



Planting Many Seeds . . . Embrace Change! 2024 NVON Conference

Speakers

Lunch - Wednesday, July 17



Marga Fripp

Marga is a Romanian-American humanitarian, trauma-informed expressive art therapist, certified Qigong teacher, artist and mental health advocate.

During her 30 years of experience as a nonprofit founder and executive director, she empowered thousands of women and families from domestic violence to immigrants, refugees, and trauma survivors. Marga is the founder of Empowered Women International and a TEDx speaker.

After moving to Western North Carolina in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, Marga founded Marga Fripp Studio to extend self-care practices and healing arts services to individuals

and organizations.

In 2022, together with her daughter, Geanina Fripp Emerson, she co-founded The Pollinators Foundation to promote mental wellness, compassionate connection and social healing through the arts, movement and mind-body practices.

The organization runs a *Healing Arts Hive* - a community space that offers expressive arts playshops, nature walks, mindful movement Qigong classes, creative retreats, and one-on-one healing experiences – to reduce stress, promote mental wellness and cultivate deeper connection. Marga acts as *the Chief Pollinator of Good* at the foundation, and her vision is to end the epidemic of loneliness and the shame and stigma surrounding mental health.

She has a master's degree in *Expressive Arts Therapy* from the European Graduate School, Switzerland, and a B.A. in *Communication/Journalism* from the University of Maryland University College. She is a 200-hour *Certified Holden QiGong Teacher* and has additional training in mindfulness and mental health.

Marga will share lessons and wisdom from her lifelong journey of *embracing challenges* and working with them to build a rich soil that nourishes and sustains a beautiful garden of life. Each great challenge she experienced at various points in life allowed her to create something new and generative that benefited not just her and the people she loves, but also the community as a whole.

Think about challenges as compost for the garden that becomes our life. The greater the challenges perhaps, the grander the opportunity to create a more beautiful and meaningful garden.

Dinner – Wednesday, July 17



Georgann Eubanks

Georgann Eubanks is a writer, consultant, and documentary filmmaker. After many years of service to the humanities and literary arts in North Carolina, she has been named literary executor and director of the Paul Green Foundation, charged with preserving the progressive legacy of North Carolina's Pulitzer Prize winning playwright and human rights advocate. Georgann's books include the *North Carolina Literary Trails* series of guidebooks commissioned by the North Carolina Arts Council, *The Month of Their Ripening: North Carolina Heritage Foods Through the Year*, and the forthcoming *Saving the Wild South: The Fight for Native Plants on the Brink of Extinction*, all from the University of North Carolina Press. She also directs the Table Rock Writers Workshop, held annually in the Blue Ridge

Mountains.

Lunch - Thursday, July 18



Michelle Estrada

Michelle is the Family and Consumer Sciences Agent specializing in the areas of food and nutrition and volunteer development through NC State University at the Wayne County Cooperative Extension. Michelle's role is to design, implement, and evaluate educational programs in the areas of foods, nutrition and wellness, and food preservation. Michelle has worked as a lead teacher in a variety of preschool classrooms including rural areas in Mexico, Reggio Emilia Approach, and Head Start. Michelle was also a certified parent educator with the Parents as Teachers Program for more than 8 years. Her experience and understanding of Latino and American culture has helped her to develop handouts, newsletters and other educational materials for Spanish speaking audiences. Michelle Estrada

holds a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Mexico (Escuela Normal de Educación Preescolar) and a Master of Youth, Family, and Community Sciences from NC State University.

Empowering Girls Through Life Skills: The Girl Power Program

Girl Power is an educational program sponsored by Wayne County Extension and Community Association and Wayne County Cooperative Extension, among other agencies and businesses. The program targets girls aged 12-14 and offers hands-on activities on topics such as cooking, financial management, self-esteem, personal care, fitness, and sewing. Join us to gain insights from our experiences and learn how to implement this wonderful program in your county.