

Summertime! Welcome to the sauna, thunderstorm, skyscaped and cloud sculpted season we are enjoying! With 17 acres of garden pumping out vegetables, our orchard laden with berries and our fields dancing in crops, we have our hands very full. Plus the sun is shining! This means that the river is calling, the rodeo is happening and music is playing nearby. And we don't want to miss a thing! Here is a glimpse into our lives right now.

### The Fourth of July-Asger Elmquist

Since July 4<sup>th</sup> fell on a Monday (harvest day) this year most of our celebrations happened a day early. Sunday July 3rd most of us at Community Homestead gathered in the morning for a while to help pick berries in our Orchard, and then everyone went off to the St. Croix River at Osceola Park Landing for a "Picnic." Unlike last year, only a few people plunged into the river to swim and splash. Some played Frisbee, tossed Football or rolled the Bocce balls. After eating most of us settled on the grass to enjoy conversation in the sun or snooze.

Amazing to think that ten days later, due to heavy rains further north, the St. Croix River would rise to within three feet of all time recorded high – more than ten times its normal flow.

In the evening most went to fireworks. We have the best seats in the house at Marine- on- St -Croix: we sit on the lawn of our board members and friends, Jeff Commins and Laurie Schmidt, and gaze straight up!

Monday July 4th was celebrated in the evening with Games on our "Playing Field.".An enthusiastic and lively game of Kick Baseball was quite an event to watch from the sidelines. Some amazing styles of kicking, of running (and colliding), sliding into bases and even attempts to run off WITH the base, as if this was some kind of "Rugby-game.".

Janette's style of "Nonchalance" was perfect as she kicked the ball gently and then sauntered off toward first base. On principle she never runs. She loved the activity of the game though, bursting out in giggles as Joseph dived into third base, sliding on his belly at her feet, as she was guarding it.



However Joseph did not save the day as Oscar Borgerding had already caught the ball and was sending it off to "Homebase." It is fun to see people's hidden athletic abilities come out with a good sense of competition and fun for everyone, especially when it is followed by ice cream sundaes!

Photos: Steven at Osceola Landing Chelsea's signature "Fourth Cake"



#### The Country Banquet -Christine Elmquist

Two hours to go. Chefs in the kitchen, flowers blooming as requested, lawns neatly trimmed and gardens raked out and standing at attention. And where are we? Wrestling the wind for our huge yellow and white tent set up an hour before on the lawn of the Community Center. We are losing badly. Flexibility friends! And a really fast plan B is needed!.



As board president Ed Funk said later, "having the meal by the pond and the packing shed was like a fancy restaurant where you pay extra and sit at a big table in the kitchen!" This new sheltered spot, with the lilies and the frogs for

neighbors turned out beautifully and Chef Nathan Sartain was as relaxed as ever. We got the clear chuckle that in the range of things that he and fellow Chef Sean Jones could imagine going awry at events, this did not even register.

When our guests arrived, our greeters, Alex, Kelly and Shannon, had managed a quick change and were looking cool and relaxed. The garden was beautiful and the wind was now just Mother Nature's welcome air conditioner on a hot day. The hors d'oeuvres, served on large platters, the wine under the eaves, the sour beer from Oakhold Farmhouse Brewery made from our own grapes, all delicious! As ninety guests wandered along the pathways, around the flowers, through the herbs, the whole place seemed to breathe out peace and tranquility.



Jackson Bean has been coming here since he was 18. Now 24 he is off to college to stay in a dorm in the cities. His last day is coming up fast and we wish him well in this next exciting stage of life!

photos: Alex and Shannon greet guests Janette anchors the tent hors d'oervres in the garden



Many of our guests have been to all four banquets. As Nathan and Sean have now incorporated this annual affair into the curriculum of the St Paul College, their students making charcuterie, artisan cheese, and vegetable dishes from our organic produce, we all look forward to banquets to come. Fantastic experience for the college students, beautiful fund raiser for us and a generous and appreciative connection between Community Homestead and St Paul College. Together we raised almost \$9,000 for the land fund so we can be ready to purchase our farmland.



