



Community Homestead

Newsletter: Summer 2026

Mission: "to create and sustain a community where people with disabilities can reach their fullest human potential"

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

Shepherding a Diversified Livestock Operation

~Shannon Kulig

If I could characterize this summer in a single word, several come to mind, but the one that consistently comes out of my mouth is critters. This has been a summer of critters. Some intentionally brought to the farm, a springing beef herd calving a new generation, and others that simply move in or migrate through, taking advantage of the bounty that this season has brought us.

Our new arrivals began just before Easter, as our crews greeted 100 little baby peeps and 5 turkeys. Then in May, one at a time, fuzzy brown and black calves were born to eagerly awaiting mommies and fresh spring pastures littered with dandelions. By the end of May we picked up 6 piggies ready to turn the hovel into a home, snooting through the spring mud. Tadpoles grew into spring peepers in the wetland behind the barn dug to encourage water to drain away from the farm. June marked the end of our purposeful critter collection. The new life on the farm was exciting and we had our hands full as fieldwork began.



Aldo watering the cows

I find that often, despite our best intentions and planning, the farm has a life of its own. We suffered close encounters with baby skunks who helped themselves to the

leftover catfood and marshmallows forgotten after a late night bonfire. A new ground hog moved into the den under the machine shop. Last year's tenant was evicted - lured by cantaloupe, captured in a live trap, and removed to a distant forest. We obviously failed to fill in the den well enough to deter future occupancy. During a heatwave in July, raccoon pups begged for relief above the machine shop. Travis helped me spook them to a cooler space to snooze. The migrating birds took to the fields after the grain harvest. Goofy sand-hill cranes, plumed turkeys, and Canadian geese settled in to prevent any volunteer rye from taking hold.

We have watched, called to, baited, pursued, and run away from the animals we shared our space with this summer. I, personally, have loved my meet and greets, even the

skunks. The critters keep us on our toes. You never know who you will meet turning a corner at the barnyard.

Rhubarb Fest

~Alex Hansen, Hannah Gregor, Christine Elmquist

Christine: This is a festival we co-organize with Osceola PTA and the Osceola Lions. Each of us arranges a part of this, the craft fair, the duck race, the pie stand, co-ordinating with the businesses on Main Street who all jump into the fun. We put it all on a map and launch ourselves into summer with Osceola Rhubarb Fest. The pie stand is really popular. This year we made 200 pies as well as small pie slices and individual items, all rhubarb varieties. People here are so enthusiastic in baking and many neighbors help supplement the rhubarb supply. Its so popular that Mindy, who volunteers every year with her son Alex, said, "it's like selling on Black Friday!"

Alex: We made good pie! Rhubarb, Rhubarb Strawberry, Rhubarb Apple, Rhubarb Raspberry. First, wash hands, apron, hat on. Then I wash the rhubarb. Desi, Christine chops the rhubarb. Janette stir rhubarb, flour, and sugar. I mix the big bowl. Janette or me chop butter. Christine chops in machine; two butter and flour. Desi puts the water. I get the pans out, Christine puts the dough. Janette scoops the pie filling. We put the stamp on, I do the knife take the dough out then get a tray. Christine puts them in the oven! Us! We all clean up!

Hannah: We made Rhubarb Blondies and Rhubarb Brownies and little Rhubarb Cakes. Desi made Rhubarb Lemon Bars and Graham and Desi made little crumbles. So there were other people who don't always make pies, Max and Graham, me, Storay, Hillary, Elena as well as everyone else. Mary Elmquist came over a couple of times to help too.

We were putting a lot of pies in the freezer and then we ran out of space so we had to use the walk-in freezer. We baked them in the bakery because there were so many, and then we had to move them to the cooler. We were all down in the basement trying to label them all and bring them up to

the outside cooler. There were a lot of us!

