

COMMUNITY HOMESTEAD

NEWSLETTER: FALL/WINTER 2016

Mission: “to establish and maintain a community so that people with developmental and other disabilities can reach their fullest human potential”

501 280th Street, Osceola, WI 54020 (715) 294-3038 www.communityhomestead.org

It is Advent time. The long awaited snow is scudding across the fields, the cold wind whips around the trees and we bank our woodstoves and reach for our scarves. For us, Thanksgiving comes at the right moment. We have time to look up from the skittering demands of our daily lives, sit with an incredible bounty of friendship and food and, wow. We would not be here if it was not for many others; painting, nailing, gardening, being customers, reaching out, and financially supporting expansion and ideas. We hope you enjoy this window into our lives here and wish you all a wonderful winter season.

Wreath Making by Alex Hansen

Flowers out of the garden: Christine and Waldorf School and Janette collect them in the summer. We dry them in the Community Center. We do dried wreathes, yellow flowers, baby’s breath, cockscomb. We use a ring, and put it in a green metal wreath holder. You step down and hold the wreath down and with a step down and clap, the metal holds the wreath together.

Now we do green wreathes. Bruce, Betsy, and me, and Christine. Tony, Sandy, Oscar and Scott make from Christmas trees from the tree farm, right? The sap is sticky. Smells like mint! We put pine cones, dried red peppers, red cockscomb, strawflowers, red and purple corn. We put them in a box for craft fairs and for delivery day. Good wreathes for smart Christmas!



Photo: Janette and Alex

Winter Box Packing by Oscar Rauch Borgerding

In the winter we have about 64 member boxes to pack. The large boxes-the dirty ones-get cleaned out on the inside and the outside. Terra, Nina and Kelly do that. Terra does the inserts and Nina brings in the boxes when they have put them together. Nadine is the organizer and she tells us everything we need for the week and what we need to harvest on Monday and Tuesday.

Before we start we have to sanitize and spray down all the counters and the crates and, if anything falls on the floor, it STAYS on the floor. You can’t pick it up and use it. We are really picky about the vegetables that we pack.

This is the biggest packing but it’s not the only packing because Christine and Richard pack the Homesteader boxes on Tuesday night. The Homesteader boxes are the extras like cookies, jam, bread and pickles.

Tony and Scott and Richard do the deliveries on Wednesday which means they drive into the cities and deliver the boxes and pick up the empties. We have one more Winter delivery this year.

It is very enjoyable, packing the winter boxes. It is much easier than summer because we get done early!

Looking Back on the Farm by Eric Witt

As we settle in for winter, and the hurried pace of farm life begins to slow, we're afforded a chance to look back at the year that has passed. It is a pleasant view of milking milestones, new faces in the barn, bountiful harvests, and transformative projects.

This year Community Homestead milkers had cause for celebration as our humble dairy was recognized by Organic Valley for outstanding milk quality. Organic Valley determines milk quality from bulk tank tests that are performed each time our milk ships. Over the last several years we have seen steady improvement in this area-receiving a Bronze award in 2013, Silver in 2014 and finally Gold in 2015. Way to go milkers! We look forward to seeing what we get this year!

If you peeked around a silo, poked your head into the hay loft, or peered into the Moo-Tel this summer you surely would have noticed some new faces mucking out. Perhaps you spied Will taking a break from sweeping to try on barn suits in the boot room. Or Makinzie who preferred the calves and their company. You couldn't miss Eli, though you'd have to be persistent to follow his boundless energy through the barn. And late comer Noah, no stranger to hard work, could be seen pleasantly working, but definitely not heard.

While we enjoyed the novelty of integrating new people into the barn, our veteran crew members- Joel, Travis, Dusty, Stephan and Hillary; kept things running smoothly and improved their skills. Joel learned how to operate the bale chopper and mastered the new roller mill. Travis became a one man pasteurizer cleaning machine. Stephan multi-tasked his many barn chore contributions with frequent inspections

of the Farm House re-model. Dusty demonstrated that he could calmly approach and tie-up the most timid of heifers with a cow whisperer's grace. And Hillary gripped the halter and dug her heels in to challenge the resolve of many a stubborn calf.



