

## **2018 January 22**

Dear Ocate Cliffs family,

Quick newsletter, just four things.

1. **SAVE THE DATE** - Our autistic retreat for 2018 will be held Sunday 17 June through Sunday 1 July. It will be free and have a focus on building and other work projects. This year we will be joined by international volunteers. Please consider coming. More info to come in March or April.
2. **STAFFING** - Like the idea of a quiet mountain, a cozy fire, and being away from everything? Consider applying to be staff starting as early as March. We can support a few long term staff to help build the program.
3. **FAMILY MOVE** - My partner Crystal and I moved so we are now only an hour away from Ocate Cliffs, making life a lot easier.
4. **SUSIE** - Our neighbor and the only resident on the mountain, Luna Sue (Susie), died in her home at the age of 72 this past November. She was a fiercely independent spirit who lived her life on her terms, surrounded by nature and her beloved cats and dogs. The animals have found new homes.

In service,  
Star Ford, Program Manager



## **2018 February 25**

Dear Ocate Cliffs family,

Our summer retreat is being planned and the dates are set for the last two weeks in June. This year we are combining an international camp through Volunteers for Peace [<https://vfp.org/>] with our autistic family and allies. Here is the announcement with lots more details:

retreat announcement = <http://www.divergentlabs.org/ocatecliffs/volunteer/work-retreat-june-2018/>

Why a combined retreat like this? Sometimes when people put disabled people in groups with non-disabled "peers", they intend for the non-disabled people to model the "correct" way to be, and this sets up a two-tiered community. When I've been in the lower tier of groups like that, I have felt isolated and resented being there. So we are not doing that! Instead we are aiming to keep what is special about autistic space while experimenting with how to bring other people into it gently. Young people exploring a foreign country are rarely the types to take over control, so I expect this to be a community of supportive equals. We as autistic people are usually engaged in some form of "cross cultural" communication when we are communicating at all. In my travels I've often felt the barrier to people in other countries was no more difficult than with Americans. So my expectation is that everyone will be experiencing a similar level of barriers and that will avoid the two-tiered situation. Also, it is just really fun and engaging to have so much diversity and to be able to make bridges across languages and cultures.

Please share the retreat link or this email with anyone who might not be on our mailing list.

For another opportunity to be in autistic space this summer, check out Autspace, which will be held in Michigan in August. This 4 day event centers on prepared presentations in the style of an academic conference, and is also a great place to meet people. [ <http://tinyurl.com/Autspace2018> ]

In service,  
Star, Program Manager

