



# FALL GIVING & NEWSLETTER

November 2023

*The Ashmere Project community pushes society's boundaries for radical self expression, equity, and inclusion. Together we prove that a sense of belonging is one of the most important pieces of the human experience.*

## A Letter from the Directors

We could not have hoped for a better summer together. Thank you to all who donated their resources and time to make our second retreat such a success.

While many of us are lifelong friends who spent countless years together at previous camps, 2022 was the Ashmere Project's inaugural summer. It marked our first time gathering in Western MA, planning and directing a two week retreat for adults at Berkshire Lake Camp, and putting on an original musical production at the '62 Center at William's College. 2022 established a strong foundation for us to build on in 2023.

This summer, we continued to engage with and grow our connections with arts and cultural organizations, businesses and community partners in the Berkshires; we had the capacity to welcome new friends with and without disabilities to the retreat; we again were able to waive the need for tuition or finances for travel, hosting over eighty attendees free of cost to them; we had the time of our lives and made wierd art that we are super proud of; and most importantly, we deepened our bond as a community and sharpened our vision for the future.

Our retreat is all about being present with one another. Because of the generosity of our donors and supporters, we are able to cultivate a space that is safe, fun, beautiful and truly extraordinary; where everyone is engaged, loved, respected, and belongs. There is truly nothing more rewarding than seeing our friends, new and old, so profoundly devoted to the celebration of individuality, self expression, and life itself, in all forms.

We see sustaining and nurturing this community as our lifes' work. We will host our third retreat at Berkshire Lake Camp in August of 2024. It is our earnest hope and dream to gather in the mountains every summer, sink our roots into the arts and cultural community there, and to expand our year-round programming. This winter, we have dedicated time toward our organization's strategic planning for this coming summer and beyond. Stay tuned— there are big, exciting things on the horizon for the Ashmere Project!

We thank you with our whole hearts,

Julia, Maggie, Mike & Jojo



## WHAT OUR COMMUNITY HAS TO SAY...

*The Ashmere Project is wonderful and makes my heart feel better. **My friends there feel real and that makes me loved.***

*-Olivia August*



**CAMP IS FUN!** *I love all the activities and that there is always a role for me in the play.*

*-Sam Wood*

**Our son is extremely well taken care of at the Ashmere Project** *while spending a joyous time with friends!*

*- Julie Romero*





*What I like most about camp is the play, walking and talking with friends, and going out to eat together. **Mostly, what I love is getting to see all my friends who are like family.***

*-Sam Stoddard*



*...**The sense of family and community you feel is magical and one I believe everyone should experience.***

*-Sam Smith*

*There are very few times in life when you can be your truly unadulterated, authentic self and camp provides the perfect environment to do so*

...



## What is the Ashmere Project?

The Ashmere Project is an organization that provides residential retreats and programming for adults with and without disabilities. Our mission is to nurture a community of friends who create art; celebrate diversity; and foster inclusion, independence and equity.

Our community is made up of some new comers and largely long-time friends who spent many years together attending a camp on Martha's Vineyard. In Fall of 2021, we decided to branch off and start something new. In the summer of 2022, we hosted our first retreat.

Each summer, we gather as a loving community on Lake Ashmere in the Berkshires for two weeks of fun and collaborative creativity. We swim in the lake, do classes around our site, visit museums, get out in nature, play, make music, create art, have new experiences, and write and perform an original musical at Williams College.

It is expected that everyone, disabled or not, participates in their own way and supports one another. Volunteers are paired up one-on-one with someone with a disability and assist with activities of daily living, including providing accommodations, promoting independence, ensuring safety, and cultivating fun!

The Ashmere Project runs 100% on donations. No one pays or gets paid to attend. The retreat's cost is completely covered by the generosity of our donors and in-kind gifts.



## How can you support us?

**Make a donation of any size online or by mailing a check. Visit our website for more info.**

<https://www.ashmereproject.org/make-a-donation>

Checks can be mailed to:

The Tulgey Wood  
60 Weld Hill Street Apartment 2  
Boston, MA 02130

Please put "The Ashmere Project" on the check memo. While we currently accept donations through our fiscal sponsor, The Tulgey Wood, all donations to the Ashmere Project are allocated entirely to us.

