

# Circle!

Inspiring Chapin Fans and Friends to Make a Difference

## A Note from Jen Chapin

**Welcome** to the premiere issue of Circle!, a labor of love created by those of us inspired to honor the memory of Harry Chapin by supporting one of the causes he gave so much of himself to -- ending hunger. As you know, my dad founded WHY with his friend Bill Ayres in 1975 and Long Island Cares in 1980 because he felt a keen sense of responsibility -- a responsibility to put his talent, public profile and money to use in addressing the fundamental injustice of hunger in a world of plenty.

My dad was almost insanely driven to make a difference -- I hear new stories all the time about his willingness to "make an ass" of himself for the right cause, and his refusal to be discouraged by setbacks in the uphill battles against hunger and poverty. But the reason we tell these stories again and again, and never fail to marvel at Harry's legendary energy and determination is not just that he achieved so much in such a short life -- it's not just what he did. It is how he did it -- with pure joy, humor, and overflowing humanity. Just as his story songs were pictures of the small kindnesses that bind us amidst our weaknesses, his activism was a demonstration of joyful partnerships, joined together in a good fight. For Harry, the battles against what is wrong in the world

were informed most of all by the celebration of what is right.

All of us at WHY are guided by this spirit today, as we continue the work that Harry started 28 years ago. At its essence, WHY's work is about making connections -- connections between problems and solutions, and connections between the diverse individuals and groups who are working to make a difference in whichever small ways they can. We've got a lot of work to do, but we're having a good amount of fun doing it. We invite you to join us! ●



PHOTO BY MERRI CYR

Jen Chapin  
WHY Board Chair  
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<http://www.worldhungeryear.org>

*P.S. On May 5th, WHY will present our annual Chapin Awards dinner in NYC. We invite all of you to join us in person for this joyful celebration of WHY's programs (see article in this issue). If you cannot attend, we would love to have your participation in the evening through a special page in our dinner journal. For a tax-deductible donation of \$25, we can print your name and your favorite Harry Chapin quote (from speech or song) on a Harry Chapin Tribute page. For a \$50 donation, we will print your quote and also send you our new vivid blue "WHY Fights Hunger" X-Large sweatshirt. Click on [https://ssl-033.imconline.net/world-hungeryear/forms/firm\\_why\\_donors.asp](https://ssl-033.imconline.net/world-hungeryear/forms/firm_why_donors.asp) and make your donation, indicating "Harry Chapin Tribute" and your quote in the comments section. Please keep in mind that quotes must be received by April 13, 2003 for inclusion in the Dinner journal.*



## Volunteerism *by Harry Chapin*



PHOTO BY DION FARRELL

*Editors' Note: Each of us has been moved in different ways by the passion of Harry Chapin as expressed in his songs, stories, and social activism. Here, in Harry's address to the 1977 Nassau-Suffolk Volunteer Conference, Harry reminds us that each of us can make a difference. The editors would like to thank Sandy Chapin for contributing this speech.*

**Most of us** operate in some kind of vacuum. We are all searching for a positive affirmation of our existence; some indication that it matters whether we are alive or not. Extraordinarily enough, people do not realize that the best way of getting this is by dealing with people around them on a positive basis. We need to be in touch with people. We need to reach out and see their eyes and hear what they are saying. The satisfactions that I have received in the last few years are not from gold records, or album successes, or even money I have earned, but from being involved with the meaningful issues that attract the good people. As Pete Seeger calls them, "the people with the live hearts, live eyes, and live heads."

The really truly effective advocates of any position are those who lead with their humanity, and are concerned with universal principles. What makes them effective is that they're not just concerned with themselves and their own kind, but with the problems that affect us all.

I don't get caught on the word "volunteer;" I just say we are in a participatory democracy, where we are all supposed to be armchair experts on hunger, economics, defense, and ecology -- all the various fancy things that the supposed experts are telling us about. If we do not

get involved to that degree, then we are not doing what the American system was set up to do.

Volunteerism is a right, and we volunteers are carrying on the heritage of this country. I, therefore, challenge the people here not to be passive or just pat ourselves on the back and say how wonderful we are, the whole job is to get more people to go out and do it -- not only because volunteering is rewarding, but because it is our responsibility.

We who volunteer are saying that there is something important enough for me to do, no matter if I'm getting paid or not, because life gets down to ideas, as well as guns and butter.

We have seen so many people from the middle class on up in our society basically end up lost because they have put all their stake in life into money, and they have seen how shallow it is. So what I'm saying is when you volunteer, you are doing something that means enough to you to do it for no money -- and you are doing something that is really life oriented.

