

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

A Gardening Summer by Alex Felt

It's mid-August, so to speak honestly, I am really looking forward to corn. I mean, I love sweet corn, but corn represents more than a delicious grain; it also is representative of what I consider the hump of the garden season, and we are in fact about halfway through our CSA season (243 members means a lot of gardening!)

When spring allows the gardening team to dig up beds and start planting vegetables, it is an exciting time to get your hands in the dirt, to refresh calluses on the hands, and imagine all the amazing fruits of one's labor that are to come. Weeding is wonderful at this time, social and satisfying. Harvest is so exciting at the season's start (even after a dramatic hailstorm). As the heat picks up, the veggies get more diverse, and the summer volunteers are starting to say their goodbyes, this time in summer becomes a push for many. Already, our garlic haul has happened, onions are around the corner, and corn harvest begins in the next week or two.

Corn for me represents the last of the intense harvesting. After that, things begin to slow down and by the end of the season we have already harvested many of our later crops that store well and go into boxes (it's just a matter of wiping that dirt off! I'm looking at you, winter squash). Sooner than we will probably be ready for in our hearts, beds will be tilled and not reseeded or transplanted into. But my body will feel ready when autumn starts bringing the chill and promise of sleeping in a little bit later because you can't harvest at 6 am-- it's too dark.

When I finally hang my sunhat up for the season to put on my wool beanie, trading hand hoe for paint brush, I will be ready for the 9am start time and yoga at 4pm until February, when I am checking the weather obsessively, ready for the fresh greens and soft dirt in the warm sun. The cycle will continue on, always.

Photos: top to bottom

Sandy. Sebastian, Alex, Oscar. Hillary, Travis and Adrian



Coming and Going by Christine Elmquist

This summer our last Americorps members, Leo and Julaine left. We have been lucky enough to be part of Camphill's National Americorps grant for the past eleven years and have enjoyed a steady flow of interesting people enriching the community with all their efforts. Then Americorps changed its grant emphasis. And with direct human service no longer being a priority, the Camphill grant came to an end. After some internal ranting, which I will spare you here, we hit the internet, and put the word out, hoping for a great summer!

And we got one! We now have a definite German flavor. Gap year and volunteer experience is a familiar and valued concept in Germany, and service to the world while notching up your second language skills plus a little cultural zing, is recognized benefit

Joshua Brunner who came for two months in 2015 came back for six months, this time with his class friend Annabell Keifer. They are from the Black Forest area and already feel like part of our extended family. Altair is delighted to have two such sunny, capable people in the house. Also returning for six months is Fabian Ruede. He originally came for six weeks from Hibernia Waldorf School in Herne, north west of Dusseldorf. Fabian has unlimited enthusiasm and an ability to jump into any task so we are very happy to have him back too! We have our very first volunteer from an organization called Freunde. This is "Friends" of Waldorf schools and helps Waldorf graduates from Germany serve a year of volunteer service in all parts of the world. Luca Wessenfiels is from the southeast of Germany and brings his energy to Orion and the whole farm community. Fabian and Joshua joke that Americorps is now "Germancorps"

We do have two Americans this summer, Claire Scanga from North Carolina, who found us on the Idealist website, and Cait Conley who is a Bonner Scholar at Earlham College in Indiana (Emily's connection!) and who responded to our outreach there. Claire is cramming a whole community experience into two summer months and is walking sunshine-in both light and energy, and is very appreciated in Farmhouse where she lives in a little cabin attached! Cait is also a cabin dweller but her cabin is attached to Orion. Not only did she bring her own positive attitude, curiousity and reflection, she also brought friends to visit!

And wait, there's more! Renata Sebstad (Americorps 2015-16) returned for a month to help everywhere and renew all her friendships. Charlotte Howland continued to join us for various weeks before she leaves for college on the west coast. Isadora Harper came for 3 weeks from Chicago and then to cap it off, we have three Hibernia Waldorf School students, Magda, Damien and Shawn, here for five weeks



of community service.

