



# COLLEGE GUILD

*Celebrating 20 Years of Building Community Beyond Prison Walls*



## *In This Special Issue*

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### **The Road Ahead:**

**Celebrating 20 years of building  
community beyond prison walls**

September 16th, 2021, 6:00pm  
Wolfe's Neck Farm, Mallet Barn  
713 Wolfe's Neck Rd. Freeport, ME  
Register online today!  
More info pg. 4



In the spirit of our  
20th, we've  
highlighted 20  
pieces of student  
work!  
See if you can find  
all 20!



#1: Phoc Nguyen, College Guild Student

## Marking 20 Years of Work & Celebrating Our Founder

College Guild has used this newsletter over the years to share with you the impact of our work on the many imprisoned students we have served. With this Anniversary Edition, we recognize our founder's commitment to shine a light into the hearts of any incarcerated person who wished to engage with our courses and readers. We hope you'll enjoy what you find here and be inspired to continue to be a part in whatever way works for you.

*cont'd p. 5*

# From Mary Malia, Executive Director

There are many organizations that work with prisoners in this country, some small and others large. All of these organizations are seeking to lift up the incarcerated person so that they might find a better path forward in life when they are released.

College Guild has taken a unique approach to this work through our model of using nontraditional correspondence courses and volunteer “readers” who provide encouragement, honest feedback and a good dose of respect and dignity. These are things everyone of us need to be well in the world. Our students are often denied these simple human comforts.

The last three years of working with Julie and learning her approach, vision and dreams for creating change in the lives of our students has been an exceptional experience. She is gentle, firm and definite in the approach she has used in developing our program. With her clear vision added to my experience using data to better understand our impact and message, we’ve made a good team. It’s rare for a founder and executive director to get along as well as we have. It’s been delightful! I’m going to miss her.



**#3: Turk, College Guild Student**

Working with simple data points we eliminated the 800 names on the waitlist in the last year. Now anyone that writes asking to enroll, receives an enrollment packet within 30 days of that request.

None of this happened in a vacuum. Hundreds of people have stepped up over the years to volunteer their time and donate their money to support this work. Today, it's you I want to celebrate and thank, just as much as we celebrate Julie's work. She wouldn't have it any other way - we don't do this work in a vacuum, but with you.

Prisons won't be going away and the United States won't stop incarcerating people at numbers far beyond any other country in the world anytime soon. Our services will be needed for many years to come.

This year we need your support more than ever. Your donations shine a light to even more imprisoned people whose lives and hearts will be changed by the work of College Guild.

Thank you for being here, for reading this and for caring enough to give again to this special cause.



**#2: Kevin D., College Guild Student**



**#4: K. Wright., College Guild Student**

## *In Memory:*

**\$25 from Anne & Andrew Strum in Memory of Barbara Cady & Marjorie Hollands**

**\$25 from Barbara Doughty in memory of Jerry Conway**

## *In Honor:*

**\$500 from Raymond Randall and \$100 from Walt & Linda Kaup in honor of Julie Zimmerman**



**#5: Anthony K., College Guild Student**

# From Alaina Cellini, Vice Board Chair

## The Next 20 Years

My name is Alaina and I'm a reader and the Vice Board Chair for College Guild. My interest in College Guild stemmed from my passion for access to education. I first found out about College Guild as part of the Maine Association of Nonprofit's Emerging Leaders program. I attended one of CG's Board Meetings as part of my training and instantly knew that I wanted to spend more time working with CG and their Board. A few months later I joined as both a reader and volunteer.

2021 is College Guild's 20th anniversary. This amounts to 20 years of building a community beyond prison walls. College Guild doesn't ask students why they are in prison. We don't require students to pay for our courses. We don't require students to have prerequisites. We provide access to free correspondence courses to any incarcerated individual that wants to participate. We provide the opportunity to build connections with our volunteer readers outside of prison.