Without volunteers in our society, the quality of life would immediately drop. However, we must get at our problems by treating the causes and not just the symptoms. Our job is not just to clean up the dirty

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Masthead photo by Diane Maple

Thank you Harry and Jim.

# Jim Chapin Was All Talk... and Action



## As one reads

the remembrances of Harry's brother and former WHY Board Chair Jim Chapin, who died suddenly

of a heart attack on September 30, 2002, a definite pattern emerges. He was among the smartest of the human race. He totally loved his family and friends. He was a walking history book.

And he lived up to the core beliefs that everybody matters and everybody can and should make a difference. Those beliefs are easy to say; but making them a reality is another story. A Jim Chapin story....

*The subway station was crowded one day and an obviously drunk man was lying on the tracks. When Jim arrived on the scene he noticed that nobody was trying to help the guy. So Jim yelled at the man until he moved back to the platform where he wouldn't get hit. It was another perplexing example of people choosing inaction over grabbing the power to make a difference.... if for no other reason than to prevent their subway ride from being delayed for hours had the guy been hit.*

*One of Jim's sons tells a similar story of a cab ride he was sharing with his dad. As they drove, they noticed three young men fighting along a side street. Jim ordered the cabbie to stop the car. Jim jumped out, pulled apart the battling boys and yelled "Come on, come on. You don't really want to do that, do you?" The boys ran off in different directions.... and a potentially serious situation was averted.*

*"When we got back into the cab, we all talked about it on the way home," said the younger Jim. "The thing that amazed me about it is that the cabbie and I had been thinking the same thing, which was that 'somebody should stop that.' The difference was that my dad thought 'I should stop that,' or rather, 'we should stop that.'"*

A friend tells the story when he confided in Jim that his mother was dying of cancer. Again, without hesitation, Jim told his friend to take action with two words of advice: reassure her that she did a great job raising her children, and let her know everything will be all right when she is gone. The friend did as Jim suggested.... and his mother was relieved and at peace when she passed away.

Sometimes words are not enough.... even for a guy who could run circles around all of us with nouns and verbs. ●

*Editors' Note: The following tribute to Jim Chapin, Chair of WHY's Board of Directors for 22 years, originally appeared in the 2002 WHY-Chapin Awards dinner journal.*

**Jim Chapin** is a modest man who doesn't always place high value on his own very impressive accomplishments.

In late-1974 and early into 1975, WHY was being developed by a brain trust: Harry and Sandy Chapin, Bill Ayres, and Jim. Jim helped to form the embryonic WHY, and became a member of the Board at its founding in 1975.

James never intended to be WHY's Chair. He certainly never intended to serve as Chair for 22 years. But when Jim complained to Harry about being WHY's treasurer, he found himself with a new title — Chair. Honoring media to stimulate coverage of hunger and poverty — what is now called The Harry Chapin Media Awards — was his idea. Jim knew that every not-for-profit needed a list of supporters it could depend on — to mobilize when necessary and to fund its progress and growth. He asked Harry to include a signup card in one of his LPs. That response became the foundation of WHY's mailing list.

Jim has been an academician, a consultant, a politician, a government employee, and a journalist. He served as WHY's Chair from 1980 through 2001, for 22 of its 27 years. Under his leadership WHY rebounded from the death of its co-founder (and Jim's younger brother) Harry Chapin — and flourished.

In December 2001, with the passing of the gavel to WHY's newest Chair — niece Jen Chapin, Jim became WHY's Chair-emeritus, and returned to the role of Board member.

Twenty-two years of leadership is not just proof of his commitment to his brother's life and legacy. That WHY thrives today is a remarkable testament to Jim Chapin's own vision and dreams.

Thank you Jim.

*Sue Leventhal*

*Director, WHY's Artists Against Hunger & Poverty, Hungerthon, and Special Events*

## Letter Carriers' "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive Set for May 10

**The National Association of Letter Carriers** (NALC) will hold its **Stamp Out Hunger** food drive on **May 10, 2003**. For the 11th straight year, postal workers in all 50 states will collect non-perishable food items on the second Saturday in May. In most areas letter carriers will pick up cans of food left by home mailboxes, while in other areas individuals will be asked to bring donated items to their local Post Office. Specific instructions on how to donate will be mailed out shortly before the food drive. All collected donations will be distributed to local food banks and pantries. The Campbell Soup Company and Second Harvest are co-sponsors of this event, which is also supported by the U. S. Post Office, the AFL-CIO Community Services network, and the United Way of America. ●

Harry Chapin encouraged all of us to "do something".