### Ode to the Berry -Brendan Bennett

It starts before you know it, and it ends before you know it. It's colorful, vibrant, and staining to the fingers and clothes. It's brilliant white petaled flowers remind us that winter is not forever. The hard bitter knobs that erupt from the flower builds anticipation. At last, soft juicy fruit arrives captivating consumers, man and animal alike. Suddenly, in less than a month, they begin to rot leaving their lovers longing for one more day of picking. It flashes by and can't be returned. Preservation is a consolation, but will never compare to the warm ripe fruit you taste in early summer. Until next year, my tasty friend....

## What is going on at the Farmhouse -Richard Elmquist

We are doing a fairly major renovation of the Farmhouse primarily to make it safer and more suitable for life sharing. With this in mind we are encompassing a complete update of wiring, heating and ventilation, increasing insulation, repairing the foundation, pouring concrete slab in the basement as well as moving stairways, and opening up walls downstairs. Once started, this list got bigger as we found some com-

promised floor joists, rotted wall joists and framing, rotted windows and a poorly vented attic.

Farmhouse is a hundred years old and so it is time for some updating. We have continuously occupied it since starting the community but now we

### Pie Group -Alex Hansen

The processing crew makes pies: Christine, me, Janette, Bruce, Saskia, Ari. I stir raspberry on the stove. I put sugar on-sprinkle. Janette does dishes, gets things out, does pans. Bruce does flour, measures. Ari puts butter in.

Christine makes pastry, Saskia too now, cuts a heart in it. We take pies to Farmer's market on Friday. We sold Rhubarb pies too at Rhubarb Days.

### Exchange to New Hampshire -Hillary Schauls

I went to the NAC conference in Kimberton Hills, Pennsylvania. I hung out there with a bunch of people I know. Elizabeth Bright was there from Copake. I saw Donut, Emily, Violet, Berry and Ashley from Plowshare. I saw my exchange at the conference: Ashley. After the NAC Conference, me and Tony went to New Hampshire to Plowshare which is a small farm. Ashley, me and Nina shared that exchange. I went first for 2 weeks before Easter and then I came back. Nina went for two weeks after Easter. Ashley stayed at Morning Glory and then she went to Orion at Community

had an opportunity to move people around and create a gap

to do all this.

We have Joel Slattingren doing the carpentry and masonry with the help of Jeff Greeley. Joel brings a vision to the house so there will also be a beautiful porch wrapped around two sides. Jeff has been really generous in his concrete work with the foundation. Joel has welcomed help from various community members who have enjoyed learning about construction (and also destruction.) Scott, Terra, Mark, Alex, Steve Fons and Steven Kicker, Jordan,

Will, Jacob, and Brendan have all joined in taking things apart and cleaning up. Students from the Chicago Waldorf School, here for two weeks, got to take down stairs and walls. Together we filled a three ton dumpster with six and a half tons of debris.

By the end of August, we'll have a tighter, lighter, spacious home with an abundance of three prong outlets so no more blowing the fuse when you vacuum or worrying about people falling down the stairs.



Photos: The Farmhouse

Nina and Juliane sell pies at Rhubarb Days.

Hillary and Tony at their Plowshare exchange



Homestead. I did the bakery. I had to make a big batch of cookies. I made macaroons. I went to a church dinner and did eurythmy and the cows barn. I lived in Haska with Ikenna and Violet and Violet is my new best friend. I sent her a birthday card in the mail for her birthday. I sent a hat I made to Ashley for thank you. They have a store and sell cookies. I got a bag that says Plowshare on the front and a t-shirt and goodies to share with everyone in my house.

Photos: With the river too flooded to swim, and a tight budget, in our heat wave, we took to the exciting slopes of the Community Center. Engineering developments got pretty elaborate. Here are Juliane and Hillary, Leo and Terra, going for a great run!

## Who is Leo Moua, our new Americorps person? -Travis Hansen

Leo has been here three weeks. He likes sports. He has two brothers and two sisters. He does not have any horses or cows or dogs or fish. His brother has a pair of parakeets, a pair of birds. Wow! They laid eggs!

