



# Heathmere Center

FOR CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT



**2025**  
ANNUAL REPORT

THE ART OF DIALOGUE  
**Building Trust,  
Inspiring Youth**



# Letter From Our Executive Director

## Dear Friends,

We are excited to share some of our accomplishments that have expanded Heathmere's impact across the North Shore. **2025 brought increased demand for our dialogue facilitation trainings, particularly for teens and young adults who are eager for meaningful ways to engage with complex social issues.** Thanks to the Cummings Foundation, our Beverly Dialogue Youth Corps completed its second year and introduced a mentorship program for returning youth.

**Our commitment to fostering inclusive dialogue continued through our powerful Neighborhood Conversations,** hosted in partnerships with the Beverly Public Library and Peabody Institute Library of Danvers. These events tackled challenging topics like, *"How do we make our communities more accessible?"* and *"How do we deal with our political differences?"* And our co-sponsorship of the 7th Race Amity North Shore Festival brought residents together to celebrate the transformative power of cross-racial friendships.

Like last year, **we welcomed two highly skilled Board members.** Also like last year, we worked with a consultant to help us refine our mission. **The board and I reached unanimous agreement to focus our programming primarily on teens and young adults.** To serve this critical demographic more effectively, we hired a youth program consultant who is helping us deepen our curriculum and expand both in-school and out-of-school programming.

While celebrating these achievements, we acknowledge the challenges that have tested our resilience. Federal funding cuts to arts and humanities have impacted grant opportunities through Mass Cultural Council and Mass Humanities. Our new focus on youth programming led to the difficult decision to decline a grant opportunity, demonstrating our commitment to mission alignment over financial convenience.

**In July, we held a memorial service for our founding donor, Ann Ferguson,** whose legacy lives on through Heathmere. Ann's three core values: **inviting diverse dialogues in welcoming spaces, supporting youth voices and agency, and embracing art as a pathway to deeper human connections,** continue to guide our mission.



*In gratitude for your partnership,*

**Lauren Swayne Barthold, PhD**  
Founding Executive Director

"THERE IS SO MUCH WORK TO BE DONE BUT WE ARE ON THE RIGHT PATH AND THESE CONVERSATIONS MAKE A HUGE IMPACT."

— **Neighborhood Conversations Participant**



# Our New Mission Statement

**Using the power of dialogue to foster connection, build trust, and cultivate understanding across difference in local communities.**

**Using the power of dialogue**  
we affirm the potency and potential dialogue has for transformation. Our programs demonstrate that there is a way to talk so others can listen and listen in a way that builds bridges rather than exacerbates divisions.

**To foster connection, build trust, and cultivate understanding**  
we want people to know that our dialogue programs are aimed at neither achieving agreement nor denying difference nor winning arguments. Our dialogues help participants understand the humanity of those with whom they may disagree, building a strong foundation of trust and understanding in their communities. Without a strong dialogic foundation, democratic deliberation is unlikely to be productive.

**Across difference in local communities**  
we acknowledge that we live in a pluralistic democracy, with many different and conflicting points of view. Viewpoint diversity is not a reason for despair nor does it render getting along impossible. Heathmere is dedicated to helping to create more connected communities where difference and belonging both thrive.



# Youth Program Spotlight

## Heathmere Will Devote 80% of its Programming to Working with Teens & Young Adults.

**THE RESEARCH IS CLEAR:** our programs that support youth to channel their passions into collaborative civic action close the gap, address challenges, and create impact.

"Cultivating civically engaged [youth] is crucial for their well-being, their communities, and the future of democracy. By fostering collaborations that... demonstrably build civic dispositions and empower youth to act, we can more effectively bring democratic lessons to life and nurture a new generation of active citizens"  
*(Improving Communities through Youth Civic Engagement in After School Settings, Report 2025)*

Our programs will build civic engagement skills, foster agency, and empower all youth to collaboratively address issues impacting their communities. This strategic direction is based on demonstrated need and the success of our Beverly Dialogue Youth Corps (BDYC).