**Circle!**, a free, quarterly on-line newsletter, presents ideas for social action, especially with the fight against hunger in the U.S. and around the world. Circle! is produced in its entirety by a volunteer staff. To subscribe, send an email with the word **Subscribe** in the subject line to [circleteam@hotmail.com](mailto:circleteam@hotmail.com)

### Let's Hear from the Cheap Seats!

We'd love to hear from you with your feedback on our premiere issue, ideas for future issues, stories about Harry, and what you're doing to make a difference. Please drop us a line at [circleteam@hotmail.com](mailto:circleteam@hotmail.com)

## Behind the Song:

# Circle

### Like most of Harry's songs,

"Circle," the one that became known as the "Chapin national anthem," has a story behind it.

When **Tom Chapin** was hired to host the weekly ABC Television children's show "Make a Wish" in the Summer of 1971, the show consisted of two word topics in each episode like "fire" and "wind." They were looking for a songwriter to write a song for each word, helping to bring each word to life in a way that would be meaningful and appealing to kids. Tom immediately recommended Harry for the job and the producers agreed.

This was the year when Harry had gotten back into music and had created his first band with **John Wallace, Ron Palmer, and Tim Scott**. He was opening for his brothers' band, "The Chapins," with **Steve and Tom Chapin, and Phil Forbes and Doug Walker**, who later became Harry's lead guitarist, every weekend at a club in Greenwich Village called The Village Gate. So writing songs for "Make A Wish," although very lucrative for him, was far down in the list of Harry's commitments. One week the word was circle, and Harry still had not written the song—the night before the episode's taping.

"After the gigs at the Gate, we usually met, ate, and rehearsed the evening at Maria's Diner in Brooklyn Heights," said Tom. "It was late Sunday night, and we were going to be shooting the episode for "Circle" early on Monday morning, and he promised me he'd have it done. So at 6:00 a.m. Harry called me and played the first verse and chorus over the phone while I took down words and scratched out the tune." Hours later Tom performed "Circle" for the first time on camera, walking around the Cinderella fountain in New York City's Central Park.

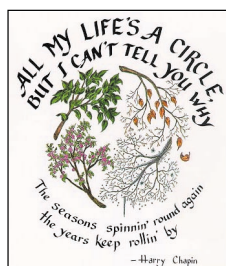
For a while it was only the first verse and chorus that existed. "Then our mother told Harry it was great song, and he ought to write some other verses. He did—and it became a signature Chapin song. All these years later, we still sing the song at concerts, weddings, funerals, and people all over the world love and sing that song."

## "Circle" Greeting Cards Available from WHY!

These greeting cards are great for any season and were created by Harry Chapin fan and WHY supporter Kathy Long.

A set of 12 cards, blank inside, with envelopes is available for a \$15 donation.

Click on [https://ssl-033.imconline.net/world-hungeryear/forms/frm\\_why\\_donors.asp](https://ssl-033.imconline.net/world-hungeryear/forms/frm_why_donors.asp) and indicate "Circle Greeting Cards" in the comment section when you make your on-line donation. (Please indicate number of sets of cards ordered).



## Kids Cook Up Nutritional Fun

**As children**, many of us didn't see the joy in broccoli and potatoes let alone the advantages of a plum over a popsicle. But it's all in how one approaches fruits and vegetables.

Take the New York-based Community Food Resource Center CookShop Program®, for example. With the help of many community volunteers, the program mixes hands-on activities with a dash of learning to make eating peas and carrots a fun, delicious experience for low-income grade-school children.

World Hunger Year honored CFRC for its innovative programs like CookShop with a Harry Chapin Self-Reliance Award in 2001.

The 12-week program is designed to give students a wide range of experiences to make whole foods as familiar as the local fast-food burger joint. Students hear from farmers, tend their own crops and stir up easily prepared meals. Another offshoot of the program gets school cafeterias involved in promoting healthier meal alternatives.

"We've found that being exposed to whole foods in a multitude of ways makes it easier for children to enjoy and appreciate the nutritional aspects of fruits, vegetables and

grains," said **Lisa Kingery**, the CookShop program manager. "All of the different experiences reinforce the idea that eating good nutritional food is a natural, everyday way of life."

Take-home newsletters, family-size recipes and other educational tools also are provided to promote good nutritional habits as a family activity. The home environment is important because lower-income families often eat larger amounts of high-fat, high-calorie foods. The regular intake of fatty foods, health officials say, has led to one out of every four children becoming overweight.