For our first Post Americorps Era summer, we are bustling with energy. We are learning how best to organize all these folks and maximize everyone's experience and so appreciate idealism, enthusiasm and fun in the world! Let's keep the energy going and the word out there...2018 experience anyone?

School groups. We had a really busy and wonderful early summer with lots of school groups. Lending a hand to the garden, feeding the calves, fencing (the field kind not the weaponry kind) and landscaping, these lively students bring us a lot of joy and, in many cases, lasting friendships. Thank you to Viroqua High School Initiative, Avalon School, Minnesota Waldorf School 3rd grade, Chicago Waldorf School 9th grade, City of Lakes 3rd grade, and the Give Back Day group from Osceola High School. Also many thanks to our big summer stretch groups from St Patrick's Church in Hudson and Peace Lutheran Church in Dresser.



photo above: Fabian below: Chicago Waldorf School 9th Grade, Osceola High School Give Back Day and Community Homestead Forestry Crew

Guten Tag by Annabell Keifer

My name is Annabell I am from Black Forest in Germany near to Switzerland.

I am 19 years old and I tell you now my story.

I graduated school in June and two days later I arrived at Community Homestead.

After school I have to make an Internship of 9 Months.

Friends told me about Community Homestead and so I came here without really knowing what happens.

But Now I can say its the best place for me.

I live in a house with wonderful people and 3 adorable children. Its my second home.

At monday and tuesday we have to harvest at 6am. Sometimes I am laying in my bed and I ask myself why?

But then I walk to the garden and on my way I see the beautiful sunrise and I meet all the lovely people who are working together.

In this moment I know that's why I do this and that for me life quality.

Every day is different and you have so many places where you can work.

I am also baking cookies and bread and I am in the processing group where we are making Pickels, Pesto, Jam, cakes and more.

Everyone is really patiently at explaining things and you can ask again without a bad feeling.

My first day of baking bread i was like oh no I will never do this like Shannon { she is the bread master} but thats okay.

I learn every week more and I am better from week to week.

After a week full of work is weekend. Excursion time.

I am now 2 month here and I saw and experienced so much.

Music festivals, wonderful lakes, City tours, karaoke and a lot more of great things.

You work and live all the time together with people with special needs and you learn so much from each other.

There are still so many things to learn and I am very happy to spend 4 more month at Community homestead.

A wonderful place to be yourself and to learn about yourself.

Photo: Joshua, Cait, Hillary, Oscar and Annabell

A Completely Different Summer by Cait Conley

Did you know that parsnip oil, when exposed to sunlight, can leave burn-like bubbles on your skin? This is one of the many nuggets of common knowledge I was unaware of when I first arrived at Community in May. I am a rising junior at Earlham College, working toward a Geology degree. I have been floating through the academic pipeline my whole life, and until recently it has been the focal point of many big decisions. Which high school will most prepare me for college? Which college will provide the best opportunities and connections to put me on a well-paying professional trajectory? Turns out it doesn't matter how many bullet points you have on your resume



when you are making coasters using a table saw, milking a kicking cow, or trellising overgrown grape vines. During my first s u m m e r away from home I've learned that hay bales don't care

what grade you earned in your geo-chemistry class, they will scratch you just the same if you try to stack them without long pants. I've learned so much that my friends, family, and former employers have never cared about, that I was never exposed to through my upbringing. Academia did not prepare me for farm life, but I'm realizing more and more that no amount of schooling can never completely prepare you for the successes and failures life has to offer. My path has taken me through classroom after classroom, and for a while, "success" had been defined by letter grades and college acceptance letters. This summer, it is something completely different. It is the feeling of exhaustion at the end of a harvest morning. It is the dirt on my knees and the tan from an afternoon finely weeding carrots. Success in Community Homestead is not measured in income, possessions, popularity, or skill. Those who choose this lifestyle use their hands, go outside, create, and support one another. They laugh and bicker and go to bed tired after a hard day in the sun.