### Our work with youth addresses 3 urgent and intertwined challenges facing both youth and our democracy:

1. The Erosion of Trust Essential for Strong Communities and Democracies
2. The Gaps in Youth Civic Engagement
3. The Youth Mental Health Crisis

Based on need and community requests, here are some examples of dialogue programs for teens and young adults:

#### Out-of-school dialogue trainings and workshops:

- Dialogue Youth Corps
- Dialogue Mentors
- Dialogue Fellows
- Dialogue trainings for local youth councils

#### In-school dialogue programs:

- Dialogue Clubs
- Dialogic Curriculum Support



Beverly dialogue Youth Corps (BDYC)

"THROUGH THE BDYC, I'M ABLE TO HAVE IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS ABOUT INEQUITIES IN OUR SOCIETY... WHILE CREATING SPACE FOR CIVIL AND MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE. BEING PART OF THE BDYC FILLS ME WITH GRATITUDE...FOR THE AUTONOMY TO SHARE MY PERSPECTIVE AND BE HEARD."

— BDYC Participant

## We've Added a Youth Program Consultant



In September we hired **Joyce Swagerty, MEd, MA**, to help strengthen our new teen and young adult programming. Joyce has volunteered as a co-facilitator this past year with the BDYC and we are thrilled she has agreed to partner with us!

Joyce is an educator and consultant with decades of experience in corporations, NGOs, and educational institutions. Her business, Your Fresh Horse LLC, collaborates with individuals and teams to develop learning experiences and creative solutions that transform people and organizations. Her professional coaching and consulting partnerships are known for facilitating out-of-the-box thinking that shifts perspective and illuminates new possibilities. Joyce has served as a trustee, senior administrator, and middle school teacher in independent schools. She has also held strategic leadership, DEI consulting, and people management positions in the corporate sector. Joyce is a graduate of Harvard College (AB, cum laude), Lesley University (MEd), and UMass, Boston (MA)

## BDYC Dialogue Impact

Attendees echoed the impact of participating in youth-led dialogues

NOTING THE  
“ power of dialogue to mitigate negative behavior

“ THE DESIRE FOR more of these in our schools

AND APPRECIATION FOR ITS  
“ potential to bring new perspectives to a topic

100% OF ATTENDEES AGREED THAT THEY learned how to facilitate dialogue and felt prepared to do so.



Beverly Dialogue Youth Corps (BDYC) session.

If you'd like to hear more about how Heathmere can support youth to have transformative conversations in your community or school, send an email to **Lauren Barthold: [Lauren@heathmere.org](mailto:Lauren@heathmere.org)**



# Community Impact:

PUBLIC DIALOGUE PROGRAMS, FACILITATION TRAININGS, & NEIGHBORHOOD CONVERSATIONS

## Reflecting on Our Impact in 2025

This year marked significant growth in our community engagement efforts as we expanded dialogue programs and facilitation trainings. Our work reached diverse audiences through partnerships with **The Resolution Center**, **the City of Lynn Youth Task Force**, and the **New Immigrant Multiservice Center**, where we delivered comprehensive dialogue facilitation trainings that equipped local leaders with essential community-building skills.

Our signature **Neighborhood Conversations** program flourished through collaboration with the Danvers and Beverly Public Libraries, hosting nine dynamic sessions that brought community members together around pressing questions like, *"How do we make our communities more accessible for all?"* and *"How do we deal with our political differences?"* These conversations demonstrated the power of facilitated dialogue to transform challenging topics into opportunities for mutual understanding.

We proudly co-hosted our seventh annual **Race Amity North Shore Festival** in partnership with the City of Beverly, reinforcing our commitment to racial equity and community celebration. Additionally, our **Community Art and Peace Circles**, led by artist Luba Shapiro Grenader, in partnership with Temple B'Nai Abraham, Beverly Public Library, and the Beverly Farmers' Market, exemplified our innovative approach to combining artistic expression with meaningful dialogue.



Danvers Neighborhood Conversations session

"WE CAN BE LESS POLARIZED THAN WE ARE TODAY IF WE LISTEN TO ONE ANOTHER."

— Neighborhood Conversations Participant

"WAS FEELING VERY DISCOURAGED ABOUT THE RECENT EVENTS IN OUR TOWN AND IT WAS REFRESHING TO TALK TO PEOPLE WHO ARE EMPATHETIC... AND WANT OUR TOWN TO BE A WELCOMING AND ACCESSIBLE PLACE FOR EVERYONE."

— Neighborhood Conversations Participant



7th Race Amity North Shore Festival: Arts Table

"I FEEL THAT PEOPLE LISTENED RESPECTFULLY TO EACH OTHER & COMMENTED THOUGHTFULLY."

