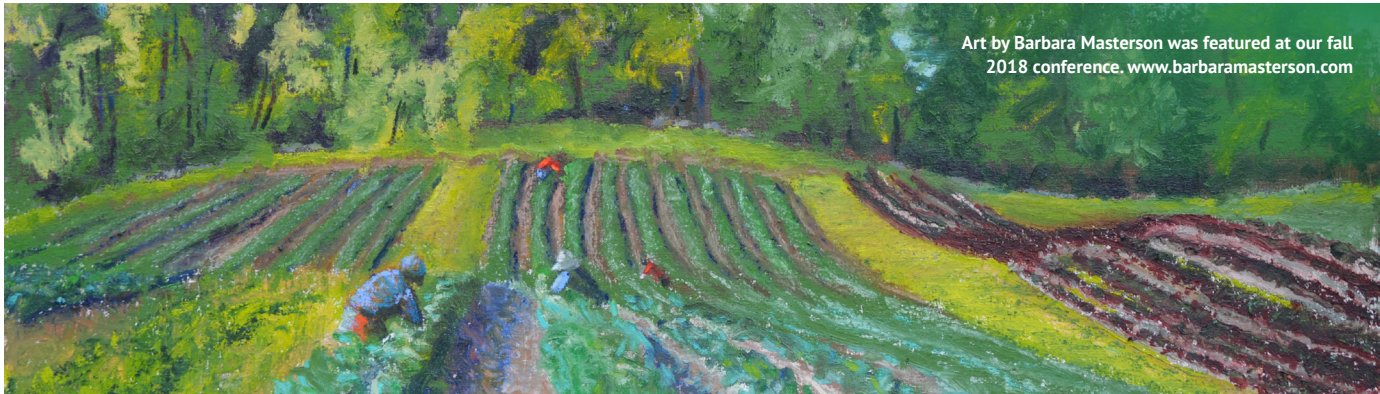




# Mohonk Consultations

*"Let's talk  
it over at  
Mohonk."*

DECEMBER  
2019



Art by Barbara Masterson was featured at our fall 2018 conference. [www.barbaramasterson.com](http://www.barbaramasterson.com)

## Convening Farmers, Farmworkers, Gleaners & Peacebuilders

This year, Mohonk Consultations revisited our founder's vision and the themes that have woven through past conferences and programs. Our Spring Forum explored the challenges facing small farmers and farmworkers in the Hudson Valley. In June, we celebrated Stiles Najac with our Distinguished Achievement Award for her leadership in the region's food security and gleaning movement. Finally, our November conference reached further back into history, as we partnered with Mohonk Mountain House to celebrate its 150th anniversary with a three-day conference on sustaining peace.

All three events brought together motivated and curious attendees who learned, exchanged ideas, and shared intentions to confront the challenges facing our region and our communities. We hope the energy of these programs helps attendees find their way to new collaborations, positive actions, and successful outcomes. We're certainly energized and inspired as we plan for the year ahead.

## Supporting Farmers & Farmworkers in the Hudson Valley

### 2019 Spring Forum

"How much are you willing to pay for your produce?" was one of the many questions raised at our Spring Forum held on April 7 in the Mohonk Mountain House Parlor. The forum explored opportunities to advance sustainable and just farming in the Hudson Valley, with diverse perspectives from growers, farmworkers, distributors, and farmworker advocacy and support organizations.

The issue of small farmers' economic fragility in the current food system was echoed by Matt Igoe, panelist and Rondout Valley Growers Association (RVGA) board member. "If RVGA doesn't find markets to sell what our farmers have produced, then corporate interests in food markets will dominate even more," he said. Opportunities for small-scale farmers to expand to commercial distribution are often stymied as well by arduous inspection requirements.

Farmworkers also face challenges. Many are socially isolated, experience financial hardship, and have no voice in the politics and economics of

*"Along with the threats of climate change and development pressure, farmers are facing changes in consumer interests. We need to focus on marketing."*

— Matt Igoe, Rondout Valley Growers Association

farming. Organizations like Rural Migrant Ministry and Mid-Hudson Migrant Education Program help farmworkers and their families integrate into the community and access transportation, school, and health care.

Forum attendees and panelists engaged in roundtable discussions. Many felt strongly that everyone living in the Hudson Valley would benefit if our communities were more welcoming to farmworkers and their families. A summary of the forum and a list of roundtable ideas are available to read on the Mohonk Consultations website at [mohonk-consultations.org](http://mohonk-consultations.org).

## Honoring Stiles Najac

### 2019 Distinguished Achievement Award

Mohonk Consultations presented its annual Distinguished Achievement Award to Stiles Najac on June 2, and all who attended were moved and inspired by our awardee. Since 2006, Stiles has served as the Food Security Community Liaison at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Orange County.

