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Press Release

SpiritHouse Inc.
 www.spirithouse-nc.org
 (919) 697-8090
 September 1, 2017

SpiritHouse Inc is pleased to announce the title of our 5th book for The Harm Free Zone Book Study. From September - November 2017, we will expand our book study to the world of fiction through reading *Parable of the Sower* by Octavia E. Butler. In *Parable of the Sower*, Octavia Butler challenges us to push beyond our comfort zones and imagine what preparedness looks like in an ever-changing world.

The Harm Free Zone Book Study, over the past two years, has explored the impacts of prison, redlining, and the utilization of cooperative work to address the impacts of structural racism in marginalized communities. Nia Wilson Executive Director of SpiritHouse statement regarding our previous book studies remains true.

*“A study of this book is a perfect continuation in the development
 of our common language and understanding of the
 impacts of poverty, mass criminalization, systemic racism,”*

We call ourselves Alchemists in SpiritHouse because we believe we already have everything that we need to address our needs, our joys and our ability to thrive. And that it is a matter of aligning what we have to create a world free from the legacy of systemic racism and oppression. Join us as we stretch our minds to consider what we already have to make that world possible.

*“The Destiny of Earthseed
 Is to take root among the stars”
 Lauren Oya Olamina ‘Parable of the Sower’*

In continued SpiritHouse fashion, of bringing more groundbreaking dynamics, we are pleased to announce our partnering with Toshi Reagon and Carolina Performing Arts (CPA) at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Toshi is the inaugural fellow of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation DisTIL Fellowship program launched last year by Carolina Performing Arts. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation DisTIL Fellowship (Discovery Through Iterative Learning) invites artists to UNC’s campus for multiple semesters to collaborate with faculty in a department outside their own area of expertise, providing them the opportunity to gain new insights into questions they have been asking about their work and the world. The DisTIL Fellows will bring the unique creativity and approach of the arts to the work of faculty and students, helping them look at their own work through a new lens. DisTIL Fellows will share the results of their ideas and discussions with the wider community.

A singer-songwriter committed to social consciousness and supporting communities, Toshi Reagon, whose commitment to social consciousness and supporting communities will see her collaborate with Professor Danielle Spurlock in the Department of City & Regional Planning in the College of Arts and Sciences to gain insight into their work studying the impacts of the environment, social policy, government decisions and healthcare on communities. A highlight of Toshi’s residency will be the live U.S. Premiere of her newest work, Octavia Butler’s *Parable of a Sower*. The performances will take place at UNC’s Memorial Hall on November 16 and 17, 2018. Tickets and additional info are available at www.cpatix.org.

For more information, and to join the Harm Free Zone Book Study contact Tia Hall at Tia@SpiritHouse-nc.org.
 For weekly updates on at: <https://www.facebook.com/TheHarmFreeZoneBookStudy>

About [SpiritHouse Inc](#)

SpiritHouse is a multi-generational Black women- led cultural organizing tribe with a rich legacy of using art, culture and media to support the empowerment and transformation of communities most impacted by racism, poverty, gender discrimination, criminalization and incarceration. Since 1999, we have worked from our home base

in Durham, North Carolina, to uncover and uproot the [systemic barriers](#) that prevent our communities from gaining the resources, leverage and capacity necessary for long-term self-sufficiency.

About [Carolina Performing Arts](#)

The mission of Carolina Performing Arts (CPA) is to enrich lives by creating and presenting exceptional arts experiences and connecting them to the UNC community and beyond. Established in 2005 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, CPA presents the very best from the full spectrum of the performing arts: internationally renowned recitalists and orchestras, chamber ensembles, jazz, folk, and world music artists, dance and theater. CPA strives to nurture artistic innovation and the development of new works on and off campus; to challenge and inspire audiences with powerful and transformative performances; and to integrate the arts into the life of the University, embracing its mission of teaching, research and public service.

Carolina Performing Arts contact: Mark Z. Nelson, (919) 966-3834, [http://mark_nelson@unc.edu](mailto:mark_nelson@unc.edu)



Ted Talk

**WHEN BLACK WOMEN WALK THINGS CHANGE/ WALKING AS A REVOLUTIONARY ACT OF SELF-CARE
BY T. MORGAN DIXON AND VANESSA GARRISON, FOUNDERS OF THE HEALTH NONPROFIT GIRLTREK.**

Watch Video [Walking as a revolutionary act of self-care](#)

Tubman Doctrine affectionately named by Dixon and Garrison

The first one:

Do not wait. Walk right now in the direction of your healthiest, most fulfilled life, because self-care is a revolutionary act.