— Neighborhood Conversations Participant

"IT IS CLEAR THAT A LOT OF THOUGHT WENT INTO THE AGENDA AND THE FORMAT FOR TONIGHT."

— Neighborhood Conversations Participant



Art & Peace Program

"I'M SO GLAD THAT CONVERSATIONS LIKE THESE ARE HAPPENING IN THE TOWN WHERE I LIVE AND I'D LIKE TO LOOK FOR MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT WITH MY NEIGHBORS AT EVENTS LIKE THESE."

— Neighborhood Conversations Participant

## Strategic Evolution: Embracing Youth Engagement

As we expand our work with young people, we made the strategic decision to pause our **Neighborhood Conversations** and our leadership role in the **Race Amity North Shore Festival**. This pause will allow us to collaborate with local leaders and organizations to reimagine these programs with enhanced youth focus. We are exploring exciting possibilities, including an intergenerational dialogue initiative that would connect youth and seniors in meaningful conversation.

## The Arts as a Catalyst for Connection

We believe that arts-based programming offers a unique pathway for bringing people together —one that welcomes diverse perspectives while elevating our common humanity. This vision aligns with the core values of our founding donor, whose legacy continues to guide our work.

At Ann's memorial service, one of her former students captured this philosophy beautifully: *"Dr. Ferguson made a space for us to be human... she gave me the freedom to create, to ask questions that mattered to me."* These words illuminate the transformative power of combining artistic expression with inclusive dialogue.

In an era of increasing polarization, we believe engaging people through the arts provides a vital alternative to debate and argument. The arts invite us to encounter beauty, complexity, nuance, and profound questions while celebrating our shared humanity. **Together, we create spaces where understanding flourishes and community bonds strengthen.**

Interested in developing innovative programming for your organization?

We welcome partnerships with communities looking to explore ideas for dialogue and cultural programs. Reach out to: **Lauren Barthold: [Lauren@heathmere.org](mailto:Lauren@heathmere.org)**



# Strengthening Our Foundation

BUILDING A BOARD & STAFF THAT FACILITATE STRATEGIC GROWTH



## Propelling Our Strategic Shift with Expertise

Over the past year we've been extremely fortunate to have had the wise support of two amazing consultants who have helped us strengthen our outreach and fundraising plans and embark on a strategic planning process. We are incredibly grateful to **Steve Filosa** (To the Good) and **Teri Riddle** (and her amazing team at The Crossland Group) for helping Heathmere on its journey to a more sustainable future. We are reaping the benefits of having invested time and money to shore up our financial and strategic foundations.

At the same time, our ED, completed her **Certificate in Social Impact Management & Leadership** through the Institute for Nonprofit Practice. These endeavors, along with a highly skilled and diverse new board, puts us in a position of strength as we work to achieve our mission and honor Ann Ferguson's legacy.

## Welcoming Our Newest Board Members



**Tanya Gisolfi-McCready**  
NEW BOARD MEMBER, 2025

A seasoned attorney with over 20 years of experience in legal advocacy and community leadership. Passionate about human rights, social equity, and dignity, she leverages her legal expertise to promote fair policies and practices in educational, civic, and community settings.

As Chair of the **Lexington Human Rights Committee**, Tanya led initiatives to address discrimination, protect human rights, and ensure equitable treatment for all residents. She has also served on several community-based boards, including the **Munroe Center for the Arts**, where she applied her legal skills to strengthen governance, promote equal access to resources, and address employment challenges.

Additionally, Tanya is Vice President of the Board of **Rubia**, an NGO that empowers women artisans in Mali through the creation of traditional hand-dyed fabrics. She works to ensure these women, many of whom are widows and caregivers, have the resources they need to support their families.

A skilled mediator and facilitator, Tanya helps individuals and organizations resolve conflicts and engage in productive dialogue to find equitable solutions. Since moving to Massachusetts, she has remained a steadfast advocate for human rights, using her legal background and deep commitment to service to make a lasting impact both locally and globally.



**Melissa Schultz**  
NEW BOARD MEMBER, 2025

An accomplished marketing professional and arts administrator with 20 years of experience working with organizations of all sizes, from small, all-volunteer nonprofits to major institutions with multi-million-dollar budgets. Melissa's marketing approach finds synergy between storytelling, strategy, and infrastructure. She pairs strategic vision with impactful narratives, while building scalable marketing infrastructures that streamline operations.

