

## **An EMR-S Refuge @ Bloom, a Center for Arts & Ecology**

*"As someone who has suffered from EMR-S for many years and have managed to have relatively stable housing, I can't imagine what it would be like to be isolated, sick and not have a safe place to be. I've already enjoyed low EMF arts events at Bloom and launched a farm store in the adjoining building next to the theatre (my partner and I own an organic farm eight minutes up the hill). This center could go a long way towards normalizing and raising awareness about the importance of low EMF spaces." - Meredith Wecker, Heath, MA*

*"For years now, I have been largely unable to work, or sometimes even think straight. Chronic fatigue has become so normal, that I forgot what it was like to walk without weariness . . . Three days in this place, visiting Jonathan and Godelieve, and there is no fatigue. I am emotionally and cognitively clear . . . A refuge for EHS-people is not just a nice thing to do. It is a way to re-enable so many people lost to us, and empower them to change the world for the better." - Brad Decker, Hayward, CA*

*"Canary in a Gold Mine" is a major contribution. My hats off to Jonathan and the creative team who created this piece of art that has major impacts of importance to all of us." – David Carpenter, MD, University of Albany School of Public Health*



A view of the barn on the right and original farm house on the left which also houses Piti's office and storage spaces.

### **Background**

In 2010, Godeliève Richard, co-founding Artistic Director of international touring troupe Piti Theatre Company, became inexplicably ill. After being taken to the emergency room in Boston, she returned to her home in Shelburne Falls, MA but remained continuously dizzy for two years as her nervous system gradually deteriorated. Eventually, she understood that she had developed

electromagnetic radiation syndrome (EMR-S) and began to heal. This is the core story of Piti Theatre's award winning documentary *Canary in a Gold Mine* (2023). The private link for watching Canary is here: [vimeo.com/pititheatre/canarysings](https://vimeo.com/pititheatre/canarysings) (password: butterfly). Between 2012 and Canary's release, Piti has repeatedly returned to the theme of electromagnetic pollution in family theatre productions like *To Bee or Not to Bee* (2012), *Innocenzo* (2014) and various shorts and music videos (collected on their sister organization website <https://www.hilltownhealth.org/music-videos/>). In 2021, they bought a farmhouse and 18+ acres in a low EMF location in Charlemont, MA. In, 2023, they purchased the barn and 17+ acres of land on the other side of the road with the goal of creating an Arts & Ecology Center as well as a refuge for those suffering EMR-S. One year later, the non-profit Piti Theatre Company, Inc. completed its' first capital campaign, raising \$415,000+ for the barn to theatre conversion and land purchase.

## **A New Opportunity**

While the renovation work is ongoing, Piti is already offering low-emf opportunities for the community like Godeliève Richard's dance troupe (<https://ptco.org/education/dance-troupe/>) and Bee and Blossom, a homeschool program for 0 - 8 year olds co-taught by two local staff people who suffer from EMR-S themselves (<https://ptco.org/education/blossom/>)

Now we have learned that our neighbors who sold us the barn are planning on putting their remaining 24 acres, two houses, two cabins and in-law apartment on the market. This would roughly double the total number of people who could be accommodated on the property from 10 - 12 to 20 - 22. Updated details about this opportunity are available here: [www.ptco.org/bloom/community](http://www.ptco.org/bloom/community)

## **Evolving Vision for Development on Land Already Owned**

- 3 - 5 tiny houses/cabins on the building site serving artists, EMR-S "stabilization", families seeking a "digital detox"
- 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).



**Note:** Piti intends to seek grants to build housing. There is currently a major state level funding push to address the housing crisis. While this may be seen as a "boutique" initiative compared to building 20 units, Charlemont is not an easy fit for this kind of development so we think any kind of additional housing will be welcomed.

## Refuge Viability

Currently, there are some places on the property where you can make a cell phone call with one bar and others where you can not. On a Safe and Sound EMF meter, there is no visible signal from cell tower coverage.

Over the years, Jonathan and Godeliève have received many calls and emails from fellow sufferers looking for ideas about a safe place to live. Meanwhile, they created Hilltown Health to try and make their part of Western MA safer - - the ten towns surrounding them west of Greenfield, MA are known as the "hilltowns" because of their hilly terrain which is actually the eastern slope of the Berkshires, a cultural and tourist area famous for attractions like Williamstown Theater Festival, Tanglewood, Kripalu, etc.