Number two:

When you learn the way forward, come back and get a sister. So in our case, start a team with your friends -- your friends, your family, your church.

Number three:

Rally your allies. Every single person in this room is complicit in a Tubman-inspired takeover.

Number four:

Find joy. The most underreported fact of Harriet Tubman is that she lived to be 93 years old, and she didn't live just an ordinary life; uh-uh. She was standing up for the good guys. She married a younger man. She adopted a child. I'm not kidding. She lived. And I drove up to her house of freedom in upstate New York, and she had planted apple trees, and when I was there on a Sunday, they were blooming. Do you call it -- do they bloom? The apples were in season, and I was thinking, she left fruit for us, the legacy of Harriet Tubman, every single year. And we know that we are Harriet, and we know that there is a Harriet in every community in America.

Study Group Considerations

- Get people involved and talking about the book.
- Share Press Release so they understand the reason for The Harm Free Zone Book Study
- Inform people about the [Facebook page](#) for updates.
- Determine the size capacity for your study group
- Determine the frequency for meeting over the months of September through November.
- Determine the length of time for each meeting and time of day (we suggest two (2) hours.)
- People get hungry. Consider building in snacks or potlucks around your gatherings
- Send out reminders a week in advance of each meeting
- Consider having someone besides the facilitator take notes
- Offer a contact/ sign in sheet at every gathering.
- Consider having people take turns summarizing the assigned reading
- Be mindful of an even exchange so that everyone has access to speak.
- Utilize the **step up/ step up** policy. If someone is an enthusiastic speaker, **invite them to step up and listen more**. And conversely others who might be quite involved as listeners, **invite them to step up and speak more**.
- Be mindful of your group's needs. Do you need translators? Is your meeting space accessible for everyone?
- Set the 'intention' at the beginning of each gathering.

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INSPIRING • OPENING • HEALING • STRENGTHENING • COMMUNITIES

Dates of Importance *

Kick-off Event

- A. Durham - Tuesday, September 12th
- B. Chapel Hill - Saturday, September 16th

Community Gathering

- A. Durham - Saturday, October 21st
- B. Chapel Hill – Tuesday, October 17th

The US Premiere of Toshi Reagon's *Parable of a Sower*

UNC's Carolina Performing Arts - Thursday, November 16th & Friday,
November 17th

Convening Celebration

- Durham - Tuesday, November 28th
- Chapel Hill - Saturday, December 2nd

*Locations and times to be announced and be sure to connect via Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/TheHarmFreeZoneBookStudy> and
<http://www.spirithouse-nc.org/book-study-toolkits>



SpiritHouse
INSPIRING A COMMUNITY OF LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY

Suggested Reading Schedule

Read Chapters 1-3.....September 10th through October 6th
(Covers Year 2024)

Read Chapters 4-9.....October 7th through October 14th
(Covers Year 2025)

Read Chapters 10-13.....October 15th through October 22nd
(Covers Year 2026)

Read Chapters 14-19.....October 23rd through November 4th
(Covers Year 2027)

Read Chapters 20-25.....November 5th through November 18th
(Covers Year 2027)