He doesn't watch TV much. He likes swimming in the river, not lakes. He doesn't fish. He likes to work in a group, that's all. In a group of people like us.



#### Hiawatha Music Festival-Kelly McDaniel

This must have been my fourth or fifth time at Hiawatha, Bruce, I, Nina, Kim, Ari, Chloe, Sam and Brendan went. It was a good crowd. Its good we had another big van driver. Brendan was happy he got to come because he has been to music festivals before he said, but he has never been to one like Hiawatha!

We camped out in a family size tent and a medium size tent. We had some rain but no thunderstorms and we got lucky because it was also hot and Kim said not to bring those extra layers! We had a picnic on the beach. I had my swimsuit just in case but I am not a big fan of swimming. But Brendan said I can at least put my feet in, so I did!

The music was jazzy. From 8:30 to 11:30 on Sunday Nina and me and Brendan helped with security and we put on orange vests, put a big smile on our faces and said, "Good Morning!" and we checked everyone was wearing their bracelets. Afterwards we got a T-shirt. I met another Jeff and another Connie. That's a common name. I like to go every year because I like Kim's sense of humor and she said she'd look into it for next year because it always happens the third week of July.



#### First impressions -Juliane Nemrow

When someone asks you where you are from, or where you are living now, you usually give them a place name, as if that tells them everything they need to know. And, in most cases it does the trick. If you are from a big city, you're used to diversity and know your way around public transport systems. A small town means slow driving and few secrets. But, once in a while, your home is so out of the ordinary frame of reference that instead of naming a place, you have to describe it as an idea.

As an Americorp member at Community Homestead I find myself pausing. "Well," I say, "I live in a community of people who all work together to enjoy life basically. We all have different abilities and skills that we use to help each other, so that everyone can experience life in a meaningful and enabling way.

Usually my description is met with skepticism until I tell them about weeding in the garden, or Sunday barbeques, or even about getting a smile from Nina. I think, in the end it must be the look on my face that convinces them that I must live in a remarkable idea. And I do.

Photo: Kelly, Nina and Bruce relaxing at Hiawatha Music Festival.



# Goodbye to Mary Peters -Christine Elmquist

Twenty years ago, I got an emergency call from a social worker in Dakota County. Could we take a 34 year old woman tomorrow, her foster mother had a medical emergency and was moving into a nursing home? Well, as it happened, yes we could and Mary Peters moved in within 24 hours. With a taste for ice cream right out of the tub, and a bite of cheese from the hunk, Mary was a self advocate, and assertive activist, right from the get go. She brought with her a pair of stripey farm overalls and several pairs of glittery bead necklaces and jumped right into the farm and garden activities. She engaged our 8year old oldest and rather undersized son in a five year long competition of size and importance ("Mary big, Joseph small!" she'd gloat-until of course, he wasn't) and knit yards of wobbly grey scarves af-

ter learning with Richard. sing- along was complete without her foghorn bass. No potluck felt right until you could hear her raucous cackling and laughter. Flirtatious, funny, competitive, Mary rocked the community.

As time went

by, she settled into team life, Joseph grew taller and he became her favorite flirt. Every Christmas our four adult children each bought her giant rings, baubles, flashing pins and gaudy hats and she wore them all at once. She was part of a steady trio with Sandy and Bruce, and went to every music event possible. She travelled to Florida, Nebraska, to north woods cabins, and hopped onto Chelsea's family reunion where she was an honorary and delightful wearer of their colored T- shirt. She went on exchange at Camphill Copake. She rode her tricycle for years. She checked the newspaper daily for her horoscope, announcing that today was, no matter the fact of it, "five stars!" Cheese burger was a culinary delight, and we would bewilder newcomers playing Apples to Apples by saving our "food cards" for Mary's turn: no matter the question, the answer was always Cheeseburger. If you had that card on her turn, you won. She went every Saturday to the library and out to eat, and after she was no longer able to navigate roads, directions or town life, was helped by her friend Kelly who took her arm and chivvied her along with the group. She embarrassed me no end, mooching extra brownies at craft fairs, cadging drinks from strangers, dancing provocatively at any public occasion, and once hilariously dashing up to the mike during

music in the park and howling her contribution during the, "come and add your praise" portion of the gospel choir performance. She was the Queen of yoga and last year, the star of jazzercise. One Easter Friedo convinced her she had laid an egg, a miracle that was reprised every Easter for years to come. She was the champion lid-unscrewer of Morning Glory.

