

### **Chelsea Green, Charleston, SC - at WBRC for the month of February 2017**

"After leaving university and living at home with my parents for two years, I spent one month at the Well Being Retreat Center (WBRC) which offered me the opportunity to find meaningful work, exceptional mentorship, and many precious moments of serenity in nature. The Center's mission statement is 'to promote harmony with nature, wellness of body, and peace of mind' and I can say with certainty that these intentions are woven throughout every aspect of the WBRC cloth. This is not an internship of 'busy work', but of meaningful contributions to a cause much greater than oneself.

Don and Patty, the Directors and onsite managers of WBRC, are far more than managers; they are mentors. By watching them operate the center, I saw how effortlessly they take on situations without making them into problems. I saw how they handle each day's work with presence and grace, teaching those around that it is possible to bring a peaceful presence into any situation. It was through observing Don and Patty that I realized it is possible for work and life to come together harmoniously. I consider this a unique and invaluable lesson for it is not one I learned in school, nor have I come across it in the professional world.

To this day, the lessons I collected from Don, Patty, and the Well Being Retreat Center are still present in my own work and home life. I highly recommend the WBRC to anyone looking for a unique and meaningful work experience immersed in 160 acres of spectacular, untouched Tennessee wilderness.

### **Michel Ishee - Knoxville, TN - 3 months at WBRC Spring 2017**

"The time I spent at Well Being was unexpectedly invaluable. After spending a month and a half at a monastery during an intense period of searching, I ended up at Well Being with the idea that I would be there for a week or two to reassess my situation before moving off to another monastery. Within a few days of being there, however, the richness and maturity of the place sunk in and I began to realize that this would be where I would spend my time instead.

The days unfolded with a refreshing naturalness. The formula and ceremony that largely dictated my life and practice slowly began to fall away and in its place was the simplicity of my experience of life and how it presented itself to me in that moment - no form or filter needed. With this, I started to learn to appreciate myself and my life for how it actually is. It seems that this is one of life's greatest gifts.

In addition to my introspective triumphs, the people at Well Being were a gift as well. Don and Patty were always there to support, love, and guide me when I looked to them with an issue or question, but they would never intrude. I also made so many good friends during my time there, including the retreatants who were always so grateful, open, and kind. It was a joy to watch their faces glow as they lined up for the amazing meals that I got to help make happen.

All in all, my time at Well Being was not always easy, but it was invaluable and I'll never forget my time there. As I put it to Don and Patty before I departed, I feel like it helped give me my life back."

**Salwan Cartwright-Shamoon - Belfast, Northern Ireland - six months during Sept 2016 to May 2017**

I spent a total of six months at the Well Being Retreat Center. Having just finished a four-year university degree in Classical Music beforehand, my time at the center came at a pivotal point in my life, and my experience there was very special indeed.

The center is run by two open, clear and fundamentally loving people – Don and Patty. I had the opportunity to live and work with them during my time at the center and this is something that I will always cherish. I also had the opportunity to spend time with two other interns. My time spent with them was always loving and fun, and being of similar ages we were really able to relate to each other, and to where each of us was at, in our own respective journeys.

The most important thing that I took away from my time at WBRC has two parts to it: (1) The truth of who I am, or the thing that I was searching for, is right here already, constantly waiting to be acknowledged or recognized, and (2) It is me, and only me, that can cover up this recognition of truth. There are three main ways I found myself covering up this recognition: (a) by holding (subtle) beliefs to be true on some level; (b) [acting out of] previous unconscious conditioning; and (c) by not being completely honest about something.

When I first came to WBRC, my relationship with music was such that I wanted to be finished with it, to do something else, and not look back. However, it became clear to me by the end of my time as an intern that music was something that I could not part company with. I was grateful to have had the opportunity to sing on numerous occasions to different groups of people attending the retreat center. I learned that what I brought to each performance in terms of honesty and vulnerability was altogether more significant than any concerns I had with the technical aspects of the music. This insight has allowed me to

return to music in a way that represents what I value most in life, and has enabled me to engage with music in a way that is honest, exciting, and fulfilling.

Some of my most enjoyable moments at WBRC came when cooking in the commercial kitchen with Don, Patty, and others. I have always had an interest in food and flavors, but my time at WBRC allowed me to develop my cooking skills and confidence in a spacious kitchen facility with high quality ingredients, some of which are grown on-site. My experience in the kitchen taught me how to effectively work and communicate with others and how to commit to completing something and then take pleasure in watching other people be well nourished by the food that I had helped prepare.

I am confident that if one's intention is pure, there is much that can be gained from working at the center and with the people who support it.

**Salwan Cartwright-Shamoon - Belfast, Northern Ireland - another month during Dec 2017 to January 2018**

“Something that I experienced in my time recently at Well Being was a sense of selfless service. It is quite a paradox really. On one hand the majority of the work I was doing was not for any personal gain; and yet the majority of the work I did gave me a true sense of joy, fulfillment and genuine happiness, especially at being able to work to, and stretch, the boundaries of my productivity and creativity”.



Photo of Don, Patty, Salwan, Michael and Chelsea