Success is the feeling that, at the end of the day, after you've washed the manure off your face (yes, I found out what it's like to be whipped by a cow tail), you can sit down for dinner with friends and family, reflect, and laugh at your mistakes - and nobody is grading you.

Trip to the Hiawatha Music Festival - Sebastian Gugloz

We left at 4:00 in the morning, a hurried, hushed departure after almost an hour of filling coolers with food, waking the bleary-eyed passengers, and loading the van with everything we couldn't pack the night before. Kim drove, the rest of us slept. By 7, we'd passed through Hayward, and by noon we were heading into that other half of Michigan, the U.P., to the Hiawatha Traditional Music Festival!

There were eight of us, Kim and her three children, Ari, Chloe, and Sam, myself, Dustin, Kelly, and

Bruce. The trip out to Hiawatha happens every year, courtesy of Kim, who takes along a small group from Community including a volunteer to help out. This year, I was asked to go, and I was more than happy to oblige.

We arrived at the festival in midafternoon, in time to see some early acts,

but first the claiming of an adequate campsite was our priority. Setting up the tents became a game of Tetris due to campground spacing regulations, further confused when it became clear that the 1-person tent I had intended to sleep in had never made it into the van!

The bands and songwriters performing were a mix of traditional folk, bluegrass, and blues, with one band representing a variety of traditional Mexican folk music from across the Mexican nation. But none of these were yet gracing the mainstage, and all the excitement was being had at a large, high-topped white tent lain with an expansive wooden floor inside. It was the dance tent, and true to form, a few of the bands were leading the crowd in a folk dancing lesson. The music was lively, the dancers on the floor were quick-footed, and the amplified voice over the microphone urging everyone onto the dance-floor had been keyed up just a bit too loud. It'd been a long day of driving, Kim having been awake since 3 with no time for shut-eye, and the rest of us managing only a few hours of sleep between rest stops, the only things keeping us awake was snacks and what little adrenaline we had left.

So of course we danced.

First it was Kim and me, then Ari, Chloe, and Same joined in, pulling Dustin and Kelly in with them. And around we whirled, stamping our feet and swinging each other by the arms, till we were all laughing, happy, and exhausted. This energy carried over to the next day, when the bands put on musical workshops in the morning and by afternoon were at the mainstage. After breakfasting on pancakes, we wandered between stages, alternating between singalongs and square-dancing until finally settling in at the main event. The afternoon was long and relaxing, our mouths full of food, our ears full of music and the question "where did Sam go?". When darkness finally

arrived, and some of our group decided to turn in, Kim and I returned again to the stages, she to the mainstage for some of her favorite acts, while I headed to the dance tent, where a punky blues-band had filled the tent to its maximum and where I was quickly pulled into an impromptu conga-line.



Sunday morning rolled around, and with it came rain, leaky tents, and work. Kelly and I had volunteered for a morning security shift (reward: free festival shirts!), so we avoided having to help dry out the tents, instead patrolling the campground and darting under cover when the rain got too intense.

But for the rest of the group, the sudden rain and the cold it brought with it proved harder to bear, especially for Bruce, and by early afternoon, we bailed and found a warm place to stay the night - a motel. But though we'd been chased out, we were determined not to let the rain dampen our spirits, and once we were warm and dry again, we waited till the rain let up and returned for more music in the afternoon.

The trip back was more lively than the trip in, with unexpected roadside blueberries, pasties, and a visit to the lakeside, all set to the soundtrack of folk music. Ah, Hiawatha!

Photo: Brice, Sam, Chloe, Sebastian, Ari, Dustin, Kelly (missing Kim)

Our Camping Trip by Claire Scanga

This past week Kelly, Scott, Oscar, Tony, Janette and I went on a camping trip up to the North Shore. We started our trip on Wednesday afternoon and drove up towards Lake Superior, pitching our tents at a campsite just outside of Duluth. We made a campfire that night and roasted hot dogs and marshmallows. It rained all Wednesday night, making us very thankful for laundromats on Thursday morning because we had a couple very wet sleeping bags and towels to dry.