In the last couple of years, Mary has been choosing to step back from the active life of the community preferring her coloring, music and home. Every little blonde haired boy of about three became "Ashy" (Asher now 22) her sisters' names tended to merge into each other, and she could lose herself on the way to the orchard. In May, she broke her hip. Together with her sisters and her guardian, we have been wrestling around with what happens next as each recovery was beset with complications and further set backs. Mary,

willful as ever, was much quicker than all of us, recognizing that she was moving on permanently and has embraced the attention of the transitional care home telling us, "I stay here." In actuality, she can not remain there but she will move on to a home specializing in dementia and mobility is-

sues. It is hard to adapt. Her sisters and her guardian and we, her Community Homestead family, want everything left right as it and there is grief in knowing it is no longer. Now we have to catch up to the ever adaptable Mary (again) and embrace the next part of her journey. Thank you Mary for creating such a fun community for us all.

Photo: Mary and Arianna climb back up Oakey Park hill after a great sledding run in January 2016

#### Osceola Farmer's Market -Alex Hanson

We sell our bread. Farmer's market in Osceola (Go Osceola Cheiftains!) Me, Steven, Tony, Christine and Oscar Borgerding. I tell people we have bread. Steven Kicker does the cashier, Oscar does cash sheet, Tony answers questions, Christine bags. We sell jam, vegetables, cookies, pies too. We had raspberries last week. Matt sells sauce, spaghetti sauce. A lady sells cinnamon cakes at Foxtail and art and vegetables too. That guy that goes to church, he sells coffee. Lauren sells necklaces. She makes them. I like Farmer's market: we have fun!

#### Coming and Going -Christine Elmquist

Goodbye to Americorp members Stephen Crimarco who joined the Peace Corps in Jamaica, to Renata Sebstad who has taken her incredible energy and sunshine home to Hawaii for the summer before continuing college in Massachussets, and to Hailey Diener who has returned to Pennsylvania to start the next episode of her life. We welcome Julaine Nemrow who joins Americorp from New Mexico and Leo Moua from east/central Wisconsin.

Brendan Bennet has joined us for the summer as have German students Dario Schink and Saskia Poppler. Young fellows, Eli, Will, Doran and Max, have all started coming through the day program adding a lively and light energy. Maddie Howland dropped in to help us at Country Banquet while Peggy Geskermann, Cheryl Beardslee, Roger Mussel, Maureen McElrath and Sue Horn volunteer on a regular basis. Elizabeth Bright spent a week of vacation from Camphill Copake organizing, cleaning and putting us back to rights. Thank you to all the relatives; Jacob's brother, Alex' sister, Nadine's Mom, Elmquist family, and friends who came to visit and jumped in with a helping hand. School groups came but Oscar can tell you about that, and the

National Farmer's Mystery tour buses brought 150 people to visit! Thank you all for bringing us news and life!

Sandy and Dario at the rodeo, and Saskia.

# Germans for the Summer -Saskia Poppler

Hey, we are Saskia and Dario from Herne in Germany, where we live with our families. Dario lives with his three siblings, his parents and his dog Josie. Saskia lives with her grandma, her parents and her cat Shadow. It is part of the education from the waldorf school Hibernia, we both attend, to live and work together with people with

special needs. We've chosen the Community Homestead because our friend Fabian, who's at our school too and spent his 6 weeks also in this community, told us how great it is here (and we've always wanted to travel to the USA.) We're glad to spend out 6 weeks in this community, where we have the chance to make new experiences and lifetime memories.