More than 5,000 children have participated in CookShop. The program's success has now led to the "Vegetable of the Month Club," a parallel program for adults. ●

*Editors' Note: CFRC is a member agency of WHY's Reinvesting in America (RIA) program. RIA uses an extensive network of contacts to create opportunities for grassroots organizations across America. For thousands of organizations, WHY has helped raise more than \$6 million, initiated countless media connections and facilitated meetings with policymakers.*

## The WHY-Chapin Awards Dinner

**Join World Hunger Year (WHY)** in honoring four individuals for their outstanding dedication to alleviating hunger and poverty at the annual awards dinner on May 5, 2003. Two-time Grammy Award winner **Tom Chapin** will serve as this year's host for the ceremonies at The Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers in New York City. The 2003 honorees of The WHY-Chapin Awards are: singer **Judy Collins**, Rep. **Ben Gilman (R-NY)**, **Kathy Goldman**, and **Richard Oulahan**.

Throughout her illustrious 40-year recording career, **Judy Collins** has remained a political activist working both with UNICEF and to promote landmine awareness through songs, television appearances and books. Collins will receive an ASCAP/Harry Chapin Humanitarian Award from ASCAP's president Marilyn Bergman.

**Congressman Gilman**, who has served on WHY's Board of Directors for more than 20 years, was urged by Harry Chapin to join the fight against world hunger in the mid-1970s. Gilman authored the legislation that established the Presidential Commission Against Hunger and the Select Committee on World Hunger. During the 1981 UN session, Gilman served as Congressional Delegate to its Ukraine Famine Commission.

For 23 years **Kathy Goldman** has been one of New York's leading advocates for the poor. Through the nationally recognized Community Food Resource Center, which she founded in 1980, Goldman has created innovative programs to improve access to healthy food, published reports on barriers to food, and convened conferences on food policy issues.

As executive director of Milwaukee, Wisconsin's Esperanza Unida (United Hope) since 1978, **Richard Oulahan** led the organization's development of an innovative job-training model that has trained more than 2,300 youth and adults in auto repair, welding, construction, customer service, and computer applications. For the past 19 years, Esperanza Unida has placed more than 70 percent of those individuals in living wage jobs.

For more information on The WHY-Chapin Awards Dinner, call WHY at 212-629-8850, ext. 31.

## LUNCH Tribute to Harry Chapin

**Connecticut's** Local United Network to Combat Hunger (LUNCH) has announced that it will present "A Tribute to Harry Chapin" at 7:30 p.m. on **May 16, 2003**, at the University of Hartford. The concert is part of the University's Music For a Change series. LUNCH was founded in 1989 to continue Harry's work of encouraging social activism through popular music and has delighted area audiences for years with its theatrical performances. The two-hour show will include performances of songs both by Harry Chapin and LUNCH founder **Bill Pere**. Other featured performers are **Scott Sivakoff** and **Kay Pere**, and the ensemble will include young people from grades 5-12. All proceeds from the show will be given to hunger relief agencies. For more information about LUNCH, see its web site <http://www.lunchensemble.com>. To order tickets go to <http://www.musicforachange.com>.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LUNCHENSEMBLE.COM

# Harry on Volunteerism *continued from page 1*

linen that other people create. If we are willing to commit our time for no money, we should damn well make sure that other people are not just creating horror shows that we are supposed to clean up because we are "nice people."

So the job for volunteers is really to be sophisticated enough to realize when we are being asked to do something about solving the problems. There has been some controversy regarding the merits of "service-oriented volunteers" as opposed to "change-oriented volunteers."

I do not believe it is a cut-and-dried issue. However, if certain forces are creating hunger and all that we are doing is feeding hungry people without treating the causes of hunger, we are being silly and we are not taking our time and effort seriously. All we are doing is putting a Band Aid on a bad situation. So the minute we make the commitment to volunteer, we are telling ourselves: "We are serious people; we really want to do something."

At that point, we have to be sophisticated enough to find the places where our effort will really make a difference.

The greatest lost resource in our society today is the elderly. The whole concept of putting old people away is obscene in every sense of the word. When old people are living on fixed incomes in a society faced with inflation and increases of the cost of living...and you have people who have to buy a room and some heat...and some light and the telephone...and then some food — it's no wonder you find they're eating only one meal a day — that is an indictment against all of us.

## Move the World!

In the spirit of Harry Chapin's belief that one person can make a difference, WHY has established the National Hunger Clearinghouse online database.