We spent Thursday visiting the aquarium in Duluth



and making our way up the scenic Highway 61 to Grand Marais where we poked around antique shops and walked along the lake.

Friday we headed to Ely, stopping for a hike to a sweet spot

on Temperance River where you can jump from big rocks into the river.

On Saturday, we went to the International Wolf Center in Ely and saw live wolves and explored the museum's exhibits on wolf folklore. We also hiked to Kawishiwi Falls and stopped in the Dorothy Molter museum where we learned about a woman who had a root beer business on an island in the boundary waters. Sunday we headed home, stopping for a hike to Shovel Point off of Highway 61 and one last goodbye to Lake Superior at a beach in Duluth. It was all in all a great trip.

Our days were busy, but each night we slowed down the pace and relaxed by the campfire. It was a super special way to close out my time as a summer volunteer at Community Homestead. Thanks, camping crew, for a lovely vacation filled with laughter and dear friends!

photo: Oscar Rauch and Claire Scanga

right: Steven Kicker

Glamping in our new Motor Home by Betsy Campbell and Steve Fons

Betsy: I went camping. I stayed in a van with a bed inside! We had breakfast in the van with Brendan and Renata, Sandy and Stevo. I have a coloring book and pencils: Brendan and Alex gave them to me for my birthday. Sandy and Stevo were catching fish. I didn't catch any, I was walking with Brendan. There was a dance too with a lot of music. Alex came over for a visit. I liked doing that. It was my first time. I will do that again!

Steve: The camper was nicer than a tent because you're sleeping in a comfortable motor home! Betsy-Boo and Sandra were sleeping in the back of the camper. I had the big bed and Brendan and Renata slept up front. I went fishing twice and caught two little fishes. I threw them back in the water. You can't cast the fishing pole a long way because the trees are there. It is pretty but many mosquitoes: I got bitten many times. Sandy was sick and Brendan and got up. I think it was what Brendan made for dinner! None of us got sick.

I went before with Julaine and Leo and Dustin. We went into town and all the different stores. This was on the North Shore, We ate as well. I went fishing then by the cottage. We sat on the chair there and threw the fishing line out. I like trips like that! I wish I can go again!

Huge Thanks to Terri Ann and Daniel Flynn for the Motor Home that makes this possible!



Special Olympics by Christine Elmquist

Here is our Community Homestead Champion. Steven Kicker recently went to Milwaukee for state with his Special Olympics soft ball team and, despite very little softball experience, helped them win a gold medal. Earlier this summer, he won gold in 100 metres, gold in shot putt and a bronze with his basketball team. He just heard that he has made the selection team to represent Wisconsin in the Nationals. Good luck Steven! What an athlete!

Sixth Annual Country Banquet by Mary Tomes (Board member)

Our Country Banquet is held on the last Sunday in June and of course we look to the sky and hope that the weather will cooperate in providing us perfect weather to showcase the beauty of Community Homestead. Usually, the mantra revolves around no rain or blistering heat; our wishes were honored to the extreme and instead of heat we had unseasonably cool weather!

People arrived in jackets and jeans and had a great time! The chefs from St. Paul Technical College prepared a fabulous feast starting with delectable appetizers featuring cheeses, sausages, and other concoctions to a tasty dinner that ended with fabulous desserts.

The culinary students worked along side the chefs and had first hand experience in preparing the food, serving, and cleaning up. The planning actually started in late winter and culminated on June 25th.

The highlight of the night was the program and participation from Community Homestead residents. Oscar accompanied Kelly on his guitar, the choir sang, and Christine gave a lovely talk about the progress of the land acquisition and plans for future. A newcomer said she was most impressed by the happiness she saw in the people of Community Homestead and that is the best compliment of all!