Alex: The best! Rhubarb Fest! Millpond. Me, My Mom helped,

Hannah: Sherry Hansen, Nastia, Max who was a French volunteer, our board member Michelle (and it was my first time meeting her) Christine, Mindy and Alex all helped sell. People were overly excited about pies and the event kind of opened itself because lots of people lined up and there were so many ready that we decided to start selling! They were with families and they bought a lot. They commented that they'd had our pies before.

Alex: We will do it next year!



Desi and Graham



Selling Pies

Volunteering at Adoray ~Hannah Gregor

Adoray is a non-profit for home and hospice care which gives a chance for people who don't want to go to a nursing home to die at home. Every Wednesday morning at 9.30am I go to Adoray's thrift store which raises money for it.

I turn on all the main store lights, price tag bags, jewelry, put books out, straighten clothes racks, organize shoes, make a cup of coffee for another volunteer! I work with Peg, Tia and Care, and sometimes Corky. There a lot of moving parts. You do one job and then you get asked to do another job, sometimes before you are finished but this is the way

it runs. Its friendly and a nice environment to work it.

The work I do there has a purpose and we raise money and bring awareness to hospice care. I am compassionate for others and giving up a part of myself for this helps that. Being on time and responsible for the work I do and actually really caring about the work rather than just saying I've done it has been really good for me. Its fulfilling for me and gives me a sense of pride and being part of a team.



Janette, Storay, Hillary, Hannah & Alex

Glimpses of the Garden, Orchard and Farm



Nadine



Hannah



Travis

Nadine Holder: I like working with all the people here. The diversity makes it fun and interesting: you have to find different ways to do different things so you have to stay creative. Life does not seem so serious and problems are put into perspective when we all garden together like this.

Hannah Cabreana: I am holding the Love in a Mist! It was a Wednesday. I was gardening, holding a rubberband to band the flowers, to make wreathes. We dry them. I was weeding. In the morning I used to be in the orchard and now, today, I am in the Community Center, taking leaves off the stem of the lemon balm. I like chamomile. Harvesting in the orchard and playing with those kids, Chelsea's kids. I like it.



Terra

Ethan Clarke: In the orchard, blueberries and raspberries, with the red, and sometimes white in the apples too. Working in the garden crew. Look at the beans, see if they are okay to put in the bucket. Pull out some weeds. I like all the people. They are all fun. They are all my friends.

Terra Corpuz: So fun the turkeys. I make their bed, feed, water. Hold them when they were little. Two boy turkeys, three girl turkeys. Now, they follow people around. They run at butterflies. They make noise, yep, gobble gobble. Turkeys flap around and puff up. Eat the

turkeys at Thanksgiving.

Scott Cummings: Summer season is harvesting kale, carrots, tomatoes, carrots, I don't even know how many vegetables we have!

We go to each row to harvest. I do it with Nadine, Adrian, Shannon sometimes. Alex, and Brendan is there early on Monday and Tuesday. So is Kelly, Batyah, Hillary, Dustin... We have discussions about our week, what we did, what we are looking forward to. Sometimes we talk about who is running for the governor of Wisconsin and all that. Some people have an opinion but we don't know who is running yet.

Brendan came around with La Croix water and chips. Popsicles, freezies we call them. Packing on Tuesdays, lining up the boxes and all. They get filled and go to various stations in the cities or at the Waldorf School. There's a bunch of sites. Individuals come and pick up from the farm. I've met a lot of people. I like harvesting best. I like the conversations we have while we do it.



The First Blueberries

~Brendan Bennett

In 2023 the orchard began working and amending a small section of earth with the intention to plant blueberries. Initially it needed elemental sulphur to lower ph and some cover crop to try to work out the weeds.

In spring 2024 we planted around 150 blueberry bushes in this area and immediately realized that the space didn't quite fill out nicely, so we proceeded to plant another 120 in 2025.

Much was learned. After 2 summers of treating the little bushes like they had arrived on a silver chariot, they've begun to offer us something in return. BLUE-BERRIES!