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Year 2024 - Chapters 1-3

Suggested Reading Schedule
September 10th through October 1

- A. Welcome (snacks and centering)
 - a. Centering / make room for possibilities (breathing, music, poetry, movement)
- B. Group Imagining: Where I'm From
 - a. Materials: Where I'm From Activity Sheet
 - b. Activity: Where I'm From is a SpiritHouse practice that helps us connect with people in our community. This practice is meant to acknowledge the people, places and things that have shaped and influenced the way we move in the world.
 - i. Who are your people
 - ii. Where are your roots
 - iii. When did you come up
 - iv. What was happening culturally and politically
 - c. Share poems with the group. If the group is large, break into small groups of 3-5 people and share)
- C. Chapter Discussion:
 - a. Summary: What topics or themes stuck out for you in these chapters?
 - b. Possible Guiding Questions: Lauren shares a recurring dream.
 - i. Do you have recurring dreams?
 - ii. Do you notice during the dream a recurring theme?
 - iii. Do you try to change or shift the dream?
 - iv. Do you document your dreams?
 - c. If you are creating a community, out of necessity,
 - i. Who would be in it?
 - ii. What would be in it
- D. Closing:
 - a. Gratitude for the courage involved in participating and sharing oneself
- E. Possible Activity:
 - a. Frog Hallow Outdoors Moonlight Paddle:
 - i. Available Dates: September 22 and October 6
- F. Walking and PhotoVoice Prompt:
 - a. When discussing the street kids, Laura asks "What's safety for them anyway". What is safety to you?
- G. Resources:
 - a. Neil deGrasse Tyson: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slvR1QJlpjw>
 - b. The Parables of Octavia Butler, an article in Medium: <https://medium.com/@StuBuSA/the-parables-of-octavia-butler-2905863a3068>

Where I'm From

Write 2-3 lines:

Who are your people? (who are your parents, how many people are in your family, what are some family traditions)

I am from

I am from

About where you grew up (describe something about your neighborhood and your city)

I am from

I am from

About when you grew up (what was on TV or the radio, what are clothing styles)

I am from

I am from

Write about your favorite song/type of music? Why does that music speak to you? What happens in your body when you are listening to it?

Year 2025 - Chapters 4-9

Suggested Reading Schedule
October 2 through October 14th

- A. Welcome (snacks and centering)
 - a. Centering / make room for possibilities (breathing, music, poetry, movement)
- B. Group Imagining: Make a salve (to add to our emergency pack)
 - a. Discuss the ingredients that are present in the salve
 - b. Break down the herbal elements
 - i. What they help with
 - ii. Conditions to grow
 - iii. Where they can be found
- C. Chapter Discussion:
 - a. Summary: What topics or themes stuck out for you in this chapter?
 - b. Possible Guiding Questions –
 - i. Lauren has hyper empathy. What does it mean to you to feel what others are feeling? What is your tendency: to lean in or pull away?
 - ii. Lauren’s friend Joanne betrayed her confidence and told her parents. Why do you think preparing for the unknown was so disturbing? What does ‘change mean for you? Do you prepare for the unknown? If so, how?
- D. Closing:
 - a. Gratitude
- E. Possible Activity:
 - a. Make acorn bread together
 - i. California Parks, Acorn Bread Recipe
http://ports.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=25519
- F. Walk and PhotoVoice Prompt:
 - a. What will we need to survive? Individually? Collectively?
- G. Resources:
 - a. DIY sites:
 - i. Dr Axe: <https://draxe.com/natural-remedies-category/diy-recipes>
 - ii. Don’t Mess with Mama <https://dontmesswithmama.com/100-diy-beauty-recipes>
 - iii. The Nourished Life: <https://www.livingthenourishedlife.com/200-diy-beauty-products>

Emergency Pack Ideas

- Taken from Parable of the Sower
 - A full change of clothes
 - A pair of shoes
 - Matches, preferably waterproof
 - comb/brush
 - Soap
 - Toothbrush
 - Toothpaste
 - tampons/pads/diva cup
 - Toilet paper
 - Bandages
 - Sewing kit
 - Alcohol
 - Aspirin
 - Utensils
 - Can opener
 - Pocket knife
 - Dried fruit
 - Roasted nuts / seeds
 - Dried milk
 - A little sugar and salt
 - Survival notes
 - Several plastic bags in an assortment of sizes
 - Plantable seeds
 - A notebook
 - Lengths of clothesline (paracord, bungee, etc....)
- Our Additional Suggestions
 - Life straws
 - 115+ hour emergency candles
 - Lighter
 - Masks
 - Wind & go lantern
 - Mylar blanket/tent
 - Activated charcoal
 - Pepper spray
 - Pocket chainsaw
 - Solar battery charger
 - First aid kit
 - Survival guide book
 - Emergency drinking water or tabs
 - Duct tape

