



Community Homestead Newsletter: Summer 2021

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

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

Lessons Learned at Farmers' Market ~Hannah Gregor

I help out at the Farmers' Market in Osceola which happens on Friday afternoons. The first one was really hard for me to understand. It felt like it was a massive chaos and I felt out of place. It was so new and I felt I had no experience and could not understand how to do anything. I felt I did not fit in.

I had experience in high school where everyone was higher up than me and it was like I was blindfolded and thrown on top of the heap. I did not do well. So when I could not understand right away at first I kind of threw myself on that heap. No one even threw me on: I just did it all by myself! It was really me making a massive chaos out of everything. Christine gave me a choice to either choose to do something else, which I think was really giving up, or to give it a try. It does not matter just what job skills you have, it matters that you don't give up. You just have to keep trying, and keep going. You should not run away from something you might be good at in the long run. I decided to keep trying.

So now I am really good at it! I help on the end of the tables with Alex where the crafts are so it is more slow than the bread and the vegetables. I can talk to customers. I say, “hello,



Photo: Hannah

how are you?” or “is there anything you'd like help with?” And sometimes, if they've made eye contact, I might say, “I like your outfit” if I think they've heard me. Sometimes I just leave it alone because sometimes people are just looking at things. Sometimes people talk to me and sometimes they are shy. I try to lift my face into a smile so people feel I am friendly. When people hand me money, I just ask them how much money to give them back or ask Christine or Alex. I am learning to be more patient with myself, and working on my money skills.

By the end of the season, I hope to practice confidence: how to deal with my emotions appropriately; when I get to something hard, how to ask for help or take a break, and how to hear other people. When I have more practice at Farmer's market, my next step will be to volunteer.

Craft Shows and Markets

Wednesdays 3-6pm: Lindstrom Farmer's Market

Fridays 2-6pm: Osceola Farmer's Market on River St.

Saturdays 9-12: Stillwater Farmer's Market

First Sunday of the Month 10-2pm: Franconia Art and Farmer's Market

September 11: Scandia Taco Daze Osceola Harvest Bazaar

September 25-26: Hudson Spirit of the St Croix

October 2-3rd: Sogn Valley Art Fair in Cannon Falls

October 9-10: Red Wing Art Fall Festival

We have 36 milking cows and 4 cows going to have babies, and 2 meat ones, in the barn. #73, one of the boys, really likes #21. He puts his head on her belly and it's adorable. Every four months about, we ship meat cows out and we clean the stalls for when the next meat cows come in. Most of the meat cows are outside with the herd. Because of the drought we have to keep cows in because the grass is not growing. Everybody doesn't like that because they want to properly clean the barn, and they want the cows to go out to eat so they make more milk and are cleaner and healthy. At night they have to eat hay inside and that's not good because the hay is supposed to be for the winter time.

It rained, so now we can take the cows out but if it doesn't rain again, we have to keep them in. We clean the barn and lime down, then someone takes the back five cows outside and then I start unhooking the cows and tell them, "out out!" if they can go outside. Sometimes one has to stay inside to get bred and another one has a bad leg. They usually walk out in a line. I walk them down the cow path lane and unhook the wires for where the cars go by and keep walking them down until I hit their little area, and I shut that gate and walk back to finish up the barn. I do scraping, and fluffing bedding and scoop the back section out, putting old feed in the drop when they don't finish their food. Then I get the hay bales and Sebastian or Joel do the bedding and I do the Mootel.

Calves and teenagers are in the Mootel. I feed them hay, grain, or milk, and give them bedding and sweep it up so it looks nice. I like it to look really nice. Then I go back to the barn. I like seeing the calves. #11, she is a big cow, has a cute face and she is really nice. I can do whatever I like, and she is always nice to me.



Photo: Shannon, Hillary and Aldo

grazing animal groups, walked the dairy herd out to pasture after milking, or drove the water wagon. Fieldwork felt exhausting and without reward. I checked the weather more frequently than my email. Anxiety mounted and every day brought more problems to solve. We started to plan for the worst. Could we make enough feed? Would we be able to buy it if we didn't make enough? Was it possible that it would never rain again? That last question sounds silly, but storms missed us so many times it started to feel like a genuine concern.