In the beginning of July, Desi, Isaac, Terra and I harvested the first berries:

Desi: I love blueberries because they're about the size of a nickel.

Isaac: a dime at least. He's (Brendan) going to triple the amount we have already. I've done a bit of mowing and weed-whipping around them.

Brendan: Isaac is correct, we have started to prepare a plot for another 600 or so bushes.

Desi: I did the spreading of the weird green chips. Oh, the Sulphur chips! Also I helped put up the deer fence.

Isaac: We did "thinning" last week for the first harvest. I just crawled under the net.

Terra: you catch the birds?

Desi: No, we put the net up so the birds can't get the berries.

We've done a few more harvests since then and it's great to see challenges, opportunities, and where this crop fits in within the orchard. Many customers may have already tasted some as several pounds have already passed through farmers markets and the online farm store. A well-respected blueberry bush should live about 30 years and peak production of this planting should be realized in 2028, so expect this delicious berry to become a regular in our repertoire.



Herbs in the Orchard

~Alex Felt

There's just something about herbs! As the orchard has grown and changed shape over the past few years, I've been inserting herb plots where space is made. The growth happens at a nice pace in relation to my study of herbal medicine, which I've been doing formally online through Commonwealth School for Holistic Herbalism for the past two years. These studies have been informing what herbs and formulations I want to fold into the practice.

Working with herbs is wonderfully inclusive. I love the pace and social atmosphere as we share the tasks- be it the practice of cutting the herbs at just the right height; banding herb bundles as part of a team; sitting and chatting together while one picks chamomile;

de-stemming herbs for the dehydrator; garbling herbs on a screen for the right sifted cut; or packaging them. There's roles for everyone and, because we are working with the plants usually in the same spot for the whole season (and many of them in the same bed year after year), people get really familiar with the "who's who" and "what's what" with the herbs in the orchard, learning how these plants can be helpful to others when consumed as tea or in other preparations.

There's so many herbalists at Community Homestead who play a part in the herbal products we make at here, it's perhaps a shorter list with who hasn't played a role. I'm glad people enjoy taking part.



Brendan

Friendships in Community

~Mary Elmquist

I came to Community Homestead twenty years ago. Most of my life has been in community, mainly in Camphill, so living with like-minded people was not new for me but this community was very different from other communities I had been in.

I was of an age when most people begin to think about retirement, but I did not come to retire. I also had grandchildren here whose life I could be part of in a much closer way. We moved around a bit in the first year, ending up in a house we named Evening Star. We lived there with Nina and Sandy for most of that time.

My husband Asger carried the Woodshop with Terra and others while I helped in various crafts, the garden, and developed the candle shop. After the community center was built I took on the care and order of the craft space downstairs, and generally the basement area. It was a very satisfying life then.

When I was almost eighty, I had a triple bi-pass surgery and this was a real turning point in my life. Relearning all the basic skills, and finding I had a frail and weakened body changed me from being a care-giver to a care-receiver in many ways and it was a very big learning curve,

Being in community was a tremendous help. There was a whole network of people to rely on, who offered support, let me be on the road to recovery at my pace, and yet at the same time allowed me to participate in activities as I was able.

Not long after my coming out of hospital we moved to Tournesol, a house which the community built with us in mind and which was just for Asger and myself. At this point I need to mention three new friendships that emerged, three young ladies who, it seems to me, have taken me under their wing. All of them came to Community Homestead right at that time. They are Hannah, Nastia, and Desi.

Hannah is always there with a helping hand, a smile, and the story of her latest adventure. “Just let me know if you need anything”, are always her last words as she leaves to go home. She came once a week throughout the winter to help with the larger cleaning projects and we enjoyed our time together, ending with a cup of something, chatting over our knitting and sharing our last week’s happenings. I am also happy to know I can help her learn some new things too.