Year 2026 - Chapters 10 - 13

Suggested Reading Schedule
October 15th through October 22nd

- A. Welcome (snacks and centering)
 - a. Share what your favorite book is.
 - i. Described what moved you about it.
- B. Group Imagining: Imagine Safety -Exercise
 - a. Materials: Your Imagination
- C. Chapter Discussion:
 - a. Summary: What topics or themes stuck out for you in this chapter?
 - b. Possible guiding question – By October, the community is starting to realize what once felt like safety, is not as present. What happens when safety no longer feels possible? Do we stubbornly cling to it or do we allow ourselves to shift/ change with the changing landscape?
- D. Gratitude:
 - a. Closing out
- E. Resources:
 - a. Emergent Strategy by Adrienne Maree Brown p.37 ‘If we accept the scientific and science fictional premise that change is a constant condition of the universe, then it becomes important that we learn to be in right relationship to change’
- F. Possible Activity:
 - a. Break up into groups and write a sci-fi short
 1. Group 1: Apocalyptic Earth
 2. Group 2: Post-Apocalyptic Earth
 3. Group 3: Aliens
 - a. Stories must have plot: cohesive beginning, middle & end
 - b. Characters: At least one main character
 - c. Setting
 - i. Conflict: The place where the tension is
 - ii. Resolution: How it all works out
- G. Walking and PhotoVoice Prompt:
 1. Neither Olamina nor her father cried at Keith’s funeral. Later Olamina describes Cory as being in a walking coma.
 - a. What does trauma look like as an individual? As a collective?
 - b. In chapter 13, Curtis says to Olamina “This place is dying”. What does a community look like when it is dying? What are the symptoms?
- H. Resources:
 - a. Bill Jones: Embodiment: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOSsDHLooi0>
 - b. I Believe That We Will We Win - Rally Cry for VonDerrit Myers Jr
 - i. <https://vimeo.com/110997876>

Imagine Safety

Instructions for the group

Sit comfortably in your seat in a way that you to access your imagination.

Notice how you are feeling in your body and how you are breathing. If you feel comfortable doing so, please close your eyes. And take deeper breaths.

Think of a time when you have felt the safest: be it from your childhood to the present.

- Who is with you?
- What are you doing?
- What does the air smell like, taste like?
- What sounds do you recall?

Hold on to those feelings. Open your eyes as you allow yourself to come back into this space. Breathe deeply together. Ask if anyone would like to share what they imagined. It is alright if people do not recall a time.

Ask if any people recall alarms, police, security guards, surveillance systems and guns? Any of the things that world tells us we need to be safe? Please note that if someone states they had a loved one who is an officer; ask them if their memory is of the person or the position?

What is the difference when safety comes from a sense of love and joy versus a place of fear? What feels sustainable?

SpiritHouse
INSPIRING COMMUNITIES, ONE PERSON AT A TIME

Year 2027 – Chapters 14-19

Suggested Reading Schedule
October 23rd through November 4th

- A. Welcome (snacks and centering)
 - a. Centering / make room for possibilities (breathing, music, poetry, movement)
- B. Group Imaging:
 - a. Materials: Imagination and your whole self
 - b. Activity: Living Sculpture: Grief, Brokenness and Connection
 - i. Grief Sculpture
 - 1. Begin with 2 people create image of Grief add 1 person at a time.
 - 2. What is possible from this place? Where is tension in your body?
 - 3. Have the group take three (3) deep breaths together
 - ii. Brokenness Sculpture
 - 1. Have the last person who joined the living sculpture break off and begin making a sculpture for brokenness. One by one join the sculpture. Understand that as living beings we always have a choice to and can always change
 - 2. What is possible from this place? Where is there tension in your body? How do you feel
 - 3. Have the group take three (3) deep breaths together
 - iii. Connection Sculpture
 - 1. Repeat 1-3 from above
 - iv. Shake it off. Return to seats. Discuss exercise
 - c. If possible have someone document the images of revenge and forgiveness and send them to Tia@spirithouse-nc.org
- C. Chapter Discussion:
 - a. Summary: What topics or themes stuck out for you in this chapter?
 - b. Possible guiding question – What is your understanding of Earthseed?
 - 1. How do we heal from the trauma that we experience? As individuals? As a collective?
 - 2. Harry asked Laura to share the unthinkable, her writings? What is one thing that you would like to share with people about you?
- D. Gratitude:
 - a. Closing out
- E. Resources:
- F. Possible Activity:
 - a. Target practice: Triangle Shooting Academy: <http://triangleshootingacademy.com>
- G. Walking and PhotoVoice Prompt:
 - a. What is God?
- H. Resources:
 - Supporting a survivor of sexual assault
<https://iambecauseweare.files.wordpress.com/2007/02/survivor-support-booklet1.pdf>