Photo: Dustin, Travis and Joel

Mother Nature looked favorably upon the toiling humans and ruminating beasts this growing season and blessed the land with ample rain, mild temperatures and plenty of sunshine. Pasture conditions were excellent and allowed us to graze the milking herd and a dozen or so heifers well into October. The fields performed admirably. We completed the harvest in early October and enter winter with two full silos, a first ever silage bag, a loft full of hay and straw and over 200 round bales.

Somehow, between barn chores, crews, milking, field work and chasing wayward calves, we manage every year to get a few projects completed. This year was no exception. The gray shed got lifted up, squeezed together and anchored to new foundations. The junk shed has been converted to a dairy workshop and boot room. Avalon students increased the capacity of the Moo-Tel and re-claimed the pig pen for the dairy calves. And the barn cleaner got a newer cleaner poop ramp. Not too shabby for a few odd jobs in our spare time.



Photo: Sandy takes her calf for a walk

The end of a season is a special time. Especially when it ends in the stark contrast that winter imposes. Much of the work that we do stops, much of what we did was for this stoppage. We plant, cultivate, cut, chop, bale and store to sustain through the pause. If it goes well, we can enjoy the slow down for what it is- a chance to look back and be warmed by the new people we met, the things we accomplished and the gifts that nature gave us. This year went well.



Photo: Cows in the pasture

Adventures in the Fall by Leo Moau

Fall was full of great social events. Here are just a few of them. On September 10th, we went to Wheels and Wings at Osceola Municipal Airport. We ate pizza and brats for lunch while watching some of the most spectacular stunt plane performances, rode into Osceola on the free shuttle buses for the Community Fair and Bazaar, joined in a drum circle and then went to Oakey park for the fair and tractor pull and petting zoo. It was a fun filled day in the sun and we enjoyed seeing so many people come out.



Photo: Jordan, Maren, Leo and Steven in Madison

The next day, we took a van full of adventurers to Sauk Centre, Minnesota for Camphill Minnesota's Open House. We arrived to a bustling crowd of attendees, enjoying the music, eating lunch, and socializing. We went on a hayride to see farm fields, cows, pigs, chickens, and housing. We had a great time sightseeing and learning about this Camphill.

On the 17th, a group of us came to support our booth at the annual St Cloud Pride event as well as enjoy the fes-



Photo: Shannon and Nina at Hallowe'en

Weaving Rugs by Hillary Schauls

Oscar and I, and Steve Fons, and Peggy and Shannon do the weaving. Chelsea does it too but she is busy with kids because she just had a baby. And on Fridays too, I weave with Christine's house crew. I also weave in my room and listen to Christmas music and I weave on the kitchen table.

People donate T-shirts and we cut them up in strips and make rugs. I made a pink one and Oscar is working on a blue one and now I am working on a blue, yellow and green one. We sell our rugs at craft fairs. I did a demo at Scandia and I did it at the Community Center at our fair, remember? And I did it at fiber fest in Osceola.

I like weaving, It is the best thing, Happy hands are busy hands, my Mom told me.

tivities. We walked around to all the booths, played some games, won some giveaways and enjoyed the music. We volunteered for clean up and earning a T-shirt each!

In October, we went with our German student volunteer, Maren, down to UW-Madison for a tour around the campus and the capital. It was a long drive down and we arrived to a chilly fall breeze. We stopped by Lake Mendota, toured the State capitol rotunda and then some of us went to the engineering wing of UW-Madison and some went down State Street, all of us meeting at Memorial Union before lunch at Noodles and Company. We

went to the Henry Vilas Zoo for the last leg of our trip before heading back to Osceola in the late afternoon.

We celebrated Halloween with a party at the community center. Everyone dressed for the occasion with costumes ranging from vampires and dragons to pirates and members of the opposite sex. We had a pumpkin carving competition, played a modified version of the game "Werewolf" and an exciting and fast-paced Halloween-themed musical chairs. It was a busy and fun fall!



Photo: Hillary with lots of rugs

Muesligate by Shannon Kulig

I have now worked in Community Homestead's bakery for about a year and a half and I love it, but it hasn't always been easy. I'm afraid that November of 2016 will go down in history as Muesligate. Luckily, no one thought to mutiny or sue me for dereliction of duties. Now that it's finally over I will laugh about it, although I guess I did some laughing during Muesligate too. I suppose a bit of backstory is necessary.