Nastia, always cheerful, pops into say hi and to ask, do I have enough eggs. She brings the milk, stroking the cats,

chatting to Asger and altogether just popping in to see that all is okay. And again, the “let me know if you need anything”.

And then Desi with a big wave and a “Hi Mary” from across the way, a big smile making me feel I am, at that moment, the only thing that matters!

These three ladies with their unconditional friendship have become friends who have taken me under their wing to make sure all is well for me. They offer much and ask little in return. They are representatives of what this community is all about, and I am a recipient of very special caring. Without expectations or pressures, I can be me. I feel very blessed and grateful.



Dominick, Elena, Nastia and Max

Camping

~Nastia Baerg

I invited Max, Dom and Elena to camping at Interstate Park in Wisconsin, Richard dropped us off at campsite 64. It was sunny outside and we were thinking about how to put tents up. Me and Dom shared tent and Elena and Max shared a tent. It was Brendan and Alex’s tent.

We used Richard and Christine’s cooktop to cook food on and we didn’t know how to put it together and I made food on it. It was my first time doing it. We didn’t know how to unscrew the gas on it so I called Richard again and he said undo it, so I did. Then we used the fire for the rest of the camping. When it was bedtime, Me and Dom heard a coyote right next to us. Max and Elena didn’t hear it.

We did not have a car so we tied the bags up on trees and it worked out. Elena got a whole bunch of mosquito bites on her legs because she was wearing shorts. Me and Dom went swimming. We all went for a walk in the woods and got a whole bunch of ticks on that too. Our tent had a spider. I freaked out. Dom tried to kill it. Max and Elena thought it was hilarious. Each of us took turn how to wash dishes.

It was fun. Thank you you guys for coming.

Chef's Garden Party

~Hillary Schauls

I was so happy when Josh came and helped. We helped them out in the ambulance, bringing things, taking things you know. My sister Brigitte came and Janette and I got tickets. St Paul College: the chefs were great and students cooking: pizza in the pizza oven, pesto pizza and mozzarella pizza and the sauce was great. We tried something new, the rice, and lemon cake, a cheesecake one. I loved the rhubarb dessert with my sister! I tried meat in a sandwich and they cooked on a charcoal grill. We had a wagon ride. Eric was driving the tractor and the tour was Shannon. It was in the garden and the community center. Over a hundred people came.



Student Chef



Chef Pierre Rabbia

**Loved the Chef's Garden Party?
Missed the Chef's Garden Party?**

**Never mind! Pig Roast and all around farm-fun day
is coming:**

Pig-Roast Folk-Dance Farm Day! August 15, 3-9pm

Children's activities, family yard games, wagon rides, animal tours, craft fair, cow pie raffle, music and, of course, FOOD! Farm fresh pork, sides, dessert and vegetarian alternatives.

Tickets: www.communityhomestead.org

CSA Discount through the online farmstore

Coming Back

~Ada Lennarz



Kelly, Hannah, Hillary & Josh

Last summer, I spent two months at Community Homestead after my freshman year of college, and have had the joy of returning this July. My first stay was motivated by a short high school trip that left me curious and inspired—this inspiration has only grown with time. I've found myself welcomed into a space full of great teachers who are eager to hand me tools but also trust me to practice them, which feels incredibly empowering.

One of the things I love about Community Homestead is that it isn't an "either-or"—but a beautiful interweaving of things that complement each other in surprisingly powerful ways. The point of a garden shift, for example, is not just to produce food, or just to "take care" of people. It is real and necessary agricultural work, but the importance of connecting with one another isn't placed below the importance of being "productive." We pick beans, but across from one another while we chat. We're outside all morning and sweaty, but if something doesn't get accomplished on a shift we adjust, and it's ok. On a day with bad air quality we just might go see Moana. Similarly, the structure of life here isn't only for adults with disabilities—it serves everyone. This work culture has felt more sustainable for me than most jobs I've had—it's a space where I'm challenged, cared for, and have fun all at the same time, where my work directly contributes to a greater community—things I think are valuable for everybody.

