

Community Homestead

Newsletter: Winter/Spring 2025



Mission: To establish and maintain a community where individuals with developmental challenges can reach their fullest human potential

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

Murder Mystery Party

~Hannah Gregor

The murder mystery is where people get character parts and each person has a role and slip of paper. You are not allowed to tell the other person and only drop little bits of info which allows other people at the party to guess “who dunnit.” This was Dodge City in the Wild West.

I was a female doctor. I was supposed to go around tending to the “Soiled Doves” (Nastia was one of them with Desi, Carla and Janette) if they needed help. I tended to a patron of the saloon who had a knife wound who was a missionary and I had treated him before. So at the evening, I asked the missionary how his wound was looking and he said it was good and then he moved away to talk to someone else and as soon as he moved I pretended to write down, “patient is good, wound is healing” and I talked to his wife and she had no knowledge of a knife wound in his arm.

The costumes were particularly good and the prop set up this year. Shannon made it look like an entire saloon without changing the integrity of the community center. We had a volunteer called Agnes



from France and she made us guns out of cardboard. She was very detailed and they were very realistic and she made a lot of them. We have some for the next murder mystery party! I think Shannon’s costume was pretty cool. I saw it when I went to get the parts for mine and I got a sneak peak. Nadine and Adrian looked like they put it together really well. But everyone looked really nice and fit the time period.

I guess the reason why it is difficult, not just for me but for everybody in that time, is that everybody could be a suspect and everybody is tight in the room. There’s not a good reason to believe someone did not do it! I did not suspect Alex at first. I was more eying the missionary because he was very shady. You couldn’t have a straight conversation, so I kept a wary eye out for the missionary!

I had a lot of fun!

Photo top: Alex and Richard

Middle: Batyah, Nastia, Hannah and Desi

Bottom: Joel and Ella

Our Vacation in Tennessee ~Hillary Schauls

We went to Tennessee with Shannon and Eric and Aldo, Elvis, Janette, Bruce and Ella, Thank you Farmhouse for inviting me on Saturday March 30. Bye- bye Osceola, Wisconsin!

We stayed in a cabin and we had sister-time. We were watching movies at the movie theater inside. It was a movie based on fire and we had popcorn and pop and stuff. The Airbnb was nice. It had a pool and a hot tub. I played the tickle monster game in the van with Aldo.

It was sunny and we picked up Ella at the airport. We went to see Dolly Parton. We did rides and I did the froggy one with Aldo because he wants a partner to go on rides with him. I talked with Eric and Shannon first because they are the parents of Aldo.

I got a T shirt. It has Dolly Parton on it. I went on a ferris wheel with the lights showing and the music. Also I had ice cream, a milkshake. We went hiking like the Sound of Music in the mountains, walking in the mountains! Aldo was working for a badge and he did it. And we had popcorn as a treat. Eric went fishing. We went to a cave and a church and a cemetery.

On the way back we had pizza with Eric's uncle and aunt in Indiana in the house. We visited. We had pop too. And cookies too.

Thank you Farmhouse for inviting me!

The Expanding Beef Herd ~Aldo Witt

The brown cows are not the same as our other cows. You can't milk them and they like staying outside and eating. They like to headbutt!

There's one with a brown eye and its still a baby. It's a beef cow which means we will eat them. The most fun part is they raise their own babies. They run around the yard and sometimes they turn around and chase the wrong Mom! Sometimes, one mom is eating and she doesn't want other babies coming and drinking up because that baby has the wrong Mama!

We can't let any cows in the swamp because we have little baby trees there. They only stay in the field next to the swamp. There's going to be a lot of babies. One hundred babies! Six hundred babies!



Photos: Alex, Carla and Elvis

Volunteering at the PTA Spring Carnival ~Elvis Cormican

There was a bunch of us who went to help. We had to help set up and show kids how to play different games at different stations.