Here in Community most people eat breakfast, it is indeed the most important meal of the day. The breakfast of choice for some is muesli, a fibrous oat, nut, and dried fruit extravaganza served with milk warm (like oatmeal) or cold. I have to say there are some real die-hard muesli fans around these parts, which is great! The bakery generally cranks out about thirty or so pounds a week for internal Community use. We have a system. Whenever a house's muesli bucket, which range in size from 2-pound capacity to a whopping 18 pounds, is empty, someone from the house (Kelly, Steve, Mark, Dustin) bring the muesli bucket to the bakery for refilling. The system worked out splendidly, until this November when the bakery ran out of oats.



Photo: Hillary, Kelly, Shannon, Scott and Alex in the bakery

Cookie Baking by Tony Bodelson

Baking has always been a hobby of mine, making the bakery quite an obvious place for me. From starting at Community Homestead, cookie baking has been one of my favorite crews. At first it was being able to get in a kitchen and bake beautifully delicious cookies twice a week, and getting to smell the wonderful smells that made me excited to go there twice a week, but now it's so much more.

On a good day in the bakery, I feel completely and utterly useless. I know that sounds weird, but bear with me a second. I'm just here to move trays in and out of the oven, stick cookies into bags, and clean up odds and ends. Why is this such a great day in the bakery? Is it because I'm lazy and would rather have other people do all the work? Well, not exactly...

The bakery orders oats through the Lakes River Buying Club. Generally, we receive all the items that we order. However, sometimes items are backordered or mispicked and then the bakery has to find another source or muddle through without. That's what happened this November. The oats were backordered and then eventually our supply ran dry. Then one after another, our muesli bucket fillers came to refill their buckets only to find no new muesli.

For two weeks, I heard of little else. Daily, I received updates concerning what people were having for breakfast, inquiries as to when the muesli might return, and inventive solutions for Muesligate. I could just buy some oats at the co op, which I did, but for bread and cookies, not in the quantity needed for muesli eaters. I turned to making suggestions.

When prompted by Steve before Potluck, I encouraged him to try Cheerios. Steve turned out to be the biggest muesli fan of them all, making several mile long pilgrimages, on foot, from Berry Grove to the bakery. After almost three weeks, he found his holy grail. Eric picked up the bulk order the day before, oats were aplenty and the muesli made. He walked home a jolly (as jolly as Steve could be) fellow, bucket in hand. Muesligate was over and December was upon us.

On a good day I see Alex mix a bowl faster than I've ever seen him do it before, and exclaim, "I'm done!" with more excitement than ever expected. I also get to hear Sandy cackle with glee as she finishes scooping the last cookie of the bowl. Then there's Bruce. Not usually much of a talker, but I can hear the joy when under his breath I can hear the singing of a few words from the song playing over the radio.

So yes, I enjoy when I become "useless" in the bakery because it means I'm surrounded by talented bakers, people who have been doing this years longer than I, who can do it much better than me. It's a humbling experience, which I appreciate every time I do it. Thank you fabulous cookie crews; Alex, Bruce, Sandy, Travis, Dustin and Hillary! There's no way we'd be able to do it without you!

The Farmhouse by Richard Elmquist

So, in spite of our plan to be done by August, we are still working on the farmhouse. At this point, the upstairs is almost ready to move into. We have a bathroom vanity and sink I have to finish installing but the bedrooms and hallways look good. Summit Flooring installed a new hallway and bedroom floor but the others, Jordan and I were able to sand and oil. Jordan, Steven Kicker, Will Kalmon, Steve Fons, Adrian, Nadine and I trimmed out all the bedrooms with the original farmhouse trim, and in the hallways we installed new trim that Asger and Terra milled for us, with a “throwback” look to keep it looking consistent. Steven Kicker, Jordan, Scott, and Hillary, helped Tony and Shannon strip the original doors that we took out and now they just need to finish sanding them. We also have a few new windows upstairs. Brendan, Jordan and Joel moved the chimney so we could move the upstairs hallway, making it safer and putting in a fire exit. We have 18 inches of new insulation in the attic so the house seems tighter and less draughty.

