



Rooted in Resilience. Nourished in the Arts.

### From the Founder

The realities of racism, oppressive social structures, and the urgent need for peaceful change and collective healing has become undeniable in recent years. As a white woman, I can never claim to fully understand the depths of suffering my sisters and brothers of color continue to endure. I can only speak as a survivor of sexual violence from my youth. I live with PTSD from these experiences in a culture in which hidden disabilities often go unrecognized, belittled, or even denied. To learn about a powerful way sexual violence survivors are breaking the silence right here in Minnesota through the arts, please visit [surivorsmemorial.org](http://surivorsmemorial.org). I am also the mother of a son living with severe developmental disabilities. From these perspectives, I am personally familiar with discrimination, abuses of power, and society's still pervasive underlying attitudes of indifference and even contempt that directly affects the disability community yet today.

The disability rights movement arose out of centuries of atrocities such as rampant sexual abuse, mass institutionalizations, forced sterilizations, and the thousands buried by the state – nameless – with only a number to mark their graves. Read about some of this Minnesota history and restorative work at [Remembering With Dignity](#).

While the days of mass institutionalization is now part of our collective past here in Minnesota, the reality is that individuals living with disabilities and mental health conditions continue to experience violence against them and exploitation in all of its forms at a much higher risk than those living without disabilities. In 2019, the Treat People Like People Campaign [Treat People Like People](#). Was launched by the state of Minnesota. Self-advocates and their allies continue to fight to have representation at the table when it comes to policies and practices that directly affect our lives.

In response to the death of George Floyd, disability advocate and CEO of The Arc MN, Andrea Zuber wrote in The Capitol Connector, June 5, 2020: "As we are dedicated to protecting the human rights of one population, we must be committed to extending that to all populations who have experienced oppression... We are advocates, freedom fighters, rebels, and activists...Not until we can truly process the trauma that has brought us to this point and open our hearts to each other and the humanity in all people, will this end. The first step is that we need to heal as a collective and mutually find ways to restore and move forward together."

As founder of Sacred Grounds Coffee House, it is my hope that Rooted in Resilience and Nourished in the Arts, we may co-create a space in which all people feel authentically safe, welcomed, and supported in creative self expression. When we know and learn from one another's stories of trauma and resilience we can then more authentically move in solidarity with one another; making positive and lasting change possible. Let us together sow seeds of loving-kindness so that mercy and justice may flourish for all.

Sarah McGuiness (she/her) has a BA in Religion and a MA in Aging and Health Ministries. In 2020 she completed a year-long internship with Lutheran Social Service (LSS) Metro Homeless Youth Services (MHYS). She is a practicing Buddhist who is deeply committed to interfaith and cross-cultural community action. She is passionate about human rights, restorative justice, and building resilience through the creative arts.