My station was throwing a football through different squares in a tarp. Lots of kids enjoyed playing where I was at. They especially lit up when they found out they could win two prizes if they got it through the middle one. It was fun to see them smiling and laughing. I saw my friends who graduates this year.

It was surprising that no one seemed to know me: I am usually known in Osceola because of church and Community Homestead, and its my home town. I really enjoyed seeing families have fun and being together.



Review of the Minnesota Zoo at Morning Glory's Breakfast Table ~Alex Hansen & Nastia Baerg

Alex: I saw a bass in a tank! About this high, as big as ...a bass! We saw penguins. Then we saw dolphins. Dolphins jump.

Nastia: And seahorses, kinda cool I thought, because some of them float like a leaf and some are just plain and we saw a purple one and white one.

Alex: Then we saw flamingoes. Reminded me of Richard! It looked cute!

Nastia: Oh, my!

Alex: We saw a cardinal



Photos: Terra found a lunar moth at the zoo

Buckeyes and Badgers ~Scott Cummings

I have not been to a hockey game for a while. A bunch of us went, Oscar, Carla, Richard, Christine, Kelly, Alex Hansen, and Sandy was there too

Ohio State was playing Wisconsin and it was an exciting game for sure. I think it was better than the one I went to back in November. It was 3:2 at one point and then Wisconsin scored with 18 seconds left on a contested call. And they tied it up at three then before going into overtime.

The crowd was on its feet and really involved for the comeback. We were too I guess! We had a pretzel which was nice-gave us a little energy.

Nastia: We did see some birds.

Alex: We saw bison

Nastia: A horse, a buffalo, and I don't know what those weird things are called. They look like buffalo but they are not buffalo. Takin. I looked that up.

Alex: I sat with Alex Felt for lunch, inside in the cafeteria. We ate sandwiches.

Nastia: I left mine in the car because I did not know if we were allowed to take it inside so me and Batyah went back for it.

Alex: We saw camels and cheetahs and lions, and monkeys too

Nastia: Yes we did. And a kid let off the fire alarm, and then the Mom did not even care, just walked away from it! I don't know if the kid got in trouble.

Alex: We got our picture taken

Nastia: ...by Batyah at the end, and its about 15 people.

Everyone enjoyed it but I think Terra really enjoyed it. She thought the statues of wolves were real so she petted them.

Alex: Hannah really liked it too.

Nastia: And Kelly really kept up walking which was great because we were all together.



Photo: Oscar, Scott, Alex and Kelly supporting Wisconsin

All About Projects ~Richard Elmquist

Projects is an activity where we do an assortment of things from repairing equipment, building, renovating, maintaining grounds, and even making maple syrup. And this winter there has been A LOT of projects!

Over the winter, I've been concentrating on the solar energy system for the new apartments. Our crew has been busy making a shed to house solar inverters and back up batteries, and building a large solar array. It's an interesting project where we all learned new things like heat pumps, and the whole system of solar energy. It's progress is dependent on weather and other building projects that have been going on in the community. There's a lot going on!

If you come you can see the shed with the batteries and inverters installed, and the heat pump, 14 solar mounting posts and the first of 12 panel sections.

Everyone is important to the effort. Scott does a lot of heavy manual stuff with me. Kelly, Terra and Dustin help keep the site clean and in order, Nastia and Steve specialize in keeping all the tools in the right places and always know where they are. Carla, Ella, Chris, Batyah, Desi, Will, and Brendan, are all willing to do whatever crazy or near impossible tasks that come up. Together, we are making progress!

Also Projects ~Carla Schwinger

I like everything I think. I like tasks I can take my time on completing, which might even be "tedious" like taking apart all the screws and bolts to take down the greenhouse. I do like taking things apart because there is less pressure about messing things up! I was doing some of the sheet rock and that was really difficult and I thought maybe I was doing more harm than good.

I do enjoy being on the roof! That's pretty cool because you can see from so far the progress you have made. I did a bunch of pipes for the solar and again, the same thing over and over which is nice because I know exactly what I am doing! I also like that because then I am not taking attention from someone who could be doing things somewhere else.