As Director of Marketing at **Portsmouth Music and Arts Center**, Melissa amplifies the organization's mission, builds community engagement, and fuels programmatic growth. She is particularly passionate about supporting the organization's commitment to making arts education accessible to everyone.

Previous roles include: Department Administrator for **Phillips Exeter Academy's Department of Theater and Dance**; Director of Marketing Communications at **Relation Insurance Services**; Director of Communications and Development at **UC Berkeley's Department of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies**; Capital Campaign Associate at **Chicago Shakespeare Theater**.

Melissa holds an MFA in Arts Administration from **DePaul University**, a Professional Editing Certificate from **UC Berkeley**, and a BFA in Acting from **Missouri State University**.

## Our Board & Staff



**Hadley Stena Camilus**  
BOARD MEMBER, 2024



**Peter Rudd**  
BOARD SECRETARY, 2018



**Bob Stains**  
BOARD MEMBER, 2024



**Marc Hazel**  
BOARD MEMBER, 2024



**Pilar Perez Serrano**  
BOARD PRESIDENT, 2018



**Sahar Ullah**  
BOARD MEMBER, 2024



**Tanya Gisolfi-McCready**  
BOARD MEMBER, 2025



**Melissa Schultz**  
BOARD MEMBER, 2025



**Lauren Swayne Barthold**  
FOUNDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## Celebrating Six Tremendously Rich Years of Service: Godwin Nnanna

WE ARE SAD TO SEE GODWIN NNANNA LEAVE OUR BOARD IN 2025

Godwin came to us with a lot of dialogue facilitation and non-profit experience and has supported so many of our programs over the years in both design and facilitation, from our Neighborhood Conversations to Race Amity. In addition, he has offered advice and help for some of our grant applications.

Godwin left to devote more time to the new nonprofit he recently founded: the New Immigrant Multi-Service Center (NIM Center). Although he's left our board, this is definitely not a goodbye! Godwin has already invited us to offer a dialogue training for the NIM Center's African Story Telling summer program for immigrant youth. We are making plans to collaborate on a summer dialogue camp next year!

Thank you, Godwin for your friendship, and for your wisdom and skill that have strengthened so much of our work!

## Our 3rd Nevins Fellow Summer Intern Spotlight

We were honored to have had our 3rd Nevins Fellow Summer Intern from Penn State University! **Andriel Tabolo** spent 2 months helping our with our dialogue programs, trainings, grant research, and more. Our interns not only gain valuable experience in dialogue facilitation and non-profit management, but we also seek to provide them with mentorship and networking opportunities. We love our interns who bring us so much energy and talent!

Thank you, Andriel!



## Get to Know Our Board & Staff.

Scan QR Code to visit:

[heathmere.org/people-and-friends](https://heathmere.org/people-and-friends)



Thank You for Your Generosity

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH BEVERLY, MA  
THE CROSSLAND GROUP

- Partners
- CITY OF BEVERLY  
BEVERLY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
PEABODY INSTITUTE  
LIBRARY OF DANVERS  
BEVERLY FARMERS MARKET

Grants



Treasurer's Report 2025  
(January–October)

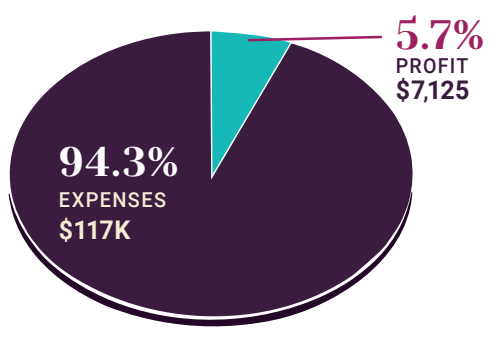
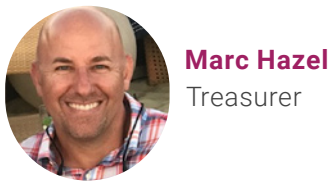
2025 has been a meaningful year for Heathmere. Thanks to the generous endowment from our founder, Ann Ferguson, we’ve been able to take a thoughtful step forward. With guidance from The Crossland Group, the board has worked closely to shape a strategic plan that reflects both our mission and our momentum.