In a conversation this week, Christine asked me why I chose to come back—it's one thing to have an inspiring experience, but why did I want to return? Besides missing everyone, my best answer is that so much of this place is about things that are built over time—relationships, farming knowledge, etc. I think the beauty of Community Homestead stems from the fact that people get to (and have to) learn to live with each other—which means getting to know each person as an individual. While I undoubtedly learned a lot last year, I knew it wasn't the kind of knowledge that could be "checked off," but the kind that can grow with experience and time. I'm so glad to be back!

We are Expanding-Come Join Us!

~Christine Elmquist

Often, on a tour or at an event, under a billowing blue sky, surrounded by the vibrant life of community, I hear, "Oh, I'd love to live here myself!" And we laugh together and I say, "it is a wonderful life!"

So let me say that again, it IS a wonderful life. And add, you CAN come be part of it. Come for a couple of months to a year. Live in a team house, adding your talents and friendship to the home, assist or even lead diverse crews of people gardening, baking, constructing, crafting, farming. Learn it all. Go on crazy vacations with the best companions ever to Alabama, hike waterfalls, kayak, knit, swim in the river, bike everywhere... the list goes on!

You need to want to create and sustain a fulfilling and vibrant life for yourself and for others, to love doing things with people as well as by yourself, to have a clear background check and physical, and to do some training here alongside the rest of us. And it helps to be a practical idealist, enjoying a place where everyone is looking out for each other and appreciating humanity in all its sparkling individuality!

Here's some answers to the unasked questions:

Yes there is financial security, health insurance, your own room (families-lead or co lead a team house)

Yes, we welcome families.

We also appreciate volunteers for a few hours, a day, for an event. Looking for the best ball game friend? Want to come and chat over craft making in the winter? Seed vegetable trays in the spring? All ages, come add your talents and enrich the lives of others!

email christine.elmquist@communityhomestead.org to start the conversation.



Will, Alex and Dominick



Hannah., Desi, Dana and Alex

Goodbye and Hello

Goodbye to lovely Max who returned to France after three months here. You added a lot in your shy gentle, way and we all miss you!

We are happy to welcome Dana from Hibernia Waldorf School for 6 weeks, Oliver from Madison for a month, Ada, Sam and Maya who both returned for a month or so this summer and to several visitors, Tabetha and Tabby (what are the chances in the same month?) and Corey, who all stayed a few weeks, adding their talents and experience to all we do. We also enjoyed April and May full of school groups from Chicago Waldorf School, Youth Initiative from Viroqua, Minnesota and City of Lakes Waldorf third grade, and Meadowlark's third grade, and Thoreau College.

Adding to this, we were happy to add Clayton into the day program. We appreciate our volunteers, The Thursday Granny Group, Cheryl, our Tai Chi teacher and other neighbors who lend a hand. It is nice not to have a hard boundary about who is, and who is not, in the community!