Countryside Plumbing and heating installed the HVAC along with a new hot water heater. The house has been rewired by Rodney Smith who has just a few more fixtures to install. The basement is all done, with a concrete floor and a nice safe, sturdy, set of stairs leading to it.

Adrian, Nadine and the ever-present woodshop crew; Asger, Terra, Jordan and Leo, have been busy finishing and installing kitchen cabinets. Appliances have been ordered and arrive December 9th and, as soon as we get some of the construction materials out of the main room, I can sand and refinish the floor there and in the front room. We already finished the downstairs bedroom floor and the kitchen has a nice linoleum.

There's been some nice landscaping outside by the Farmhouse crew above and its starting to look nice from the outside despite the need for a little more siding.

I think we are all ready to be finished although it will take us another month. It is almost like a new house and it's been a lot of work but a lot of people have been interested and working on it. We all have ownership of it as a result.



Photo: Farm House

Mary Peters

Nov 13, 1961- Sept 20, 2016
by Christine Elmquist

In the last newsletter, I wrote of our community's adjustment to Mary Peters move into a nursing home after breaking her hip. At that point Mary was showing us the way. True to reputation, Mary forged onward, dying peacefully on September 20th in hospice.

Mary is the first long term community member to die while living at the community so each step was a new one for us, clearing her room out, sorting out her belongings, (santa hat, post-cards from 20 years ago, brochures from every concert) and then deciding how to say goodbye as a community.

Her family had a very simple funeral where her ashes were put together with her parents in a large military graveyard. So on November 13th, on what would have been Mary's 55th birthday, we had a community

celebration of her life. John and Linda Iwazsko led us in singing Johnny Cash songs and a selection from Mary Poppins. We beaded, and colored and filled out a giant word search finding Mary's favorite sayings, food, and places she had been on vacation.

And at the end, we, her family, community, social worker, friends and neighbors, sat in a large circle, lit a candle, and each spoke about our memories. We included, via pre recorded videos, the thoughts of her friends now in other states and countries.. We then all filled out a piece of paper with our good wishes and gratitude for her life and these will be buried, in the Spring, beneath a pink climbing rose we will plant in her name.

Thank you Mary, for building this community with us.

Many thanks for your Donations: August 1-December 6 2016

Tom and Jane Bean in
memory of Mary Peters
Joyce Borgerding and Tom
Rauch in memory of Mary
Peters
David Busch
Lou and Kathy Chiapetta
Sherri Colberg
Karen and Chris Cook
Sarah Cozzi through Jew-
ish Family & Children's
Services
Kim Donaldson in memory
of Mary Peters
Jasob Elmquist and Alex
Slay
Kristine Fowler
Paula and David Graff in
memory of Mary Peters

Denise Grantier
Sue and Shawn Horn,
Ginney Housum
Mary Clare Huberty and
Sherry Hanson in memory
of Mary Peters
Doris Johns in memory of
Mary Peters
Topsy Preus
Dwayne Rasmussen
Debra and Steven Kurz,
Joel Nester
Thomas Rumrieck and
Ruth Ronning
Mary Tomes in memory of
Mary Peters
GE Foundation



Photo: Nina Ossi

Thanks also to those who braved the rain and came to Pig Roast or donated T-shirts for our rugs, told people about craft fairs, and otherwise lent a hand to help create this vibrant place! All donations very gratefully recieved and used very directly to maintain the community

Winter Experience by Juliane Nem- row

I sometimes forget how simple life can be. It's a bit like weaving; up close it looks so tangled and complex, only when you step back do you notice the design. Now with the Christmas Play approaching, it is a good time to lean back and see the big picture. I've been walking from place to place more often, instead of driving or biking. The winter difference is striking, yet again, simple. There is snow, well, slush now, but when it fell it was feathered and silent while underneath, shockingly, the grass continues to grow green despite the frozen ground. I am constantly expecting the see a full petaled flower, frozen mid bloom but no such miracle yet! It still seems as if spring and summer are thriving just beneath the surface. I've heard that late on in the year, it will be dark and bleak but now the ground thaws out into mud puddles and the sun still shines albeit chillingly.