Under Stiles' leadership, the Food Security program includes the GleanMobile and Farm to School project, and continues to expand its ability to prevent food from going to waste on local farms. Through partnerships with other gleaning programs, as many as 300 volunteers may show up to harvest, transport, process, and distribute fresh produce to community organizations, food pantries, emergency shelters, and soup kitchens. The program now has regional partners covering eight counties and has grown from 70,000 pounds to 300,000 pounds of rescued food each year.



Stiles in the "Gleanmobile."  
Photo courtesy of CCE  
Orange County

Stiles' impactful work was recognized by colleagues and special guests, including NYS Senator Jen Metzger; Patricia Claiborne of Orange County Cooperative Extension; and Kevin Smith of Sycamore Farms in Middletown, NY. Brian Obach, SUNY New Paltz Sociology Professor, congratulated his former student for "making a better world that's more peaceful, just, and less destructive."

## The Spirit of Peacebuilding

### Continuing a Legacy—Mohonk Mountain House's 150th Anniversary and a Weekend of Peace

Our three-day November 2019 collaborative conference, Creating and Sustaining Peace, extended Mohonk Mountain House's 136-year tradition of work on peacebuilding and was part of a yearlong celebration of MMH's 150th anniversary.

*"Peace is living in harmonious relationship with self, others and all life."*  
— Dot Maver



Some speakers and participants from Creating & Sustaining Peace.  
Photo courtesy Cara Lee

One hundred participants—including regional, national, and international leaders—gathered to discuss efforts to build peace, from community-building training for police and young people in Florida to Dr. Sakena Yacobi's passionate keynote about establishing schools for girls in Afghanistan. Philip Hellmich's keynote reflected on the need for integrated peace training that encompasses mindfulness, forgiveness, communication, and organizing.

Saturday's sessions were live-streamed and viewed by people in 18 states and six countries, including New Zealand, Canada, Germany, France and Cyprus. Attendee Peter Lane stated "The SPIRIT of the conference will be with me for a long time. It was calm, respectful, and purposeful."

Video clips of our speakers are available on our website: <https://mohonk-consultations.org/2019-fall-conference/>  
We will host a follow-up forum in April 2020.



Masooma Rahmaty, Laraine Mai, Dr. Sakena Yacoobi  
Photo courtesy Dot Maver

### Dear Friends,

For 40 years, Mohonk Consultations has planted seeds of long-term, positive environmental and social stewardship. Our mission is to support the healthy interrelationship and sustainability of life, and through your participation and collaboration, we have.

Founded in 1980 by A. Keith Smiley, Helen Vukasin, and others associated with The Mohonk Trust, Consultations' programs have carried on the Smiley family's legacy. Beginning in 1883, Mohonk Mountain House hosted annual conferences that focused on reforming federal American Indian policy, which continued through 1916. The family also established the annual International Arbitration Conferences, held 1895 through 1916. Meetings and conferences on building sustainable peace have continued, including the 1971 seminars and discussions for United Nations diplomats featuring then UN Secretary, General U. Thant; our 2016 conference, *Realizing a Culture of Peace*; and this year's conference in collaboration with Mohonk Mountain House, *Creating and Sustaining Peace*.

We want to acknowledge and thank our Board member, Brad Berg. For the past seven years Brad has served as our Board Chair. Brad also chaired the committee that organized *Creating and Sustaining Peace*, our most ambitious conference to date. I am honored to accept the torch from Brad and will be guided by his leadership example.

Next year is our 40th anniversary! Join us in the Parlor for a lively celebration on Sunday, June 14, 2020. We will also honor Rondout Valley High School Spanish Teacher, Diana Zuckerman, and her Human Rights Club students with our Distinguished Achievement Award. Save the date!

Warmest,

*Marty*  
Marty Irwin

Chair, Mohonk Consultations Board of Directors



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 @MohonkConsultations



**SAVE THESE DATES**

**April 5, 2020**

Spring Forum on  
 Peacebuilding

**June 14, 2020**

Mohonk Consultations  
 Distinguished  
 Achievement Award  
 and 40th Anniversary  
 Celebration

**November 14, 2020**

Annual Conference (TBD)

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**We are very grateful for the hard work and collaborative spirit that our retiring members brought to the board.** Thank you to Ron Brand for the wisdom and diligence you brought as our Treasurer; Anne Finn, for sustaining our collaboration with Phillies Bridge Farm; and to Dan Freedman, for helping us “talk it over” with your SUNY New Paltz students. **We extend our deep appreciation to the foundations, businesses, partnering organizations, and individual donors** who help make our work possible. For a full list of donor acknowledgments, please visit our website, [mohonk-consultations.org](http://mohonk-consultations.org)