Photo: Nastia

I promised myself when I said I would write up something about the farm for the summer newsletter I wouldn't write about drought. I told myself that to use the words dry, dusty, or arid would be too negative. The half-an-inch of precipitation in June and July shouldn't color my whole picture of the summer. However, it is a little like the elephant in the room. The lack of rain affected most of my daily activities. I no longer moved

Fortunately, we have now had some rain. I'm not going to say I see life on the farm through rose tinted glasses, but things are starting to perk up a bit. The pastures are green. Fields seem to have bounced back after a poor second hay cutting. The corn looks nice. Our water truck still works despite a break. Nastia trots calves from the barn to the mootel. I am ready to move past the dry spell, but we will feel

its effects long after the rain's return. I believe we learned some lessons that will help the farm ready itself for a future that has a changing climate. I am hopeful that the choices that we made, and are still making, to mitigate our losses are the right ones for our animals and community. Inquire after your local famers when you visit a market or give the food you pick up at a grocery store a second's pause to think about the folks that got it to you.

Coming and Going ~Christine Elmquist



Photo: Michael

As vaccinations became available and everything opened up more, we welcomed Anna Horton, Batyah Selis, Michael Leehan and Zack Grand for the summer, Emma Ruskin came for two productive weeks. Heather Harmon came for different weeks to dip her toe in the water of community life while Austin Dix, Christina Sandberg, Jackson Bean, Mckinzie Miller, Jane Campbell, Maureen McElrath, Lynne Schauls, Lois Peterson and new volunteer Logan Gesell, joined Travis Hansen and Alex Hansen during the day. We have so enjoyed this new breath of life and company but now of course, we are preparing to say goodbye to some.

In the spring we said goodbye to Illan Ackelsberg who left for Philadelphia, Hana Ackelsberg who went home to NJ, and Ceci Spann who went back to Viroqua for the summer before starting her studies in Ashville, NC this fall.

And now we say another round of goodbyes to summer folk; Anna Horton who is back off to college in MN and Batyah Selis who starts a year of volunteering with Avodah in Chicago. We also say goodbye to our own Maya Cel-



Photo: Anna, Nastia, Hannah and their new piercings

ander who gave us yet another summer of hard work. She takes her big smile and all her expertise to Oregon for an Americorps year. We had hoped to be welcoming three young German volunteers right now along with a Czech social worker who loves to volunteer and see what everyone else is up to in the world. But, Covid prevents US visas right now so we are being open, flexible and pragmatic, but not optimistic about their arrival. We will let you know!

One person we are NOT saying goodbye to is Michael. He came for the summer but has decided to stay for at least another year. Happy to have him journey along with us this crispy, wonderful, winter!

Betsy Campbell ("Campbell, like the soup") June 28, 1967 - August 26, 2021

Betsy joined Community Homestead when she retired from her job as an assistant cook in Stevens Point, and moved to Osceola with



Photo: Sandy and Betsy

her parents. She decked out her room at Morning Glory in Americana, cheered the Packers, and joined every activity and outing with enthusiasm. She crept up on a sunbathing Alex and poured cold water on her at the river, she climbed to the top of a lookout, and was Lady Giggles and an angel in plays. Later, when her health was failing fast, she found peace in playing the piano with Niels. Her highest compliment was to look deep in your eyes and say with grave beneficence, "I think I'll keep you!" Betsy spent her last years with her sister and then at Eagle Ridge. She is woven into the memories of her friends here and the international volunteers who shared these years.

Summer Community Poem

Everyone was invited to contribute one word for this poem. Here is the result!

Bahbah babahbah bah
Solar, vibrant, garden.
Wild, warm, sunshine.
Exhaustive!
Camping fishing! Legend.