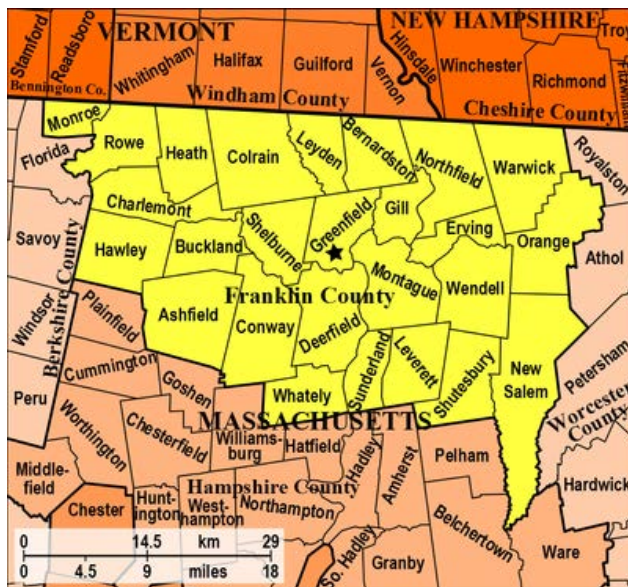
One of Hilltown Health's successful campaigns, Charlemont Town Hall is in the background.

Hilltown Health successfully negotiated a 1500' cell tower setback in neighboring Shelburne in 2021 (known for the artistic village of Shelburne Falls with its' Bridge of Flowers) and then in their hometown of Charlemont, worked successfully for municipally owned fiber to the home (2020) and then an updated cell tower by-law (2024) which includes a requirement for carriers to provide dropped call data to prove a gap in service. This dropped call data requirement may be enough to deter potential applicants who will never willingly provide it - time will tell.

Around 2014, Jonathan began writing op-ed pieces and fighting tower in applications in local communities with about a 50% success rate. These pieces combined with performances directly addressing EMF's (To Bee or Not to Bee, Innocenzo, Canary in a Gold Mine, etc.), "Test Your Device" tabling at the local food Co-op and the newspaper coverage about cell tower fights means that the "average Franklin County resident" has typically at least heard about the issue.

## 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 and are skeptical of corporate "largesse." There has been successful 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. Most leaders still do not understand that the biggest leverage point re: this opportunity is EMF reduction and education. But as we learned when Kent Chamberlin, PhD presented the findings of the NH Commission to the Charlemont Board of Health, they can learn. The Board of Health voted that evening to recommend accommodating Godeliève Richard by requiring that National Grid use fiber instead of antennas to connect their smart grid in front of her home - which is also the location of Bloom.



## **Opportunities for donors include:**

- Naming Opportunities
- Visiting the site
- Screenings/Talkbacks of *Canary in a Gold Mine* 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.
- 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 MA 4 Safe Technology, Friends of Merrymeeting Bay (led by Maine's leading smart meter opponent Ed Friedman), David Carpenter, MD (SUNY Albany, Americans for Responsible Technology, CHD, EHT, etc.

## **How to Make a Tax-Deductible Donation**

- Online @ [ptco.org/donate/](https://ptco.org/donate/)
- By mail: Piti Theatre Company, 224 Avery Brook Rd., Shelburne Falls, MA 01370
- How to make a donation contingent on the purchase going through? Just contact us and let us know your intent. Any donations made before the sale can either be returned or put towards building housing on the property we already own in the event we are unable to purchase the property. We currently have a matching grant from the MA Office of Travel and Tourism that requires we do additional fundraising so any donations received "count double." Contact: [pititheatre@protonmail.com](mailto:pititheatre@protonmail.com), (508) 439 - 2069

## **How to Make a Low or No-interest Loan or inquire about joining the LLC that will make an offer on the property (ie, for people interested in living on site or receiving a percentage of rental income from the site).**

- Email: [pititheatre@protonmail.com](mailto:pititheatre@protonmail.com) or call (508) 439 - 2069
- Loans will include signing a loan agreement with repayment terms, etc. Sample text available on request.