

Volunteering at *Campfire in the Heart*

by Fran Pegrem

It has been my delight to volunteer at *Campfire in the Heart* during October this year. After attending a retreat there in July with our David's Place community, I felt drawn to come back and be a part of this amazing place.

Being there for a week was a wonderful taste, and we experienced many of the joys of being in Mbantua (Alice Springs), including going out on Country to the Telegraph Station and Simpson's Gap, where we had the opportunity of reflecting on the history of the place and just being in the environment and listening to what it was saying to us. We also were welcomed to both the Uniting and Catholic Church communities and Keith and Stella's home at White Gums.

Being there for four weeks was a really good amount of time because it gave me the chance to get to know the place a bit better, and to really experience the many aspects of *Campfire in the Heart* more deeply. Being able to assist Nicola, the Manager, was a joy and the fact that I was able to be a part of and support the two different retreats really enriched my time there. So many interesting and wonderful people to get to know, so much to reflect upon. Being accepted as a part of



the that little community of Nicola, Jorge and Huss, plus the visitors who came to the Monday evening meditation, the Tuesday Contemplative Book Club and the Wednesday evening pot luck supper and campfire reflection, was precious to me. So many other experiences of welcome and community punctuated my time there, but the enduring memory is of the deep silence, the birds, the magnificent skies, sunrises and sunsets, campfires, spending time in meditation, listening to people and the country. I had a real sense of freedom and joy being there and would love to return.

A few words about volunteering from Judi Taylor...

<https://campfireintheheart.com.au>

Campfire in the Heart welcomes enquiries from those who would like to volunteer, as Fran says, to be part of the small community there, part of the vision for the place, in the ancient and wondrous setting of the Eastern MacDonnell Ranges, 7km from Alice Springs/Mbantua. The details are here Applications to volunteer:

<https://forms.gle/zgS5Z9f4EKDtXcbpp9>

Next year a particular opportunity exists to volunteer as a meditator-in-residence:

- staying a minimum of 2 months, up to 6 months
- a spiritual presence to work with and complement the offerings of the mangers there
- to offer daily times of meditation in the WCCM tradition
- embodying the Benedictine values of hospitality, generosity and humility for all who visit *Campfire in the Heart*.

We are calling for expressions of interest among WCCM meditators both internationally and within Australia.

See below for *Campfire in the Heart* WCCM affiliated retreats in 2024.

Campfire in the Heart WCCM affiliated retreats in 2024 ...

See <https://campfireintheheart.com.au> for more detail and to register

- **28 April-3 May** – 5 day interfaith retreat *Exploring the Pilgrim Path of the Labyrinth, a call to the Sacred Centre* with Donna Mulhearn, Judi and Paul Taylor
- **10 -15 May** – 5 day retreat, with Judi and Paul Taylor, a Christian meditation retreat *Beholding Divine Beauty*
- **11-16 August** – 5 day retreat, with Bernard McGrath osb, *Mind the Gaps or Gaps and Giant Caterpillars*
- **25-30 August** – 5 day retreat, with Bernard McGrath osb, *Desert, Dangers and Divine Disinterest ... the Need to Pray Without Ceasing*

Details will be on the website soon or feel free to email taylor.judi@outlook.com with enquiries.