In the next 20 years I hope we can continue to bring College Guild to more students and volunteers. I hope we can build our programming to create diverse and modern courses for our students that allow them to engage in the world as it continues to grow and change. I want to be part of this growth and progress and encourage anyone that wants to further support incarcerated individuals to get involved, as well. I want to ensure that our courses remain free and accessible. These are components of College Guild's program that are unmatched by other education programs in the prison system. Beyond all of this, I hope we can continue to be an inclusive and respectful space for our students to learn and connect, just as we have for the last 20 years, and will for 20 more.

## Volunteer Spotlight

When I started volunteering, I began as an office helper. What I learned first was what a remarkable organization Julie Zimmerman had created. Back then, she kept all the records of students who were taking courses, and those on the waiting list (500+). She calculated postage, pasted on stamps, and did everything that needed to be done. Much of that work is done by office staff now, but in the beginning it was Julie and volunteers.

As a reader, I learned the students were amazing, open to challenges, and often gave unexpected and thoughtful responses to questions. Their choice of subject was interesting too, sometimes a familiar or comfortable topic like Families but often an unknown area of knowledge like Greek Mythology.

There are too many people in prison for reasons that don't make sense and being a CG reader has reinforced that feeling. The students I have encountered deserve all the help we can give them and helping via CG is rewarding in ways I would never have anticipated.

-Patricia Spock  
College Guild Volunteer



#6: K.Wright, College Guild Student



#7: Michael Lutz, College Guild Student

*What I'll remember most is the overwhelming amount of generosity, talent, humor and gratitude shown by the least respected men and women in our society."*

- Julie Zimmerman, Founder

# 2020 Impact Report



We have served over 7,000 students since our founding in 2001. Each point on this map indicates that we've connected with at least one student in that location.



#8: Rickee C.,  
College Guild  
Student

250  
Active Volunteers

500  
Active Students

667  
Enrolled Students in 2020

2860  
Units completed in 2020



College Guild is open to all incarcerated people regardless of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, details of sentence, or socioeconomic status.



Women



Non-White



LGBTQ+

## The Road Ahead: Celebrating 20 years of Building Community Beyond Prison Walls

Join us for cocktails and tasty tidbits as we celebrate 20 years of work, congratulate our founder on her retirement, and learn what the future holds for College Guild.

Questions? Please reach out to [info@collegeguild.org](mailto:info@collegeguild.org)!



September 16, 2021

6:00-7:30pm

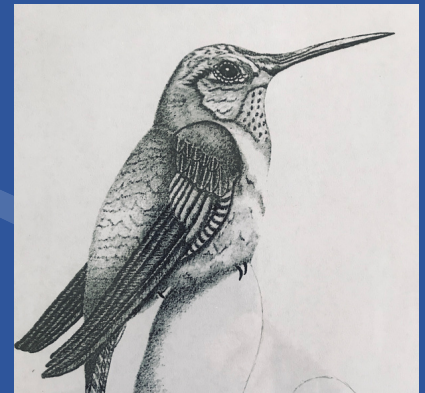
Wolfe's Neck Farm, Mallet Barn

713 Wolfe's Neck Rd. Freeport, ME

Tickets: \$10.00

The purchase of your ticket comes with 1 free drink ticket to toast the road ahead!

Visit  
[www.collegeguild.org](http://www.collegeguild.org)  
and  
register today!



#9: Chris G., College Guild Student

Our Thank You Committee - a special group of students share their thoughts about Julie's impact in their lives.

CG has been an oasis to explore the Voice Within each of us giving us the unexpected to let our minds See! **Julie tended this garden for us**, & brought it to a point where others can manage the explosions of blossom. Thank you, Julie.