Friends, calves, cricket..
Adaptability!
Family. Alive. Interesting
Dry, hot, darn hot.
Woo hooo! Yes!



Photo: Hillary, Batyah and Alex in a big trough of cold water on the 4th of July!

Outings and Trips ~Hillary Schauls

An important part of life at community is taking trips! I like going on trips. I enjoy myself, going places with my friends. This summer some trips have been Twin Cities Pride, Stillwater, and Franconia.

Our house (Me, Tony, Dustin, Batyah, Scott) went to the Twin Cities. It was really hot. There were big stairs to cross the highway to get to the Pride festival in the park. Lots of tents. We saw the Chanhassen Dinner Theatre booth—they were handing out Mama Mia cups—I was happy and joyful because I like that show and the music. I like to listen to it in the garden every day, every day! And I also got the fanny pack remember that?! It was free, the fanny pack. And I was dancing with it, to the music! We sat and listened to performers. And I got a snack too- cheese curds, MMHM!

We went to Stillwater after Pride. We relaxed, sat on a bench by the river. It was a good day, yep!

Another day we took a drive to Stillwater and walked around the antique stores and found a magazine for Scott, for his birthday, a basketball magazine. We got drinks in Stillwater, it was a rainy day and so I got hot chocolate. I like walking around Stillwater, it's pretty cool. It's close by, a short trip for the weekend.

Franconia's another place we go. This time Anna went with us and Scott came along, Kelly too. Dustin and Batyah too. We walked around. We saw a lot of sculptures. I saw lots of old and new sculptures. I remember the mirrors. They were pretty cool. We walked around inside the big mirrors, like a circle, mirror to mirror. We took a picture! We tried to stay cool, under a wooden roof, and there's a new building, It was cool in there! We went in to look at the art stuff, shirts and things like that. Franconia's a cool place to go.

I enjoyed it, having fun with my friends on the weekends.

Six months or so at Community Homestead ~Ceci Spann

The beginning of my time at Community Homestead was punctuated by election results and the first winter storm of the year, which blew in several inches of snow

overnight after a warm golden day of outdoor work. Isaac and Elias did not allow me to get too lonely during quarantine, but it was still a shock to move to my permanent home here, and become acquainted with eight lively housemates. In those first months, Morning Glory became my foundation and I grew close to the house and all its inhabitants (including the cats, shout out to Kitkat and Milo!!!).

Amidst deep winter, camaraderie was found in craft work, sunset walks, barn chores, movie nights, book club, and house activities. The months passed and temperate spring winds marked a change in our Covid protocols due to vaccination, which brought about many shared meals, dance parties, and a few road trips! The excitement

of new growth in the gardens and woods permeated this time, and for me personally, I relished the sweetness of getting to know more and more of the people of Community Homestead.

To have a living situation where one can contribute to community life, while in turn, finding oneself richer in self-growth and new friendships is a special thing indeed. I think

the spirit of community can be encapsulated by describing a folk dance in May: all gathered at the Community Center; some folks in their finest finery and others still bearing traces of garden dirt from the afternoon; some steps carefully practiced but mostly flying by the seat of our pants (ok I'll only speak for myself here);, topped off with lots of yelling and encouragement.

As Hannah once astutely mentioned to our tour-group of visiting students, living in community is all about helping others, in all areas of life big and small. And I notice that at Community Homestead, it is done with a lot of integrity and joy.



Photo: Hillary



Photo: Anna, Scott, Zach, Oscar, Kelly & Richard

Community Lunch is back! ~Claire Scanga

Shared meals with people from our day program and other community friends were so missed while our outside contact was curtailed by the pandemic. It's lovely to be able to have a daytime community meal in the week again!



Photo: Macy, Lynne, Isaac F, Harper, Asa, Elias and Isaac B.

At noon on Thursdays, people stream from all parts of the farm to the community center for lunch. Some are in muck boots, walking from the barn. Others have muddy knees from weeding in the garden. Some people make their way upstairs from the building's basement, having just finished weaving or card making or quilting. The quilters are the kids' group which took place on Thursday mornings - hosted by Lynne and Lois. We also get to see Gary who volunteers in the garden!