One of the most exciting outcomes is our renewed focus on working with and training teens and young adults. We’re expanding this work into more towns, reaching more middle school, high school and college students. The energy around this initiative is real, and it’s rooted in our belief that young people deserve spaces to reflect, connect, learn from each other, and grow.

It’s important to note that while the endowment provides a strong foundation, it doesn’t replace the need for ongoing support. Like every nonprofit,

Heathmere depends on annual giving to sustain operations, respond to emerging needs, and build a model that can truly last. Donations remain essential—not just for today’s work, but for the long-term health and reach of our programs.

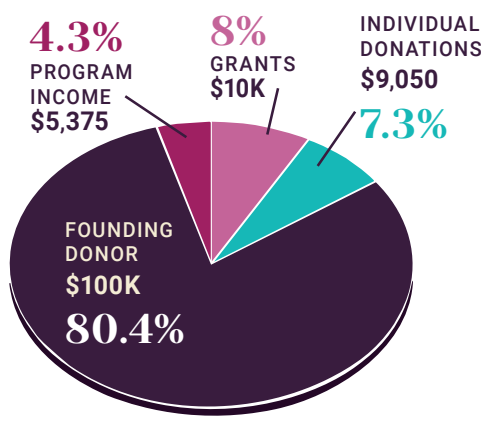
As treasurer, I’m excited to see our programs flourish, our partnerships deepen, and our culture of engagement continue to evolve. With continued support from our community, I believe Heathmere can become a lasting force for cultural engagement and youth empowerment.



Profit & Loss:  
INCOME: \$124,125  
EXPENSES: \$117,000

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TOTAL PROFIT  
\$7,125



Revenue Streams:  
GRANTS: \$10,000  
INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS: \$9,050  
FOUNDING DONOR: \$100,000  
PROGRAM INCOME: \$5,375

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TOTAL INCOME  
\$124,425



Support the courageous & compassionate exploration of our differences and our common humanity.

We're grateful to all of you who invest in our work, including those who support us through individual donations, private foundations, corporate sponsorships, and donor advised funds.

Looking Forward  
IN 2026 OUR GOALS ARE TO

- Connect with 20 New Individual Donors
- Develop Two New Foundation Partners
- Expand Our In-School Curricular Programs to Two New Schools
- Create One New Art-Based Program
- Expand our Dialogue Fellows Program
- Collaborate to Develop a Summer Dialogue Camp
- Establish an In-School Dialogue Club

Invest in Courageous Conversations

Young people hold the power to bridge our divided world. Your support equips youth with dialogue skills to listen deeply, engage across differences, and collaborate for civic change.

Join us in building the next generation of bridge-builders.

The Power of Your Donation

\$50  
Pays 1 of our trained youth to facilitate a public dialogue

\$100  
Pays for 1 in-school dialogue club meeting

\$500  
Pays for 1 dialogue training for a youth organization at no cost to them

\$1,000  
Pays a stipend for one of our young adult dialogue fellows

\$5,000  
Allows us to integrate our dialogue content into a middle or high school course



To make a donation, scan the QR code or visit: [heathmere.org/give](https://heathmere.org/give)  
You may also fill out and return the enclosed envelope.

**A courageous and compassionate exploration of our differences and our common humanity.**

**A fierce and loving commitment to deep belonging and rootedness.**

These are just a couple of Ann's values that Heathmere seeks to emulate in our programs. In closing, let us hear from two of Ann's former students who spoke about her legacy at her July memorial.

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Ann questioned traditions that purposefully or unconsciously excluded others. She looked to voices often peripheralized in middle class and church cultures, and she elevated those voices... Ann remained committed to building our community, to empowering students to live their best lives, to building bridges across ideological fault lines rather than accept an "us"/"them" mentality.

— CHRIS WESTRATE  
*Ann's former student*

Ann was deeply rooted to place and people, to a purpose, and this poem she wrote about her home makes me think about roots, and connections, and all the goodness that comes from really knowing where you belong.

— PILAR PERÉZ SERRANO  
*Ann's former student and colleague*



**Heathmere  
Center**

FOR CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

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[heathmere.org](http://heathmere.org)

**I've opened my windows to...  
the great horned owl's midnight scream,  
the softer dialogue of leaf and limb  
that steadfast winds precipitate:  
these are the voices that feed  
my poem, this the place  
that roots me.**

— ANN D. FERGUSON  
*a poem about settling in into her home  
on Chebacco Lake*

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