A New Bootroom for Evening Star

~Brendan Bennet

Summer of 2024 was a bit wet. Overall this is a great thing. However, the abundance of sky water reveals the path of water once it reaches Earth, and one of the paths of water went directly into the Evening Star kitchen.

Tiny drops of kitchen sky water seeped until they opened Mary Poppin's bag of house renovation projects. Evening

Star was in need of a new roof, but if you're going to do a roof, you should do an addition and, when doing an addition, you'll be doing windows, walls, floors, removing 2 old chimneys, fascia, soffit, trim, siding, and of course a massive deck to sunbathe on. How can you possibly put a roof on your house without adding a massive deck?



Photo: Chris, Scott, Will and Brendan at Evening Star

The winter seemed like a great time to roof so we started the project in

October with the expectation to be done by spring. I figure that's how everyone does it? I really can't put into words the experience of installing a metal roof as a winter project; you sort of just had to be there. For our 2800 sq ft roof we laid fanfold insulation over existing shingles, then installed a standing seam metal roof over all of it.

The entryway addition is an 8'x14' post with footing patio-ish structure. It's amazing I don't know how we lived without it. We have so much gear for existing outside in so many seasons and contexts and it never fit in the old entryway. Furthermore, our capacity to accept guests is so much greater; traditionally people would enter into the dining room to take off muddy boots and jackets. This wasn't cool.

After roofing on the nice days and working on the interior during the cold days, the roof and entryway are done. Through spring and summer we will finish siding and installing a deck.

I can't comfortably thank any individual as these projects are so far-reaching and I see all pursuits as a group effort, so shout out to everyone at Community Homestead for playing a part!

Projects ~Kelly McDaniel

I was the tool lady. Richard had me hold the tools, the thing that drills, the drill blade. I handed them to Carla and Ella. They were putting the nails in the solar panels by the farm and the energy shed. This is kind of like what we have on our roof at Morning Glory. It gives us power and that is for the new apartments and the new bakery which is in a different area. Solar panels for the apartments!

Garden Projects ~Nastia Baerg

We have a lot of projects going. We're seeding lettuce, fennel, and separating beans from the shell. Some of us are cleaning trays. I heard we are getting a new cooler. Nadine said they are ripping the wall off and making the cleaning area bigger. The garden is moving over to Morning Glory's front yard-ish.

They took the old greenhouse plastic off and ordered a new plastic. We chopped the metal pipes which is too long and Will taped it up so the plastic does not rip. And then we rolled out the new plastic which went a lot better than I thought it would. Adrian did it by himself because he did not ask for help or anything. Desi got a lot of beets and tied each one on the plastic to hold it down. Adrian whistled to Orchard people to come down and help and also from the Farm. And one of the strings broke because Adrian thought it was fine to pull but it wasn't. So they had to retie it. Adrian tied a red handle to a string and threw it over and Nadine has to untie it. And I was walking back and forth so Nadine doesn't get too much exercise! Half of us stayed put with the strings and the other half of us went to the other side to pull down. And we finally pulled the plastic over the hoops and put the wires on it to stay put. I was holding the ladder for Will all afternoon because the ground is not even. I thought it worked fine except he dropped some tools. He did not fall off.

I like the projects in the garden and I like to seed and watch them grow but I don't like to clean trays. I think Terra and Bruce and Kelly like to clean trays though.



Photo: Elvis up the ladder

My Part in Projects ~Nastia Baerg

I have been helping with projects, The shed connects the panels to the shed and then to the apartments when they are finished. We put the screws on the roof. I did painting too in the inside roof with Ella. We were trying not to drop anything from the roof because we had to go get it!

I use the little tractor to bring stuff to the garbage, At Evening Star I helped take the fireplace out. Its mostly wood I had to rip out while Scott went back and forth with the garbage. Everybody was on the roof getting the other half of the chimney out.