Respectfully, Sean J. White

With Julie's guidance through the many CG courses I've taken, I've become a deliberate writer, while CGs creative language courses filled in those gaps left by books such as "Elements of Style" and "How to Speak and Write Correctly." Julie's warmth in spirit is felt even when she's being stern and authentic in her comments in response to my work. **She is definitely an asset to humankind.**-Trayzon Gilbert, CA

As a CG Thank You Committee member, I will miss the pleasure it has been to assist Julie and CG. I look forward to continuing. **Thank you Julie and all you've done.** You will be missed.  
-Manuel Rosales - CA

Julie was indeed an inspirational leader and I will miss her encouragement. She was uniquely effective and inspiring people to do their best; to be their best. **Her words of wisdom and enthusiasm have made me a better citizen of this place.**-Seth G., TX

Julie, thank you for being there for me in my darkest hours.

Due to your support, and **College Guild, you made it bearable for me.** I love you and will miss you. God Bless!  
*Acosta xxxox*

Julie

You are our College Guild Mother

**Unlike any other!** You helped Us believe and got us farther.

You are God's gift to us prisoners,  
Through Guidance and Education.

Our best wishes are Conveyed in Your Retirement Vacation, We genuinely Respect you and Thank you! For all of your Hard work and Dedication.

*God Bless!*

*By Ruben Rivera*

The past few years have been rough, yet when I found College Guild and all they offer people in forms of educational programs, I did all I could to join their program. There have been times where I've had my patience tried and and felt like giving up. Julie And the staff have encouraged me to not give up, while actually enjoying what I wrote and how I could express myself. I wait for each lesson/unit like a child waits for the ice cream truck, giddy and hungry for what it has to offer. I'll miss you Julie and **thank you for being there and not letting me quit.**

*Thank you and I'll miss you Julie,  
Raymond DeVore*

Julie is a person with such a big heart. She and College Guild help me with my time so much. I joined the thank you committee to help Julie. To help let donors know and see that **their generosity did not go unnoticed.** -Jose M.- TX

Many blessings to Julie as she leaves the college Guild ranks. In the 2 plus years I've been a student, Julie's love and encouragement has shown in her writing and letters. The lessons I've completed have **opened my eyes and have made me want to better myself.** Thanks to the readers' comments also.

Thank you for all you do as well as who you are! Have a blessed day!

-Dale Grace, IN

Dean Julie Zimmerman, You've always been highly appreciated in my book, and you will be greatly missed by us all. **Thank you for giving me back a part of myself I've lost along the way.**

*Sincerely,*

*Christopher Meredith*

Dear Julie,

I've really enjoyed getting to know you over the years - you always had a way of making me feel special. No easy feat in this otherwise dreary existence. **Your mentorship and kindness give me the strength to get through the toughest moments.** For this, I will never be able to thank you enough.

-Ignacio C., IL

## Julie's Lasting Legacy

When a person comes to prison, they become a number in what seems like an endless sea of numbers. No longer a person, they are reduced to a stereotype and a statistic.

Julie and her brother, Clem, not only had a passion for education, but a desire to share that passion with those who needed it most. As a result, their attention was drawn to the prison population and incarcerated individuals around the country. They didn't see us as hopeless, useless, or unreachable as most others do. They didn't see us as a number. Instead they saw a field ready to be sowed. After 20 years and all of the amazing outcomes, it is clear that they have reaped countless harvests.

It has been many years since Clem passed on to what comes next. Clem's life will always be remembered by students like me through the lasting legacy of CG. Now that Julie is retiring, it will become her lasting legacy as well. This legacy of respect and compassion as basic human rights for all people started with a few simple ideas. They believed that education and respect have the power to transform our lives.

To Julie, respect meant treating her students as people--as equals--not only a prisoner, a stereotype, or a statistic. Julie and Clem believed in simple respect and its ability to potentially lower the number of people returning to prison -- and after 20 years, we can all see that they were right. Julie and Clem have helped and touched the lives of so many people through their hard work. 20 years ago this year, Julie and Clem created College Guild, an organization that fused their belief in respect with passion for education.

