

Artist Housing @ Bloom, a Center for Arts & Ecology

"I began working with Piti Theatre in 3rd and 5th grade at Colrain Central School creating productions like "Olde Coleraine" and "The Bald Eagle Story." Later, I joined their Valley Playwright Mentoring program for teens and continued to develop my creativity and leadership skills which I put to use leading the Mohawk Trail Equity Alliance. Now I am pursuing a career in engineering as a "woman in STEM" and have been awarded a scholarship to a great school. I think being able to share the podcasts I made with Piti and their letter of recommendation made a difference in my college success. I hope many more young people get to work with them!" - Rylee Hager, Colrain

"Piti Theatre Company builds community, makes everyone feel welcome and provides a safe place for children to be known and themselves." - Susan Pelis, 2nd Grade Lead Teacher, Sheffield Elementary School



The barn-theater and surrounding garden area in fall

troupe held on to a long term vision of their own space in the Hilltowns for creating,

Background

In 2008, Piti Theatre began serving Franklin County with their first environmentally-themed performance *Elmer and the Elder Tree*, which went on to tour New England with the support of the Community Foundation of Western MA. Although the years that followed included significant work in local schools and after school programs as well as international touring, the

performing and giving back to the community. In 2021, they bought the farmhouse and 17+ acres on the left of the image above. In, 2023, they purchased the barn and land on the right with goal of creating an Arts & Ecology Center (ptco.org/vision). One year later, the non-profit Piti Theatre Company, Inc. completed its' first capital campaign, raising \$300,000+ for the barn to theatre conversion and land purchase.

A New Opportunity

While the renovation work is ongoing, Piti is already offering opportunities for the community like Godeliève Richard's choreography and dance workshop (ptco.org/dance) and Bee and Blossom, a homeschool program for 0 - 8 year olds (ptco.org/bloom).

In December, 2024 Piti learned that their neighbor who sold them the barn and land in 2023 was going to sell another seven acres next to the center which the town had designated as a "flag lot" meaning an approved building lot without the customary road frontage but with sufficient acreage set back from the road. Unfortunately, the potential buyers of the flaglot were not enthusiastic about the driveway sharing agreement stipulated in the Art & Ecology Center deed. Long story short, Pit Theatre Company, Inc. has had their offer accepted to purchase the property.



This would:

-increase the amount of flat, open space around the barn for expanded outdoor events and much needed parking

-give Piti Theatre Company unrestricted access to the 17 acres above the barn (now 23 acres) for development of collaborator and



A Bee & Blossom student explores the woods

visitor accommodations (cabins, tent sites, yurts, tiny homes, etc).

-provide a beautiful building lot with a view across the valley at the end of an 800 foot driveway which has already gone through all the necessary wetlands approvals, consulting and design.

Nitty Gritty

The goal of Phase One of our campaign is **\$215,000.**

Purchase Price: \$160,000

Costs to finish road: \$55,000

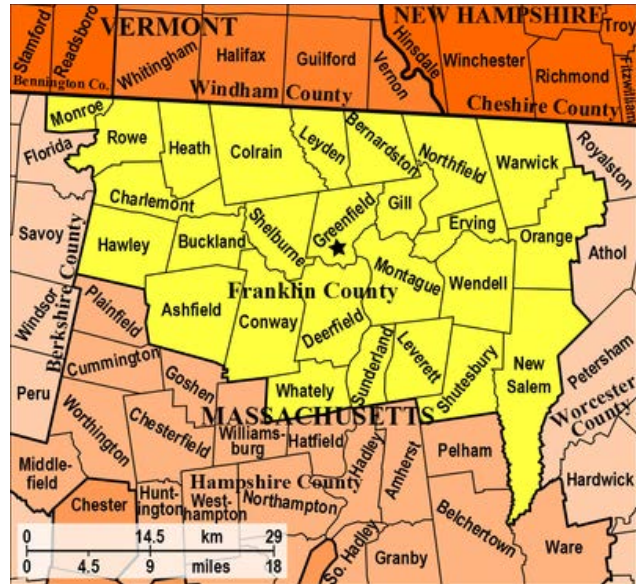
Total: \$215,000

Evolving Vision for Development

- 3 - 5 tiny houses for visiting artists, staff, guests seeking an arts-rich "digital detox" experience
- Additional building site available on land above the barn which we already own
- Additional 10+ acres available for development (campground, yurts, fancy "tree houses", cabins, etc.

County Context

Franklin County's core institutions were either created or have been led by children of the 60's and 70's - people who are accustomed to thinking outside the box. There has been pushback against commercial solar and gas pipelines in recent years. Simultaneously, there is an existential question looming: population decline. The town of Charlemont has lost about 10% of its population over the last decade but about 60% of the population under 30 has also left town. Charlemont, like Franklin County more broadly, is searching for ways to brand itself, stabilize declining school enrollments and find ways to keep young families in the area. Housing is perhaps the biggest issue - there is simply not enough of it and certainly not enough of it is "affordable."



Our argument, which we have begun to make to local leaders, is that our area's natural beauty and *the opportunity it still provides to live in a relatively healthy place*, is our most precious and most marketable asset. The leaders of the County's institutions understand that creative thinking and institutions are needed if the region is to thrive.

Giving

Opportunities for donors include:

- Being recognized on a wooden plaque inside the barn-theater
- Tours of the site
- Piti Performances / Screenings in their community

Piti Summary

- Mission: Piti (pronounced "pea-tea") is an ancient Indian (Pali) word translatable as "joy." Piti programming plants seeds of joy, sustainability and justice.



Learning to share . . . honey from our Center's bees.

- 5,000 engaged/year, 50,000+ engaged since 2008
- 4 – 5 school residencies/year + ongoing partnerships with local schools
- Past touring in Europe, across the US and Canada
- Mentoring Programs for [teens](#) and [emerging artists](#)
- 15 - 20 public performances/year
- Long term partnerships with Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, Mohawk Trail Regional School District, Holyoke Media, Community Foundation of Western MA, Greenfield Community College, etc.

Timeline

2025

- June - August: Early phase of Capital Campaign
- September 2025 - June, 2026: Capital Campaign
- September, 2025: Begin writing grants for housing construction
- June 30, 2026: Campaign Completed



Planting seeds of joy, sustainability and justice.

2026 - 2027: Fundraising for housing construction and construction begins on first structures

Piti Board

- Sue Samoriski (President), Founding Executive Director, Mary Lyon Foundation (retired)
- Sylvia Orcutt (Treasurer), Registered Lead Financial Services Officer, Peoples United Bank (retired)
- Whit Sanford (Clerk), Consultant and Director of Arms Library “Put a Roof On It” Campaign
- Nina Marshall (Member), Senior Director of Monitoring, Evaluation and Outreach, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund

How to Donate

- All Donations are tax-deductible
- Online: www.ptco.org/donate
- By mail: Piti Theatre Company, 224 Avery Brook Rd., Shelburne Falls, MA 01370 (please note Capital Campaign in the memo line)

Thank you for considering Piti Theatre among your many giving options and please do not hesitate to contact Artistic Director Jonathan Mirin with any questions:

jonathan@ptco.org or (508) 439 - 2069