I like projects, as long as its not freezing cold!

Cookies ~Desirae Peterson

Lately I've been taking more responsibility for making cookies in the bakery. I enjoy the independent work, that way I know what I have to do.

I have been working in the bakery for 7 years now so I know my way around the kitchen. First part of it was picking up when Richard isn't there, and then teaching new volunteers how to start up.

We make cookies for the Minnesota Waldorf School, Craft fairs, farmer's markets, CSA boxes.

I like them all but can't eat any, which is sad!

I feel proud of doing the cookies by myself and it's a lot easier to not have to pay attention to what everyone else is doing.



Photo: Desi making cookies

Desi : *Hi Shepherds and people that have sheep! We need more wool because we are doing a lot of projects: hot mats, gnomes, birds, woodland critters, So if you have wool you don't want to use... we can use it!*



Photo: Left: Oscar and Desi: hedgehogs and owls.



Right: Terra with felt balls

Wool and Felting Group

Desi: I like gluing the faces on the hedgehogs-I like to call them “hedgies”.

Oscar As a group, we decide what we want to make on that day. I like how everything is a different thing and how it's a challenge, learning a bit more each time. If you mess up its not the end of the world

Desi Wool is pretty forgiving, but the needle isn't forgiving. Christine was talking at the same time as standing up and felting, and she can attest to that!

Nastia: I am happy to make things out of wool. When I make a gnome my brain says do it this way but my hands make it another way but it turns out fine, and people like it! I like being challenged. Its hard for me to stay focused but recently I look at the time and I say, okay I do another one and force myself to do it longer but I do also take breaks and come back. I can do it much longer now without getting annoyed.

Terra: Make dryer balls!

Alex: We use a “kitten” machine with a crank. I put colored wool in. Use the color wheel, choose the wool. We put the bats in a bin.

Terra: She, make a ball. Put it in a sock. Use string.

Alex: Christine puts it in the washing machine

Terra: dryer balls!

Pottery Life ~Oscar Rauch

Ana, Bubba, Alex, Oscar is who is in the Friday pottery. It starts at 9:00 Fridays.

I have been rolling out a slab for making mugs, cups, and bottoms. First I get the tools out and set up the tables and chairs. Then make handles by getting the brayer and the small rolling pin and get the clay from the bag. I make balls for different size cups that I need to make handles for and I roll the balls on the rolling pin. I have to roll it until it becomes a bone shape, but it is still flat. I use the brayer to get the curve shape that I am looking for before attaching them to the cups.

I enjoy making handles. I also do the finishing of the inside of the cups using a cat tongue tool. I am very proud of the work I have done over Winter of 2025. I have come a long way. I have been working on pottery since 2016.



Below: Oscar making handles



Photo: Carla, Elke, Ella, Scott, Kelly

Back Again! ~Batyah Selis

Whenever someone asks how long I have been at Community Homestead, it's been a tough question to answer. I recently moved back here in June of 2024, but there were all the summers before... and the visits in between... Even living in Chicago, Community Homestead was on my mind as a point of reference as I participated in different organizations and communities throughout the city. My time here helped me think about communication, shared vision, and accountability in ways that made me a better community member.

I was very excited to come here for a whole year, since I had mostly gotten to experience the summer side of Community, and had many questions about post-September existence—What happens to all the herbs we dry? How do you harvest vegetables when you can't feel your fingers? How on earth do we have so many crafts in the craftroom?

When I describe what my days look like in the winter, I get to marvel at all the new skills I have learned, like paper making, candle dipping, etc, etc. When I look forward to the changing season I'm excited to build upon the perhaps less concrete knowledge that matters so much—how all the small parts and daily practices come together to form (and re-form and re-form) a whole community.



Photo: Carla, Batyah and Nastia in Duluth

Coming and Going ~Christine Elmquist

Last summer feels like a lo-ong time ago now! We have said a lot of hellos to people, and less goodbyes than any of us originally planned. This is a very positive point!

