee's house for people from El Salvador for many years and it has been used by this community pretty continuously, one way or another, so we are in it now, and the house next door which is New House, also Bix talked somebody out of that and that was I think the very first house now that I say that.

JC: Bix is rather persuasive I take it.

TD: He is. He talked somebody out of it. Either he got a screaming deal on it or it was given to him. I forget what the details are. St. Leo's is susceptible to his wiles as well. So, that may have been the very first house that he worked on in this neighborhood and then everything started coming out of that. But Guadalupe became the central house.

JC: So, let me ask you this. So, you're in Eastern Washington, you have 13 acres of land, you have house that you are able to design and build yourself, you're raising your family, you got your doctorate, how did you get back over here?

TD: We always planned to come back here.

JC: So you gave up your 13 acres of land and your hand-designed house and moved back here?

TD: Yeah. We made the decision somewhere in our children's life that we didn't want to take them out of their school system until they graduated. Pretty much the day our last child graduated, we got the Uhaul. I got to tell you. It's beautiful over there. And I don't' regret that time. Because raising children on land and living in a rural area is a precious thing that not everyone can do and it was a very good thing for our family. If I had stayed here, I didn't think it would ever have been able to go to school. I would have kept being sucked into projects, so it gave this kind of interesting space for us all to pursue education and a different life. But I missed this place before I drove out of it. I didn't really want to go. Joe had this dream of the land and what it would be like. And he learned his lesson. Taking care of 13 acres isn't an easy thing to do, so he was really ready for a small yard.

JC: Coming back into this community project was going to be easier than maintaining…

TD: Physically.

JC: Physically easier. That's funny.

TD: And Bix was becoming ill. That probably has more to do with how quickly we moved over than anything else. We might have taken our time to do it otherwise, but Bix was having an operation. Joe actually came over before me. The house we moved into

had been left empty for two years and it was a total disaster. The people who had had it before, oh my goodness, so there was all this tearing out of rugs and a lot of repair work and painting and so forth.

But, we knew that when Bix got into his last years, it would be important for us to be around. Bix would call Joe whenever there was trouble and Joe always responded and in whatever way he could. He can't *not* respond. That's why he's in Tennessee right now[10]. There are certain people in his life that he would do anything for. And I'm really happy to be one of those people. And I also feel that way about Bix as well. We have a different relationship than he has with Joe, but I love that man. He is family to me. And whenever it's possible for us to do something, even though it ends up being Joe often who is the one who has the skill set that he needs, I'm here because of that man. When I came back here, I saw that he was just swimming in things to do. I said "Bix, I will take one thing off your hands if you promise not to put something else in that space that I create." And he promised. Of course he lied like the deceiver he is. Of course, he didn't really put something new in, he just was able to focus more on the nuclear disarmament issue, which is at the heart of what he wanted to do, so I still feel good about this. But he asked me to take over his position on the board of New Connections, and once I did that and I believe that he knew full well that once I got involved in something that had to do with prisons I would be sucked in, and here I am, now spending the majority of my life in this house, which I totally blame on him. [Laughs]

JC: Which you say with a smile.

TD: Yeah.

JC: Well, it looks like we're a little past our hard stop time. Is there anything else that you think I need to know about?

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[10] At the time of this writing, Father Bix is being held at a detention facility in Knox County, Tennessee. There he will fulfill the remainder of his Federal sentence and then stand trial for another direct action protest at Ft. Knox. More information can be found at http://snipurl.com/27ye26

TD: There's one thing that I think is worth considering when you talk about the future of this area. We have never been totally Bix-less. And, although some things have been handed off, I believe that this community should be looking hard at how we will withstand that loss. It's not just a personal loss of a man who is so completely beloved, but he is a rudder. He's a leader and a rudder and he drives almost everyone crazy on one level or another because of the way that, just the choice of doing an additional civil disobedience in Tennessee when he knew this trial was coming up. I wanted to snuff him in some ways. It's like "Don't do it".

Before he left to Tennessee, I looked him in the eye and I said "Whatever you do, do not get arrested in Tennessee." And he looked back at me and he said "You know, I don't really have any intention of that." I knew right away he was going to do it, and so it was no surprise. But he will keep doing these things up until he draws his last breath and it's possible that the community will kind of coast on inspiration of this man for a time, but in the best of worlds there would emerge a distributive leadership out of this. That's not the way most communities work. Mostly we want a charismatic person who can sweep us off our feet and so I think that that is the next big step in this community. Do we focus on finding someone to fill that vacuum, or do we fill the vacuum ourselves in bits and pieces, and most importantly, we need to talk about the vacuum and it's hard, hard, hard.

JC: How do you broach that conversation?

TD: It is something that people don't even want to think about. So, that's the other piece, that I think the future of this community hinges on what happens next.

JC: Thank you very much.