Not only that, but the last 20 Years demonstrate that College Guild students have a much lower return rate to prison than non-CG students. Along with lower prison-return-rates,



I and other prisoners were afforded other benefits from CG.

Things like lower inmate-on-inmate violence, better interactions between staff and inmates, the development of self-esteem and self-worth, lower disciplinary rates, and the learning of necessary life skills are just a few examples of some of these benefits.

I've grown up in prison. Julie, Clem, and all the volunteers have provided me with positive role models throughout my years in prison. They have been a beacon of light in the darkness, always guiding me away from negative impulses by giving me something to look forward to, a reason to stay out of trouble.

There have been times that I wanted to jump into the darkness, other times it ate me, but I always looked to CG to reorient myself and find my way back to the light. College Guild reminds me that I am a person of worth. College Guild strengthens me. I owe a lot of who I am to CG.

*"They have been a beacon of light in the darkness, always guiding me away from negative impulses by giving me something to look forward to, a reason to stay out of trouble"*

For a number of years, Julie and I worked together on fundraising. Through this work I got to know a little bit about her as a person. She was endlessly optimistic and a powerhouse of a woman. I will forever be thankful that I got to know her. College Guild was a huge vision that would've stopped most folks--they would have said it was impossible. But not Julie and Clem. They made it a reality. I have never known anyone with as much passion and drive as Julie. Through College Guild, she has influenced and blessed me in ways I didn't think possible. Even at 42 years old, I still consider Julie to be my role model, just as I did when I started working with her over a decade ago. When I grow up, I can only hope to be more like Julie.

So, during this time of transition, I hope that this will allow the new director to look back at the past from a different perspective: from my perspective. As the longest continuously enrolled student, I am more than happy to take on the responsibility in helping CG move forward by looking to the past and all that Julie has done for me, for her other students, and for College Guild. While I am nervous to face the future and all the changes that are bound to happen, I take comfort in my past memories of Julie and of College Guild.

Thanks for letting me get this off my chest.

# Student's Written Work on Display

## Poetry Club

### #10: Sad Poetry by Carla W.

I was  
trying to write  
poetry  
while spinning  
down  
the speedy filthy drain of  
sadness

then hope had  
the audacity  
to flicker  
a stream of  
light  
and dust motes  
to utilize as merciful stabilizing  
steps

to pull myself  
up  
from despair  
grab  
a pen and  
write  
myself back to fierce and  
fabulous



#13: Christopher A., College Guild Student

### #12: Rough Patches by Joseph H.

Within the divine architecture of our souls  
We ride the Eternal Highway  
Wishing our paths were clear  
And smooth as diamonds  
But wishes will never birth diamonds.  
Time and pressure do.

### #11: Time and Life by Axochi L.

Time and life  
I rode them bareback  
Since those terrible twos  
And the troubled teens  
Jumpin' erected school fences  
Hiding under bridges  
Gallopin' wildly into streets  
Disregarding rules  
Trampling cornstalks  
Early years  
Under the influence of peers  
Time and life, out of control.

Time and life  
I've seized them  
With my poetic soul  
Through rusted out bars  
Neruda offered a bridle  
With which to guide them  
Paz provided the saddle  
To comfort my journey.  
I gallop respectfully  
Onto those paths  
Established by modern society.  
I control this mustang  
With love. I guide this pinto  
With patience. I feed them  
Apples of hope and sweet  
Grains of liberty.

## Diary Entries:

### "Put yourself in someone else's shoes..."

It lurks in front of me. 10 meters of beast before I crash into the depths of its liquid mass. Rails reaching out supposedly to guide me yet fear rises as I go further and further up and into their arms then the arms eject. I'm left standing on the tongue of the beast. Breath echoes past me: "Come on", as if they were miles away. The tongue flicks and I'm in a second of purgatory.

OH this is going to hurt. Splash – bellyflop!

#14: -Joseph A.

