2006 Alumna of the Year at Cape Cod Community College Czech Roots, Cape Cod Sand in her Shoes, Diane Kovanda

Cotuit, Hyannis, May 2006.  Cape Codders and visitors alike find our little peninsula to be an escape, but for Diane Kovanda, Cape Cod was truly a sanctuary. The 2006 Cape Cod Community College Alumna of the Year was just six years old when she and her mother fled Russian-occupied Prague in 1968. “I’d lived in a third-floor apartment in a city of stone, cement, and castles,” remembers Kovanda, “and when I came to Cape Cod, I fell in love with the outside.”

Unable to speak English, Kovanda took great joy in playing at the duck pond across from her new home and in daily walks with her mother along the shore and wooded areas of Marstons Mills. Explains Kovanda, “I think we were in shock and traumatized because we escaped in secrecy on the night train, not knowing if we would survive. We didn’t know anyone on the Cape and we couldn’t communicate with people here, so nature was very healing to us. Eventually we both learned English, and connected with this amazing community, we feel so lucky to have washed ashore here!

After graduating from CCCC in 1981, Kovanda received a Masters in Education at Cambridge College. She is a well-know yoga professional and stress management counselor at Complete Wellness in Cotuit, and a volunteer for Big Sisters of Cape Cod. Diane is a graduate of the Community Leadership Seminar at CCCC, member of the Arts Foundation and American Business Women’s Association. Her work is shown at Gallery 337, Main Street Hyannis.

For Kovanda that “natural” recovery became a passion for preserving the outdoor places of her adopted home. She is now an advocate for the community and environment, and the creator of a scenic DVD about Cape Cod which raises money for land preservation, “Cape Cod: Reflections of Beauty.”. Views of every Cape town from Woods Hole to Provincetown are included in the 55-minute recording, which is accompanied by the acoustic harp compositions of Andrea McCarthy of Osterville.

Ten percent of the gross receipts of the DVD are contributed to the Barnstable Land Trust, which works to preserve and protect open space, wildlife habitat, wetlands, forests and water resources. To date the production has raised over $1,300. It won “Best Pictorial” category in last year’s Cape Cod Film Festival. The production’s format follows a peaceful, meditative journey through Cape scenery, with visions of beaches, sand dunes, harbors and forest walks, along with local images like beach roses, blue herons, cranberry bogs, fishing boats and close ups of whales. The DVD is available at Barnes and Noble, Borders, and a number of other local and national outlets, or at www.capecoddvd.org.