Photos: Day trip to the North Shore with: Steven, Scott, Richard, Joel, Christine, Alex, Renata, Hillary, Kelly, Brendan, Max, Arianna, Marianne (Joseph not pictured)

# What happened to Americorps? -Christine Elmquist

We have enjoyed the Americorps program for the past eleven years. About forty people have come for a year or more of service and, for the vast majority, this was the first time

they had bumped into the concept of community life and "lifesharing". This increased our own diversity, of culture, geography, ethnicity, and added an enormous injection of talent and unreplicated experience right into the heart of the community. And yep, the community climbed right into the hearts of the young people, now in the medical field, teachers, farmers, therapists, who came here.

Now Americorps has shifted its funding away from people with developmental disabilities and our national program, as it is written right now, no longer qualifies. Juliane, Leo, Jordan, Shannon and Tony, are our last Americorps members.

With the extra energy from Americorps we have enjoyed, to name but a few things; chime choir, special Olympics, museums, expo's, parades, outings, craft areas, yoga, jazzercise (who could forget that!) Indian cooking and dance, trips to Nebraska, Florida, New York, Chicago, California, and Puerto Rico!

We are scrambling to figure out how to continue this dizzying array of experiences. We are looking at various ways to build similar bridges to that greater, dazzling, energetic world of residential volunteers. Gap year? Internship? Summer opportunity? We are up for it! Want to lend a hand to this effort to research opportunities? Contact christine.elmquist@communityhomestead.org

### Grinnell College Alternative Break -Maddie Howland

This March, I co-led a trip of ten students from my college, Grinnell College in Iowa, to Community Homestead. My co-leader Jasmine Gerritsen and I led the same trip two



years ago, as part of a nationwide program for college students, called Alternative Break.

Along with our participants—Angela, Annie, Cherie, Emily, Ethan, Eve, Harley, and Jerlynn—we stayed in cozy Olson Cottage. The week began with an ice cream social, where we got to meet the community. Throughout the week, we split up for various activities, such as deconstructing and

Photos: Grinellis join us for egg painting at Easter Tony and Kurt host the school group

# School Visits -Oscar Rauch Borgerding

City Of Lakes Waldorf School, Tamarack Waldorf School in Milwaukee, Youth Initiative High School from Viroqua, Avalon School from Minneapolis, Chicago Waldorf School, River Valley Homeschool group all came to visit. Grinnell College Alternative Break also came with Maddie Howland back in the Spring. Some school groups came for just a day and some spent two weeks here. They work in the garden and the orchard, and in the wood crew. City of Lakes did a play for us all about Muslims and Jews and Christians living together. The Chicago Waldorf School did milkingsome of them. All the school groups were helpful with all their work. Grinnell College Alternative Break also came with Maddie Howland. It is really great to have them here and we thank them a lot.

moving the frame of a greenhouse, collecting sap for maple syrup, and beginning the initial steps of planting. Everybody got up at 5 am to milk the cows at least once. Working outdoors in mid-March was chilly, but we toughened up and wore many layers. Mealtimes were always a highlight; Christine gave us a meal schedule that heroically accommodated a variety of dietary needs, so each lunch and dinnertime we cheerfully dispersed into the community to meet new people and share delicious food. (Readjusting to college cafeteria fare after a week of Community Homestead bread, yogurt, muesli, cookies and veggies is always a challenge!)

Many of the participants were attracted to the trip because of their interest in sustainable agriculture, and were surprised by other facets they were exposed to, such as the idea of intentional community. They absorbed their surroundings and asked lots of questions; many said that the chief impact of the trip for them was this exposure to a supportive community that operates as a unit.

By luck or coincidence, many of the "Grinnellies," as we were affectionately dubbed, had musical talent as well. We led a sing-along guitar session featuring songs such as Titanium and House of the Rising Sun, and appreciated the spirited singing of the community members. We also got to participate fully in community life during the week preceding Easter. We attended morning meditations, decorated Easter eggs, and shared a traditional Hot Cross Buns dinner.

I am a Minnesota Waldorf School graduate, so I made my first trip to Community Homestead in the third grade. For me, the trip was meaningful because I got to share this place that is important to me with my college community.



#### Many thanks for your Donations: Feb 16, 2016 -July 31, 2016

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