**Make an in-kind donation for items we will need next summer:**

- Accessible Van Rentals
- Movie Theater Tickets
- Golf Cart Rentals
- A Special Meal Out
- An Icecream Party
- Beach Toys and Chairs
- Kayaks
- Pizza or Ice Cream Party
- Costumes and Art Supplies

## Can't get enough of us?

Follow us on instagram  
@ashmereproject

Check out our blog  
blog at <https://www.ashmereproject.org/campblog>

Watch our original musical "Hard Knock Life

<https://youtu.be/jD5oJGEC-KQ?si=2kRe6ML9L-UtSpHq>

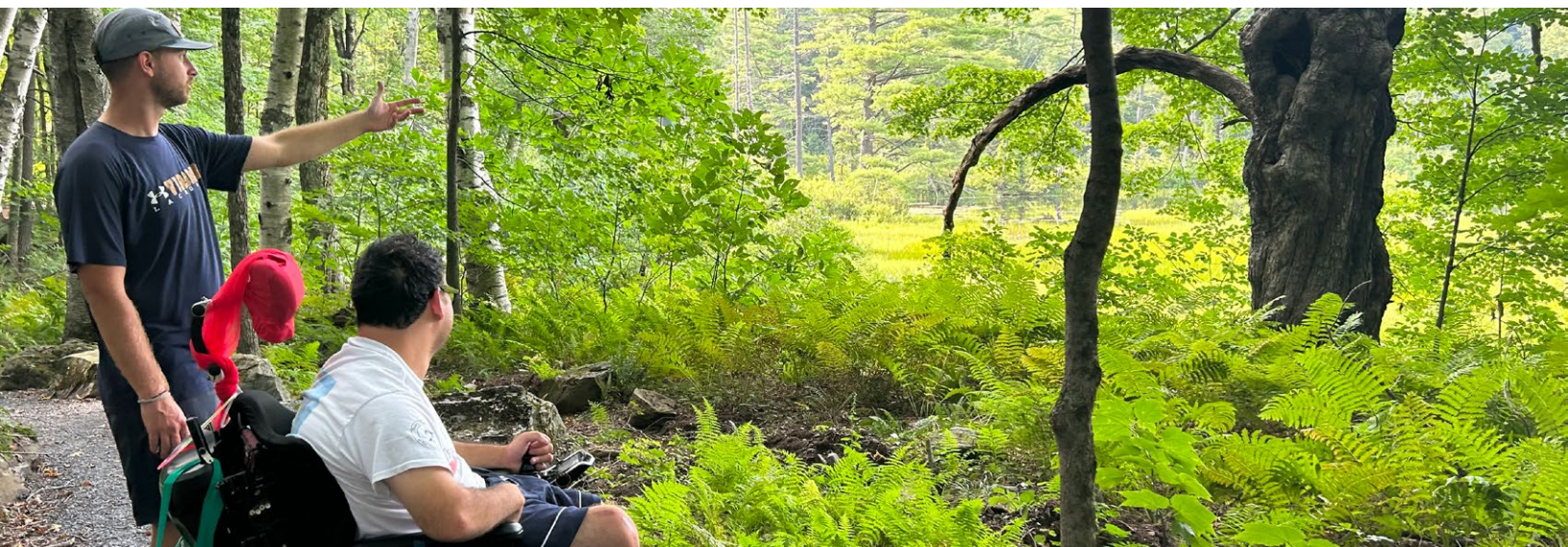
Questions or want to volunteer?

**Contact us!**

**Ashmereproject@gmail.com**

## Special thanks to:

- Williams College '62 Center for Theater and Dance
- Berkshire Lakes Camp
- Tanglewood
- Jacob's Pillow
- Mass Moca
- Topsy's Treats
- Hangar's Pub
- K&M Bowling
- Baker's Golf
- Full Well Farm
- Our Donors
- Our Fiscal Sponsor and Dear Friends, the Tulgey Wood
- Our Beloved Volunteers







A short story  
by Myles  
Brawn-Husband



This is a story about a whale who, at his core, is a jolly, joyful, stud. During the year, the whale lives in a smaller pond. It's a hectic little pond full of other whales. He doesn't always feel fulfilled. There are always other whales eating his crustaceans, not giving him privacy, and shunning his creativity.

But once a year, the whale swims upstream to a very special lake in the Berkshires. In the lake, there are a ton of other incredible sea creatures. When the whale arrives at the lake, he is bombarded by glee. He moves into a Sea Cave called Cliffside cabin, where he is met by his boys. Right away, the activities begin. The excursions are plentiful, and through the gathering, the whale feels less isolated than he does in his small pond back home. And at the end of his vacation upstream, the whale and his friends put on a Shakespearan-like play for the masses. It's full of fun, laughter, and wackiness.

At the end of the two weeks, unfortunately, the whale must swim back downstream. But he has gained a new perspective on how to deal with his isolation in his small pond back home. He has two families.







**THANK YOU**