Students building a deer fence

Donations From April 1- July 20, 2026

Natalie Alper-Leroux	Kristine Fowler	Maureen McElrath	Peggy Rydeen
Barbara U Anderson	Leann French	Bonnie & Mike Macmartin	Dale Sandberg
Carole Anderson	Claire Frisbie	Richard Meoli	Mary C Scanga
Richard Arking	John Fuller	Pamela Mielke	Gary & Lynne Schauls
Joshua Avritt	Edwin Funk & Kris Post	Kelly Miller	Catherine Schubilske
Shirley Baerg	Lukas Funk	Ross Miller	Ann Sophie Schulze
Brigitte Baig	Nora Gardner	Lillie & Will Mobley	Joshua Seidman
Peggy Baus	Kyle & Sally Gausman	Pamela Morris	Judy Selis
Cheryl Beardslee	Peter & Mary Gove	Danielle Murry-Knowles	Myra Severin
Nancy Beck	Kurt Gowan	James A Nester	Alivia Shasteen
Sharon Beckstead	Zack Grand	Joel Nester	Siddhi Sheth
Linda Bergh	Maeve Gualtieri-Reed	Julia Nester	Rosemary Shetka
Allison Berry	Paul Hammer	Richard Nester	Sally Silk
Maria Biros	Anthony Hansen	Sheri Nester	Jody Sipe
Anthony Bodelson	Kelly Hansen	Elena Neumann	Mary Small
Karen Bohnert	Melinda Hansen	Jessica J Neumann	David & Rita Sobel
Jean Borgerding	Roberta M Hansen	Kristin Nyren	Sara Sonnenberg
Joyce Borgerding	Rolf Hansen	Malika Obeidi	Cecilia Spann
Terence Borgerding	Sherry Hanson	Benjamin Ober	Margaret Spann
Todd Borgerding	Holly Harmon	Michelle Oberman	Rice Spann
Maxime Boudon	Linda Hau	Vance Olivier	Sandra Swami
Veronique Boudon	Emily Hause	Susan Owen	Pamela Swanson
Bill & Laura Briggs	Michelle Heerey Streater	Jordan Panarella	Emma Sweet
Rosanne & David Brough	Madelon Holder & Gisela	John Pantazides	Yvonne Swenson
Angela Burnett	Wielki	Sally Parks	Abigehl Taylor
Dolores Campbell	Will Hommeyer	Hannah Peckler	Joan Thompson
Jane Campbell	Melody Horn	Lisa Peckler	Mary & Ken Tomes
Mary Charpentier	Jennifer Huff	Mindy Peckler	Vanessa Townsend
Elizabeth Coffey	Lisa Jamila-Wuerth	Janet Pedersen	Cheryl Tranquillo
John & Audrey Colasanti	Shawn Johanson	Bruce & Lois Peterson	Laurene Traynor
Jeffrey Comins & Laurie	Kimberly A Kaiser	Kimberly Pilgrim	Mercedeh Vaez
Schmidt	Abigail Kapp	Johanna Pongratz	Evelyn Valen
Kate Cona	Nancy Kapp	Nina Potter	Beth Voigt
Carter D Condon	William Kasenchar	Scott Prichard	Joanne Votel
Laurel Desnick & Jim	Rachel Kelley	Therese Pueschner	Brian Wagner
Baerg	Frances Kerber	Ashley R Blake	Chelsea Wagner
Kim Donaldson	Rut Kessel	Milad Rakhsha	Cindy Wagner
Tim Dougherty	Kelvin Kobernick	Jacqueline Rice	Eric Wagner
Marcia Dressel	Lisa Kraisiwatana	Michelle Rice	Rachel Wallace
Rhonda Dunham	Niels Krappa	Garth Riegel	Melody K Waring
Asher & Maddie Elmland	Mark & Deborah Kravik	Kailey Roberts	Esther Welsh
Christine & Richard El-	Norma Kretzschmar	Christina A Roffers	Margaret Wieners
mquist	Ruth F Krupa	Thomas Rumreich	Harriet Witt
Jacob Elmquist & Quyen	Danie Kulig		
Tran	Owen Kulig		
Asger & Mary Elmquist	Shannon Kulig	American Online Giving Foundation	
Joseph & Marianne El-	Tim & Jill Kulig	Chicago Waldorf School	
mquist	Jean Larson	Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund	
Brooke Ernst-Strassburg	Linda Leng	Forethought Life Insurance	
Bruce Feldstein	Gina Lewin	John & Kathleen Rooney Family Fund	
Bruce Fillipi	Elizabeth Madden	The Blackbaud Giving Fund	
Kevin Flynn	Margaret Mahoney	Thrivent Financial for Lutherans	
Michael Flynn	Jane Maki	United Way St. Croix Valley	
Terri Ann & Dan Flynn	Pauline Manos	Youth Initiative High School	
Miriam Flysjo			