The only true deep winter I see now are the glimpses of storm green through bare branches but even so, those branches are putting out buds, remembering what is often lost, the hope of spring next, growing things and warmth. And maybe it's not the slush or the buds or the frozen ground that is simple so much as the hope it spells out, Hope is simple. Patience is simple. And so winter is simple, As well as life. And thank goodness for that.

What is Organic Certification by Adrian Werthmann

We recently had our 18th yearly organic inspection for the farm and garden. We have learned a lot over the years, but still take this certification very seriously and work hard to keep the label. Originally we got certified to sell our milk to Organic Valley but we also think it is valuable for our vegetable customers to get familiar with our farming practices without having to inspect the farm for themselves.

Midwest Organic Services Association (MOSA) hires an independent government licensed inspector to make sure we are meeting all the criteria to claim the organic label. This is very detailed and includes everything from how we treat the animals to where we buy the seeds. Animals do not have antibiotics and must have a specified amount of barn space and grazing pastures. Their feed cannot include any synthetic fertilizers or pesticides. The organic requirements also include how we use the land. We are required to rotate our crops, which mean our corn fields will next year be planted into hay which will then go back into corn after three years. This helps with soil depletion and pests.

Crop rotation is also an important practice for vegetable production. The organic certification requires us to use a map to track where varieties of vegetables are planted in order to make sure that a new variety will be rotated into that soil next. Again no synthetic fertilizers or pesticides are used on our vegetables. The regulations on compost production include rotating a pile five times within fifteen days of making the pile in order to maintain a temperature of 160 degrees Fahrenheit for three weeks. The inspector tracks all receipts for vegetable and farm seeds in order to make sure the seeds are purchased from certified organic companies.

This takes real work all year long, but at the end of each inspection the satisfaction of knowing that our farm has met the best standards for the most sustainable methods of farming is worth the work.

Healthy Eating for 2017? Join the CSA!

Certified Organic Vegetables. Three size boxes to choose from. Options that include bread, cookies, pickles, jam and fruit and meat shares. Pick up sites from Osceola through the twin cities.

Sign up online www.communityhomestead.org

Volunteers in the Garden by Nadine Holder

For as long as I have been at Community Homestead, spring is not only a time to fire up the green house, mix the potting soil and plant as many seeds as possible, it is also the time for student volunteers. From the end of April to the beginning of June, almost every week brings a different group of students.

The first yellow bus to stop in our barnyard pours out hardy high school students from Viroqua Waldorf School. They come prepared; gloves, hats, rubber rain boots. They know what to do; fork over the bed, spread the compost. They have done this before on the home farm or the neighbors' farm. This first burst of young energy gets us off to a good start. Next comes the Avalon high school students from St. Paul. They sort of tumble out of the bus and usually within the first hour it starts to rain or snow or howl with 30 mile an hour winds and they are totally unprepared for the weather. But this makes no difference, they sing, whistle, yell, whatever it takes and they stick it out. In spite of the bad weather, they bring a breath of fresh air. Tamarack Waldorf School's ninth grade is the most recent school to volunteer. For a lot of these students it is a week of firsts. The first time to use a tool to cut the weeds, a "what is that called?" the first time to get a blister or to scrutinize how small the size of a lettuce seed. Not only do these students get a first hand glimpse of a different style of living but they allow us to slow down, explain and examine again why and how. The old faithful are the Chicago Waldorf School's ninth grade and the Minnesota Waldorf School's third grade. Chicago Waldorf school stays for two weeks, which means that by the second week not only are they able to do a lot of the garden activities as well as anybody, but they can also help the third graders who are very



Photo: Renate and Tony harvesting thyme



Photo: Steve polishing pumpkins

good at finding earth worms or four leaf clovers but might have difficulty with the full wheelbarrow of compost which is for the most part bigger and stronger than they are. As we tumble into June, we start our days early and we end late.

We work as hard as we can to get the first veggies in the first box and then we do it again the week after that and the week after that until it is mid July and Summer Stretch, a youth group of 30 to 50 eight to 15 year olds, are arriving eager to help for a morning.

