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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FRIEDA'S COTTAGE

What is Frieda's Cottage?

Frieda's Cottage was the home and office of the renowned psychiatrist, Dr. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann. The 1936 Colonial Revival house is located at 19 Thomas Street on the grounds of the former Chestnut Lodge Sanitarium in the West End of Rockville, Maryland. On June 26, 2007, Frieda's Cottage was deeded to Peerless Rockville as part of the redevelopment of Chestnut Lodge property.

Why is Frieda's Cottage important?

Frieda's Cottage is important for its association with pioneering psychiatrist Dr. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann and Chestnut Lodge Sanitarium, an internationally renowned institution that operated in Rockville for nearly a century.

The Colonial Revival cottage was built in 1936 on the grounds of Chestnut Lodge for Dr. Fromm-Reichmann to use as a residence and an office. Prominent Washington architect Walter G. Peter tailored it to her tastes and manner of living, and local custom builder Franklin H. Karn constructed it. After Frieda's death in 1957, Chestnut Lodge continued to use the cottage for both residential and office purposes.

Frieda's Cottage and other historic structures and landscapes within Chestnut Lodge are part of the West Montgomery Avenue National Register Historic District and Rockville's West Montgomery Avenue Historic District.

Who was Frieda Fromm-Reichmann?

Dr. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann (1889-1957) was a pioneer in psychiatry who in 1935 came to work and live at Chestnut Lodge Sanitarium in Rockville. By that time, she was well known for her work in treating seriously disturbed mental patients with intensive psychotherapy. When she made it known that she wished to leave Nazi Germany, several American institutions invited her to join their staffs. She selected Chestnut Lodge partly because Dr. Dexter Bullard promised to build a home for her on the hospital grounds.

Under Drs. Bullard and Fromm-Reichmann, Chestnut Lodge evolved as a therapeutic community on a parallel path with the maturation of psychiatry as a discipline. Her key role was to develop the hospital's specialty in psychotherapy of psychotic patients. The Lodge became known for experimentation and success. Booming by the early 1950s, it became a teaching institution, doubling the number of patients and adding top-notch staff. It became known for quality of care and treatment, based upon the philosophy that mental illness is treatable by a combination of psychoanalysis and occupational therapy.

Dr. Fromm-Reichmann believed that no patient, however disturbed, was beyond the reach of psychotherapy. She blended different theories, a unique style, and a Judaic-based responsibility of helping people. Her book, *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy* (published in 1950 and still a fundamental text), and her teaching in Washington and New York inspired a whole generation of young psychiatrists to create therapeutic environments for people

previously assumed to be beyond reach. A fictionalized account of her work with one young patient, published in 1964 as *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*, had a powerful, positive effect on public perception of mental illness and its treatment.

Tell me more about Chestnut Lodge.

Chestnut Lodge, a private hospital owned and operated by four generations of the Bullard family, became known for its quality of care and treatment, based upon the idea that mental illness is treatable through a combination of psychoanalysis and occupational therapy. Prominent therapists, such as Frieda Fromm-Reichmann and Otto Will, joined the staff and contributed to its success. The Bullard family and the institution, well respected internationally, became an integral part of the Rockville community.

In 1997, Chestnut Lodge closed its doors. By then, much of the Bullard property had been sold for residential development. First CPC Health and then the Washington Waldorf School purchased the last 20 acres along West Montgomery Avenue, and in 2003 The Associated Companies bought the property with residential plans for the site.

What does Peerless Rockville plan to do with the Site?

The objective is to restore Frieda's Cottage to 1936-1957, the period when Dr. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann resided and practiced psychiatry at Chestnut Lodge. Although the structure was well built and is in good condition, the house has been vacant for seven years and is in need of major work. Once the house is restored, Peerless will lease it as a residence and use it to interpret the history of Chestnut Lodge and the pivotal role played by Dr. Fromm-Reichmann. The property will be protected in perpetuity with a preservation easement.

How can I learn about the history of Frieda Fromm-Reichmann and the cottage?

Call Peerless Rockville or visit our website. In addition, there is an excellent biography titled *To Redeem One Person Is To Redeem The World: The Life of Frieda Fromm-Reichmann* by Gail A. Hornstein as well as a fictionalized account of Frieda's work with one young patient, published in 1964 as *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*.

How can I become involved?

Peerless Rockville encourages the public to participate in work sessions, serve on advisory committees, and assist the project through cash and in-kind donations. If you are interested, please call or email us.

What is Peerless Rockville and how can I learn more about it?

Peerless Rockville is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, community-based organization founded in 1974 to preserve and promote Rockville's history and historic places. Peerless also owns historic Montrose Schoolhouse on Randolph Road and the Baptist Cemetery on West Jefferson Street. Its research library in the historic Red Brick Courthouse in Rockville Town Center is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 10 am to 1 pm. For more information, please call Peerless or visit our website.



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