One day long ago I was imprisoned. Everything I knew, loved or owned was taken from me; I was outcast. Endless days and forever nights are all I know now. My jailer tells me how lucky I am just to be alive, but is this living? I put on a happy face and blow through the straw that propels my wheelchair.

#15: -Ray S.

I'm having a hard time understanding the thought process of this individual. He makes bad decisions over and over, and I'm not quite sure if he is learning from his mistakes. I turn away from the mirror to face another day.

#16: -Anthony W.



#17: Stephen D., College Guild Student

# Three Women Who Cared

By: Julie Zimmerman



**Doris Buffett 1928-2020**  
Photo Credit: NYT

Every non-profit, no matter the size of the budget, struggles with fund-raising. At three points during College Guild's history, the bank account was looking alarmingly anemic.

**Crisis #1:** enter Doris Buffett, sister of Warren, who had a summer cottage in Maine. Her Sunshine Lady Foundation was funding college education to men incarcerated at the Maine State Prison. I immediately sent a note and was stunned to receive a call. No nonsense, Doris named the day, time and place we could meet for lunch. Three of us presented the CG program and asked for \$36,000 over 3 years if we could match \$6,000 in fund-raising every six months. She got up from the table and simply said "OK."

**Crisis #2:** enter Carolyn Harrington, a friend from my Quaker Meeting. Her husband, Avery, had stipulated in his will that she make a donation to the charity of her choice. She knew of College Guild, but wanted more information, specifically what CG needed most. At the time, overwhelmed with too many responsibilities, I replied, "an administrator." Carolyn generously donated the funds to make that possible for a whole year.



**Carolyn Harrington 1930-2020**

**Crisis #3:** Caroly Wilcox's generosity arrived out of the blue! We had no idea who and why this woman had made such a large donation, and continued to do so on a regular basis. I later learned she knew of CG through an article in my college alumni bulletin, (thank you David Treadwell). She had also gone to Swarthmore and was impressed with our work. Caroly, one of original founders of The Muppets, was known in the office fondly as The Muppet Lady.

These three women recognized the importance and value of respect and education for the incarcerated. Without them, I doubt College Guild would be here today.



**Caroly Wilcox 1931-2021**  
Wilcox with Kermit at the Jim Henson's Legacy Amphibian alumni reunion in December 2011  
Photo credit: Brad Fraggie

## A Big Thank You to Our Board Members Over the Last 20 Years!

Board members are the most important volunteers in any nonprofit. They do the hard work of establishing an organization with an eye on the future while their hands are on the work needed today. Thank you!!

- |                  |                    |                      |                        |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Lee Applebaum    | Bob Harvey         | Nancy Payne          | Jamie Sylvestri        |
| Bunny Andrews*   | Carolyn Houghton   | Dennis Perkins       | Ryan Szantyr           |
| Michael Bamani   | Eliza Hutchinson   | Sophia Pfeiffer      | Morgan Taggart-Hampton |
| David Bellows    | Suzanne Johnson    | Wallace Pinfold      | Jo Ann Teranova        |
| Chuck Booth      | Perry Jordan       | Jami Ream            | David Treadwell        |
| Cullen Brownson  | JoJean Keller      | Patty Rolfson        | Bob Whyte              |
| Mike Caron       | Ann Kibbie         | Adria LaBolt*        | Sue Wild*              |
| Alaina Ceillini* | Linni Kral*        | Kathleen Lacasse     | Deja Williams          |
| Dave Chipman     | Jasmine Long       | Alisia Leavitt       | Daisy Wislar           |
| Hanna Condon     | Victoria Lowrie    | Janet Lohmann        | Christine Yip          |
| David Farrington | Connie Magistrelli | Tiffanie Lockett*    | Emily Youdsnukis       |
| Jacki Fickes     | Alex Majercik      | Jennifer Raab Wells* | Jennifer Zhang         |
| Linda German*    | Jim McCarthy       | Walt Rosen           | Julie Zimmerman        |
| Mary Gilles      | Tekla Miller       | Andrew Ryer*         |                        |
| Alex Godleski    | Brad Mitchell      | Tricia Sheldon       |                        |
| Deb Gould        | Diane Nichol       | Cristopher Sifontes  |                        |
|                  | Mitsuki Nishimoto  | Nancy Simoli         |                        |