Year 2027 - Chapters 20- 25

Suggested Reading Schedule
November 5th through November 18th

- A. Welcome (snacks and centering)
- a. Centering / make room for possibilities (breathing, music, poetry, movement)
- B. Group Activity:
- a. Materials: Internet
 - b. Activity: Water is Scarce and people are capitalizing on scarcity.
 - i. When you observe your community, what scarcity do you see
 - ii. Watch [Pumzi](#)
 - iii. What role does Pumzi's recurring dream have in her desire to see what is beyond?
 - iv. Pumzi is encouraged to continue taking her dream suppressants. In what ways are we discouraged from dreaming/ visioning what is beyond our present reality?
- C. Chapter Discussion:
- a. Summary: What topics or themes stuck out for you in this chapter?
 - b. Possible guiding question:
 - i. When asked what she hoped people would take from reading Parable of the Sower, Octavia offered the following,
 1. I hope that people who read the Parable of the Sower will think about where we seem to be heading- We the United States, even we the Human species. Where are we going? What sort of future you want to live in? If it isn't, what can we do to create a better future? Individually and in groups, what can we do?
-Octavia E. Butler Pasadena, California May 1999
 - ii. Discuss the above
 - iii. How did seeing Parable of the Sower, the Opera by Toshi Reagon, impact you?
- D. Gratitude:
- a. Closing out
- E. Resources:
- a. Water Protectors of Standing Rock
<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/01/tribes-standing-rock-dakota-access-pipeline-advancement>
Flint Water Crisis- <http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/04/us/flint-water-crisis-fast-facts/index.html>

CELEBRATE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENT

Convening
Durham- November 28th
Chapel Hill- December 2nd

Gather for community event where you share activities, collages, pictures and poems with fellow readers in the Harm Free Zone Book Study.

Remember to Dance and Laugh.

Continue to envision the world you and your community wish to create where everyone thrives.

Please document your event and share it with us

Email photos to <mailto:Tia@spirithouse-nc.org>



Supplemental Materials

- Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements, edited by Adrienne Maree Brown and Walidah Imarisha
- Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds by Adrienne Maree Brown
- Spill: Scenes of Black Feminist Fugitivity by Alexis Pauline Gumbs
- Pumzi written and directed by Wanuri Kahiu



Octavia Butler Quotes

“Choose your leaders with wisdom and forethought.

To be led by a coward is to be controlled by all that the coward fears.

To be led by a fool is to be led by the opportunists who control the fool.

To be led by a thief is to offer up your most precious treasures to be stolen.

To be led by a liar is to ask to be told lies.

To be led by a tyrant is to sell yourself and those you love into slavery.”

ADD YOUR FAVORITE QUOTES from PARABLE of the SOWER



Supporters of The Harm Free Zone Book Study

Action NC - Durham
 All of Us or None NC
 BLOC NC
 Bull City 150: Reckoning with Durham's Past to Build a More Equitable Future
 Carolina Performing Arts
 Center for Documentary Studies - Durham NC
 Central Park School for Children-Durham NC
 Committee to Elect DeDreana Freeman - Durham NC
 Communities in Partnership Old East Durham (CIP) - Durham NC
 Episcopalians United Against Racism (EUAR) - Durham NC
 FADE - Durham NC
 Forward Justice - Durham NC
 Jewish Voice for Peace - Triangle Chapter
 NAACP Durham NC
 NAACP Youth in College - NC
 National H.I.R.E. Network- New York NY
 NC State – College of Design – Department of Landscape Architecture
 OAR-Durham
 Participatory Defense – Durham NC
 People's Alliance- Durham NC
 Project South- Atlanta GA
 REAL Durham - Durham NC
 SELF HELP Credit Union
 Sister Song NC & GA
 Southern Coalition of Social Justice - Durham NC
 The City Well - Durham NC
 The Heels - reading group NC
Tim-Maps.com - Durham, NC
 Triangle SURJ
 Unicorn Sanctuary Study Group - Durham NC
 Village of Wisdom - Durham NC
 Women AdvaNce



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