In the six years of preparing the Country Banquet, the St. Paul Technical College culinary department has totally embraced Community Homestead and the Country Banquet. The College now has required classes on sustainability led by Chef Sean Jones, following the journey of the food from the field to the plate. The partnership of Community Homestead and St. Paul Technical School goes far beyond the Banquet! To top off the event guests were able to sample sour beer from local Oakhold Craft Brewery including one made from Community Homestead's fruit. We are so grateful for everyone's support!

Thanks to our Country Banquet Donors Oakhold Brewery Tom Salewski at Valley Spirits St Paul College, Culinary Arts School



Voices of the Valley by Alex Hansen

We are good singers! Me, Hillary, Scott, Bruce,

Betsy, Sandy, Oscar, Hunter and Jackson Bean. We have choir Monday night. I eat here at Morning Glory and we get in the van and go to choir. Shannon's driving! Linda is the choir director teacher. We sing and sign songs. Summer songs! Choir went to Polk County Fair and sang. I was busy buying Aiden's school stuff! (My brother is going to college!) We sang at the church-I was busy! I did sing for Spring. My Mom came, and my brother, and Aiden. My uncle

came too! I like singing the songs. We

sing country.



The Osceola Famers' Market by Alex Hansen

I can't wait for Farmer's market. Next Friday! We sell bread, cinnamon bread, all kinds of organic bread. Its organic! It's good bread. Shannon and me, Hillary and Scott make it. We make cookies too. Cookies are good. Chocolate chip cookies are the best. Steve Kicker is the cashier. Tony answers questions about Community Homestead. Oscar writes the prices. I hand out brochures and I ask people to buy bread! I say, "Our bread's good!" I say, "Thank you!" We sell jam and cards and syrup and pottery and pies. Rhubarb pies right? They are good! We sell vegetables too. I like to see people at the farmer's market!



The River Monster by Mark Welk

A few weeks back, I was using a crawfish line that Eric made, the green one that has

one sharp hook. All of a sudden something was pulling that line.

It was yanking and yanking.
An all of a sudden, I saw
that fish's tail the top of

that fish's tail, the top of the fins: the color was a silver like a fish color, a green color. And I was pulling it right to the shore. I had to release the button to give it more slack and, all of a sudden, it was a Northern Pike!

It was half fish, half like an alligator! It was a Moby Dick! A

River Monster! He was huge, about 34 feet or

something

I was planning to hold that trophy and pull that hook out but I wouldn't. I let Eric do the honors. I have a picture on my wall and, to prove my point, last weekend, Sunday, using that spinner line, I caught another fish! I pulled it in myself and, back in the water, and then it took a couple of times where I kept reeling and reeling and hauling my pole and, that was another Northern Pike! I was going to take a second picture of that one but he got away. I will catch him again! I am happy since I caught that fish.

Music Events this Summer by Hillary Schauls

I went to Minnesota Waldorf School, Isaac's school, for a Blue Grass festival. A group of us from Community Homestead came. There was kid's music too and they played, This is Your Land too. It's my favorite song. It was hot but we had the farmer's market tent in the shade to stay cool.

Kelly and Betsy and Bruce and Sandy all celebrated birthdays going to see Grease at Chanhassen. And I went too! And Alex drove and it was a lot of fun and I want to say thank you for inviting me. It was nice of them.

Photo: Betsy, Oscar and Annabell at the river



Congratulations High School Graduates! Maya, who arrived the community when she was two years old, took her naps in garden carts, declared herself a vegetable eschewing carnivore at four (tough luck gardener Mother!), formed a third of the three musketeers (Joe, Lacey and Maya) grew up with Janette, and had all sorts of adventures with hayforts, kittens, and puddles, the baby of the extended Elmquist generation and the elder sister of the Backlund generation, just graduated from Osceola high school! Bon Voyage Maya, off to New Orleans to college! We

Will Kalmon is also a high school graduate, but from Hudson High School! Will has been coming to the community now for a year and is excited to try all sorts of things in his life, from carpentry to farming to cooking. Life is an exploration and we are happy to be part of Will's journey into the world!

Susan Nielsen

will miss you in so many ways!

Thank you for your Donations April ISth-August 18th 2017

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