At the start of Spring, we have some new American faces. Chris joined us for the Winter and then decided to stay on for the season, and Ana came for an extended visit and similarly transitioned into a member role for the next months. They join Batyah who is back and has extended their time beyond a year. Carla and Ella joined us from Germany for one year and Graham joined us for the day program one morning a week. We are lucky to be looking as the next months with these strong and experienced folks on board!

Last fall and into Winter Ludwig Rank from Germany came for 6 weeks. Then, Agnes took a sabbatical from her job at the mayor's office in France to spend 3 wintery months with us and was such a lovely addition to Morning Glory. Elke returned to Germany after 17 months here and continues to be part of our community family—so grateful for her sunny smile and all her contributions! Similar thanks go to Chloe who turns up so much there is a suspicion they may be secretly living in an outbuilding and doing their college papers from there!

We look forward to a summer full of Hibernia Waldorf Students, and more new fresh faces to listen to our old jokes! Also welcome to our new neighbors Jill and Tim Kulig, Shannon's parents and more pertinently here, Aldo's grandparents, who relocated from Pennsylvania to a 2 minute walk across the road!

Hello from Ethan

Hi, My name is Ethan and I live in Amery, Wisconsin. I think I said that right! Ma and Dad and my little brother Will.

I come on Wednesday, I don't know how many times, in fall and winter time too. I like community garden. I clean beans and look through beans, organizing. They are easy, to me! Nadine—she is nice and kind.

Then puzzle painting with the guy with no hair (Brendan) and Batyah and they and him together with Christina, Austin, Desi.

I like meat loaf at Community Lunch. My favorite food choice—that's the one!

PLEASE DONATE! ONE DAY ONLY FOR EXTRA MATCHES AND PRIZES

GIVE BIG VALLEYS TUESDAY APRIL 29

<https://www.givebigvalleys.org/organization/Community-Homestead>



Illustration: Community Outreach Pavilion (Alex)

Coming Events:

Sunday May 11th 11-4pm - The River Road Community Farm Crawl

Come with the Mamas in your life and celebrate. Pies, crafts and animals at our stop

www.facebook.com/RiverRoadCommunityFarms

Saturday June 14th 2-6pm - Community Homestead Country Banquet

Big elegant foodie fest! A collaboration between the chefs and their students at St Paul College to cook, grill, bake and prepare an amazing outdoor feast from organic produce and locally raised meat. The highlight of our beautiful season and a fund raiser for the life here at Community Homestead.

Tickets www.communityhomestead.org

Saturday August 16th 3-9pm Community Homestead Pig Roast

Hayrides, children's crafts and family farm fun for all. A big buffet of freshly roasted pork and lots of sides and salads. Vegetarians? We have you covered too! Crafts for sale, live music, folk dancing for all. Bring the whole family and all of your friends!

Innovation, Choice.

Opportunity to flourish!

Expand social and vocational opportunities for people with disabilities and help us continue to feed our neighbors!

So, two big drives this year! We hope you help us raise money for the **Food For All Fund**, and the **Community Outreach Pavilion** this year.

Food for All means exactly that. We grow it, bake it, cook it and distribute it to those that need it. You help us pay for the costs.

Working closely with **Osceola Open Cupboard**, **People Loving People** and food distributions in the twin cities, organic, fresh food gets right out onto people's plates. No one should go hungry in such a beautiful growing area.

Of course, we love that life balance, where people who need support to shine are the ones who are helping grow, create and distribute for others (who support them). It highlights our common humanity. We hope you love that too.

Building a **Community Outreach Pavilion** benefits the community and the neighborhood. It adds to the beautiful pizza oven we built in 2023, right next to the new bakery, creating a social gathering space.

Here we can practice hosting, serving and extending our welcome. Not only is this a vocational opportunity, it's an economic one. With one eye on the uncertainties of the future, we need to shore up our sustainable economy. Farm Pizza Night anyone?!



Photo: Bubba and Christina