

“Shared Lives, Personal Journeys. The Spirit of Camphill Soltane.”

Camphill Soltane, 224 Nantmeal Road, Glenmoore, PA 19343. Videotape. 8 minutes, 15 seconds. No date.

This short video provides a heartwarming introductory snapshot of Camphill Soltane, one of the international communities of the Camphill movement, which has some 90 locations around the world (*Communities Directory*, 2000, p. 213). Located in rural southeastern Pennsylvania, Camphill Soltane is an intentional community and school made up of about 70 people, some of whom have developmental disabilities. Those who serve as teachers are called “co-workers”, while the people with disabilities are referred to as “companions.” The co-workers take no salary or wage, but commit themselves to creating an intentional community that is mutually supportive. Camphill Soltane is described as a place where the gifts of people with disabilities can flower. The community is privately funded by charitable donations and takes no government money. According to the video, tuition is modest and companions typically receive substantial financial aid. The video shows brief scenes of life in the community, including mealtime in one of the residences, a co-worker teaching a class, and companions engaged in work, sports, art, music and play. The community appears well maintained and attractive, with ample facilities for a wide range of activities including woodworking, weaving, pottery, music and sports. The video includes descriptions of the benefits of being members of the community by both a companion and co-worker, followed by an explanation by the executive director of how donations are used. The video ends with a testimonial by a donor describing how charitable gifts directly benefit the companions’ lives.

While this video provides an uplifting introduction to Camphill Soltane, anyone with an interest in intentional communities would be left wanting for information. For example, how long do co-workers stay in the community? Is this just a short-term “internship” of sorts for them, or is it a life commitment? And do the companions stay for life, or is this more like a school with age or time limits placed on who comes and goes? When was the community founded and what were the reasons behind its founding? What, if any, belief system is the community based on? From other sources, such as the *Communities Directory*, one learns that Camphill Soltane is based on the principles of Anthroposophy and teachings of Rudolf Steiner. Interestingly, however, this information is not mentioned in the video.

Scholars might find this video of interest not for what one learns about community history and operations (which in this case is very little), but, rather, to study what information the community chooses to include and omit when it portrays itself to the outside world. However, the best use of this video might be by the community, itself, in its fundraising efforts.

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