#18 Raylon A.,  
College Guild Student

thank you

\*Current Board Member



# A note of appreciation from our students to you...

Dear Donor,

Hello. My name is Ray and I am I College Guild student. I'm writing to thank you for your generous donation that makes it possible for College Guild to help people like myself. I would like to tell you a little bit of myself and just how College Guild helped me.

I was arrested at 17 years old and have been imprisoned for 28 years this December. When I was placed in Pelican Bay State Prison at 18 years of age, I quit on life because I thought it quit on me. I was a bad person who managed somehow to become worse. I spent the next 22 years

being one of the worst inmates in the California prison system. I spent 17 years in the SHU where inmates are segregated for the safety of all. Ironically it was in that setting that I was introduced to College Guild, which irrevocably changed my path.

The glimpse into the outside world and the un-confining feeling that education brought, coupled with the care and compassion of complete strangers who were willing not only to share this but also their own time,

was, and is, awe-inspiring!

I have gone on with the learning process. I am now a model inmate; the vice chairman of my AA group; enrolled in community college; a member of Criminals and Gang Members Anonymous; and much more. I owe this to a free course that College Guild offered to a struggling person. Yet above all, I learned the value of being of service to others. This is what your donation means, thank you!

#19: -Ray, College Guild Student



#20: Raylon A., College Guild Student

## Donate to College Guild Today: Ways to Give

**Support Our Mission & Double Your Donation**

**Send in Your Donation Slip Today!**

To honor 20 years of amazing work and to support our continued growth, we're challenging the College Guild community to help us raise **\$20,000!**

If this goal is met by our **September 16th** celebration, the College Guild Board will match your donations with an additional **\$20,000**, helping us reach our \$40,000 campaign goal!

**\$40,000 Goal**  
**The Road Ahead:**  
*Celebrating 20 Years of Building Community Beyond Prison Walls*

### New Ways to Give

**The College Guild Legacy Society**

*4 Planned Giving Options*

Visit

[www.collegeguild.org](http://www.collegeguild.org) to view our full **Planned Giving Guide**

### 1 Bequests

Gift a portion of your estate to the College Guild Endowment through your will or trust.

### 3 Retirement Assets

Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA) and 401(k)s, are often the most heavily taxed assets in an estate and can be the most tax-burdened assets to leave to your heirs, making them ideal for charitable giving.

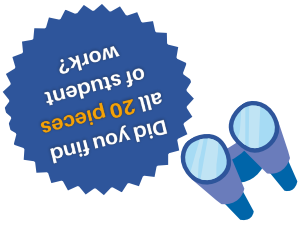
### 2 Life Insurance


Name the College Guild Endowment as a beneficiary on an existing policy or a new policy. Depending on your situation, portions of your premiums may be immediately tax deductible.

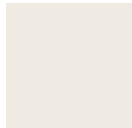
### 4 Bank & Brokerage Accounts

Adding the College Guild Endowment as the "transfer on death (TOD)" or "pay on death (POD)" beneficiary for all or a percentage of a bank account, brokerage account, or a certificate of deposit.

*The information provided in does not constitute specific financial, legal or tax advice. Please consult your attorneys and/or financial advisors regarding your particular situation.*



 | **COLLEGE GUILD**  
Educating Incarcerated People for 20 Years  
PO Box 696  
Brunswick, ME 04011



*College Guild's mission is to provide free correspondence courses that connect incarcerated people with a community beyond prison walls, fostering a mutual respect through a shared passion for learning.*