This online search directory contains information on thousands of organizations across the United States that are working on hunger, poverty, nutrition, agriculture, and food issues. Whether you are looking for food assistance, volunteer opportunities, places to donate food, or other information from programs in your area that are working to fight hunger and poverty, WHY's directory can help you get started. Click here [http://www.worldhungeryear.org/nhc\\_data/nhc\\_01.asp](http://www.worldhungeryear.org/nhc_data/nhc_01.asp) to be taken directly to the database, and be sure to read the tips at the bottom of the page to find a group near you. Then be sure to let us know when you've connected with a group near you. Drop us an email: [circleteam@hotmail.com](mailto:circleteam@hotmail.com). ●

The sad thing is that we only react when people howl. These old people are not radicals. They are very conservative. They do not want to accept food stamps. They do not want to go on welfare; they have too much pride. They do not want to go through the humiliation.

And, if we do not address ourselves to those silent people, then we are really indicting ourselves. And I would like to think that we have sharp enough eyes to see through the walls where those lonely people live. They are slowly dying in the most degrading situations possible.

As Bob Dylan said, "He who is not busy being born is busy dying." Those of us who are playing ostriches are in fact saying that we don't give a damn. What we are saying then to our kids is that all we are doing is trying to hold on until our old age — and if the world should fall apart, that's fine — because we have lived our lives. I hate to think that this is what we are saying to the people we have brought into the world.

We must all go that extra mile. We must be aggressive in the sense of challenging others and making them realize that the American dream implies that all of us must be actively involved.

We all have the potential to move the world — and the world is ready to be moved. ●

## Short Stories

### "A Better Place To Sleep"

**During WHY's formative years,** Harry would do almost anything to raise money for the cause. The story of one of his most outrageous ideas comes from Sandy Chapin:

After finishing a concert in southern New Jersey, Harry gave attendees the chance to spend the night at the Chapin home on Long Island, New York, for a \$50 donation to WHY. Twenty-three thrilled fans took Harry up on his amazing offer and made the trek to Huntington.

"They emptied out my linen closets and took over every couch, chair, or corner of available floor space for the night," said Sandy. "The next morning, needless to say, it was a bit hectic as I got our five children ready and off to school. And then Harry ended up serving breakfast to the fans." ●

## Harry Chapin Awards Forum Set For June 17th

**WHY** and its co-sponsor, the Media Studies Department of the New School University, invite the public to attend the 2003 Harry Chapin Awards Forum: Journalism Meets The Grassroots and the Harry Chapin Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, June 17, 2003 in New York City.

The free, one-day event honors the recipients of the 2002 Harry Chapin Media Awards for journalistic excellence in covering hunger and poverty issues and the Harry Chapin Self-Reliance Awards for innovation and creativity in direct service provision and advocacy efforts. The Awards Ceremony will be held in the evening from 6:00 p.m. —8:30 p.m.

The forum, to be held from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., will showcase the work of the awards recipients of both programs, along with that of finalists, past winners, Harry Chapin Media Awards judges, artists, educators, and innovative community-based organizations through a series of panels, breakout sessions, and readings.

To view profiles of the 2002 Harry Chapin Self-Reliance Awards, please visit WHY's website at [http://www.worldhungeryear.org/ria/ria\\_hcsra\\_2002.asp](http://www.worldhungeryear.org/ria/ria_hcsra_2002.asp). The Harry Chapin Media Award winners will be announced in May. The WHY website also has further information on this event including registration materials and will continue to update its growing list of panelists and speakers. ●

## "Remembering Harry Chapin" Concert

**One of the highlights** on a Chapin fan's calendar in recent years has been **John McMenamin's "Remembering Harry Chapin"** benefit concert. John will once again be performing an evening of Chapin stories and songs in the Fall of 2003. Accompanying John will be **Rob DeVitis** on electric guitar, **John Gebhart** on keyboards, and Harry's band members **John Wallace, Howard Fields, and Yvonne Cable**. Many who have attended in previous years what John calls "...an appreciation, not an impersonation" will say it's the next closest thing to a Harry Chapin concert they've ever experienced. The date of the show and ticket information will be announced by the end of April on the Remembering Harry Chapin website: [www.RememberingHarryChapin.com](http://www.RememberingHarryChapin.com) To be added to the email list and receive an update as soon as the date is confirmed, send an email to [mcmen@aol.com](mailto:mcmen@aol.com). ●



PHOTO BY MARK LAWHUT