Students are not the only volunteers around here. Every Tuesday throughout the summer promptly at 7 am we are an hour into our morning har-

vest and either Nina or Oscar or maybe Scott will ask eagerly, "Hey is Sue coming?" and sure enough Sue Horn is almost here. Ready to jump in wherever, especially when it means lifting 220 twenty pound boxes from the packing table to the cooler, never mind that she has left her twenties far behind. New this year we are grateful to Peggy Geskerman for a wonderful smile and bright colorful work gloves that have been exposed to massive weeds and sticky mud.

There is never a hesitation with Peggy, no task too difficult. We are also grateful to those who make it possible for us to donate our vegetables. Every week we have a variety of vegetables that we drop off with Siri Hustad in Lowry Hill who organizes them to go to a food kitchen. And most recently, Cheryl Beardslee and her friends came out for a day of harvesting in the cold and left with two van loads of

vegetables for the Standing Rock Reservation.

Every volunteer from third graders to the well over 20 year olds adds another layer to our community. We are grateful for the smiles, the fun and the interest. By the end of the winter we will certainly be ready for that first yellow bus to stop in our barnyard. And then we can be sure that spring has finally arrived.

Comings and Goings by Christine Elmquist

This fall Jacob Zuklic completed his Americorps year and moved on to join previous Americorps member Haley in exploring more agricultural options.

Maren Klewinghaus, special education student from Germany, added her good nature and willing smile to our community for five weeks of experience. Tabi Russell, who grew up here, returned for a wonderful week of reunion, memories and hard work! Americorps member Alex Felt, and Brendan Bennett left for a road trip which took them to California leaving us with a little pottery, many great memories and an Alex and Brendan shaped hole in the community! German Hibernia Waldorf school students, Dario and Saskia left after a rodeo, garden, farm and pickle-filled summer. And Eli, Doran, Max, and Will Kalmon also swelled our numbers and added to summer festivities. In the fall, Noah started to come on Thursdays. Then Avalon school came once again (how we love them!) to help us close up the garden in sunny fall weather.

You were all lovely! Thank you for adding so much to this community.

Goodbye to Kurt by Christine Elmquist

Kurt started coming to the community with an aide when he was just fifteen. At first, it was just a morning or so but as he got older and more comfortable with life, the aide stopped coming and he built this up to a full week. When he was twenty two, he moved into Altair after making a special connection with Lisa and Fredo, and lived with the family, Dustin and Bruce for two years. When Fredo and Lisa moved to Switzerland, he lived for the next three years with Chelsea and Jeff in Altair, where he was the resident lego expert and wingman to 3 year old Isaac. During the day, Kurt liked to do special projects associated with the farm, garden and energy, along with maple syruping. Kurt was often in two minds about community but when he did join in, his infectious laughter, his quirky humor and his radiant warmth were wonderful and deeply appreciated by everyone. In October, Kurt moved out of the community. We all miss him and wish him well on his journey.



Abraham Wagner Flynn

New Community Baby by Chelsea Wagner

This season the community has welcomed a new youngest, Abraham Flynn, born November 5th.

He came home to two doting big brothers, Isaac and Elias, and bewildered (bedraggled) parents Chelsea and Jeff. Somehow a “family of five” feels much bigger than four! So far Abe likes milk, windows, and expanding his cheeks. His brothers enjoy talking in sing-song, testing the baby swing, and kissing said cheeks.

Everyone in Altair is adjusting to three car seats in the house van and a new pitch of cries added to the usual cacophony!

Introducing Myself by Betsy Campbell

My name is Betsy Campbell, like Campbell soup. I used to live at Stevens Point. Then me, and Mom and Dad moved to Royal Oaks (in Osceola.) Mom and Dad have an apartment. It’s like a dining room, you have lunch there. They always play games there too like Farkle. I moved here, to Homestead, in November. I like staying here.

My room is three things I like, red white and blue! I like being here, and in the garden, and going to Juliane’s house, and cooking in the Community Center. I like to cook. I like that painting. Those two things, painting and felting in the Community Center, I like a lot.

I do bowling. I used to do bocce ball in Steven’s Point. I like to go to the library, sometimes with Hillary, sometimes with Joel. I went to subway and I went to the DQ and I went to a concert at the school and I went to the fair and got me a Santa! I like going to movies here like Fantastic Beasts and on Saturdays in the Community Center.

I like being here. I like playing games in the community center. I like Christmas Dancing and I like to be in the play!



Betsy Campbell