

## Circles for a Renewal of Culture – Rudolf Steiner Branch of Chicago

### The Social and Healing Impulse of Ita Wegman and Karl König – The Future They Inspired February 22, 2019



Dottie Zold and Elizabeth Roosevelt Weeks with Henry T.'s Threefold Flag for the United States– Schreinerei 2013

After the death of Rudolf Steiner it was said of the young doctors that they were striving to *'bring about a Michaelic renewal of civilization in the shortest time possible.'* Between the years 1928 and 1933 the curative education work began to be noticed by local governmental welfare organizations. Ita Wegman set up 'social welfare associations' and Dr. König was among the signers on Siegfried Pickert's letter found in Das Goetheanum: *"Rudolf Steiner has given us the possibility of offering healing help to the numberless souls who, without our work, would atrophy and sink deeper into decline in terrible inner city conditions. Despite great difficulties we need to overcome on this path, we wish to further this social deed in the secure knowledge that Rudolf Steiner gave us this task out of the spirit of anthroposophy when he founded curative education. It has become apparent that our curative education work awakens warm interest and understanding even in people who otherwise have no relationship with our anthroposophic movement."*

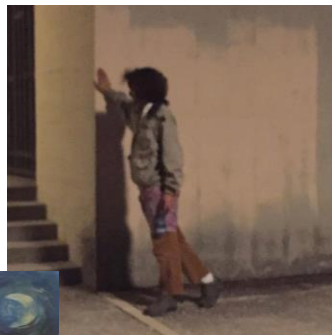


Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily mural in Chicago's Elderberries Threefold Cafe created by Frank's grandmother Olifet – inspired by Hermann Linde's original.

In February of 2013, at the Schreinerei in Dornach, Elizabeth Roosevelt and Dottie Zold held their first collaboration, hosting a conversation on the social impulse of Ita Wegman on her birthday. Once back in the United States they were inspired to go on a journey they called 'Have Seeds, Will Travel: A Journey Into the Heart of Anthroposophy'. They traveled the United States across the highways and byways, interviewing Steiner students with initiatives ranging from biodynamic farming to prison outreach as well as those taking up quiet inner work far from fellow anthroposophists. Dottie and Elizabeth were inspired by meeting elders of our movement such as Maria St. Goar in Tennessee, who selflessly offered her translations with the proclamation, "I work for free or not at all!" and Eve Olive in North Carolina where we took up the saying whenever in doubt 'Be like Eve!'

'Two traveling anthroposophists' was their calling card and in their back pocket was 'Into the Heart's Land' by Henry Barnes along with volumes of poetry from Christy Barnes. During this journey, these two friends began to speak about the possibility of seven cafes and seven curative houses in the United States that would be like 'Grail Castles' — 'fortresses' as Ita Wegman shared that Rudolf Steiner had called them in conversations in 1924. It was while Elizabeth and Dottie were in Vancouver with the most beautiful Camphill, The Cascadia Society, and shepherds Patricia Smith and Ruth Oslund that the connection between Ita Wegman, Karl König, and their own shared work began to flower more fully. In the lives of Wegman and König lie key inspirations, seeds of courage to meet the future with a creative community impulse.

## Where to from here? Circles for a Renewal of



Frank arriving in Dornach for the first time in with the Youth Section in 2015 Section in 2016.

Frank Agrama and Dottie are initiating circles of conversation, inviting youth and elders from around the world who have been able to work harmoniously in past gatherings during some pretty tight circumstances: collaborations forged in the fire a bit, they might say!

The Circles will focus on the possibilities of creating Have Seeds Houses and Urban First Aids across the United States, cultivating a space to harvest the gifts that each generation brings. John Bloom and Elizabeth Roosevelt will hold the space as Bridge Builders through deep listening.

Our hope is to then share with the wider community and to hear further questions and thoughts for creative healing spaces working in urban cities across the United States and hopefully the world.

*"... In England I was trying to set up a center where people might be able to live in freedom: the ideal which Rudolf Steiner showed to be the ideal for humanity. But these efforts seem not to have borne fruit. What I wanted, and regarded as salvation, was for a living circle of wakeful people to form around the prevailing death forces and give rise to new life: a circle consisting as it were, of fortresses and Grail castles in the different countries – where people live but are at the same time so mobile that they can move from one place to another. To realize this truly seemed to me a new alliance of Michael, whereby one can bring something new into the world in order to make possible the new life seeking to emerge. Yet realizing it seems to meet with great difficulties. ... Whether such a thing will succeed or not depends of course on whether enough people can really become aware of the need. ... Without complete support,*