Once everyone is seated and enjoying lunch, you hear the chime of silverware on a glass to signify that it is time for the meeting. A meeting with that many people is always pleasantly hectic with lots of different voices piping up. We talk about the week ahead - all events and birthdays coming up that week. People share news about "comings and goings" from the community that week- Vacations! Visitors! New arrivals! We get to hear from folks about successes throughout the week ("A weaving just got finished!") and any tweaks that could be made to the schedule. One of the best parts is hearing from the kids group about what they have been working on. They show their progress on creative quilt squares with watercolor splatters or trees or sky scenes! After the meeting, we clean up and folks depart the community center for a rest before afternoon activities.

Thursdays mean being updated on community news and to getting to share a meal with people that you may not cross paths with in your typical week. So thankful to be able to do that again!

Kids Learned Not All Sandwiches are Yummy ~Isaac & Elias Flynn, Isaac & Asa Brackett, Harper & Macy Gausman

{For the past three years (except, 'sigh', last year of course) Lynne Schauls has created and organized a children's group with her own grandchildren (Janette and Hillary's nieces) and the children here in the community. Lynne's mind is a factory of imagination, constantly producing creative ideas and then nimbly breaking them down into pieces that can be managed by people of any skill or age. So with help from Lois Peterson (Desi's Mom) and practical haulage from Gary Schauls (Janette and Hillary's Dad) six children look forward to Thursday morning this summer for playtime and creative time! Here is the children's article.

Kids' Club this year was about art and sewing and fun. We learned sewing on the machine first on paper without thread to get the hang of how to do it. Then we started to sew our fabric sandwiches, which are made of fabric and are not very yummy. What were our favorite projects, you might ask?

Harper: Blowing bubbles on fabric

Macy: That was mine!

Isaac F: Mine was making a forest collage

Elias: Sewing the grass on the cloth that was a kind of collage

Asa: The fabric sandwiches!

Isaac B: Making fabric collages

But really the best part was playing.

The Garden Party ~Christine Elmquist

Last year, during the height of Covid, when everyone else was isolated, we had lots of events; drive in movies, the state fair, country banquet and the Christmas play, but all the guests were very familiar. It was just us! With the spring revealing an opportunity to mingle with other people, it was hard to figure out exactly what we felt comfortable doing to celebrate, while still keeping our most vulnerable folks safe. Then, Sean called.

Sean Jones is the chef instructor at St. Paul College, culinary department who has been partnering with us on the annual Country Banquet for ten years. Turns out, he and Sara Johannes were teaching a class on sustainability and were offering to partner with us once again. So maybe not a sit-down Country Banquet just yet, but what about a garden party? Oh yes!

As always, this involves a lot of manicuring the herb beds and plucking every weed from the flower garden. Nadine, Adrian, and the garden crew sweep away buckets and discarded gloves, forgotten sweatshirts and water bottles, and we all scrub the dirt from our knees and put on the wedding gear! Brendan and Alex's craft beer, and juice from the orchard is presented. Chelsea pulls together a silent auction. Nastia and Steve mow every inch of every lawn area. Our greeters and hosts start polishing up their introduction speeches and our board members hurriedly contact all their foodie friends to let them know, "we are on for 2021!"

And this is how, a month after that call, we find ourselves surrounded by twenty-five smiling and eager culinary students bearing platters of artisan cheese, charcuterie, bread, crackers, and deliciously arranged nibbles artfully decorated with sprigs of berries and fresh flowers, and a hundred happy guests in the flower garden.

Not only did this raise money for the apartments, it raised our hopes for a future of new friends and wider collaboration and hosting. Stay healthy friends: we'd like to do this again next year!

Irrigating the Garden ~Scott Cummings

It's been a dry season this summer, but summer is almost over. We've been laying a lot of irrigation. That is a pipe attached to a hose and it waters all the ground underneath. The water comes from the geothermal pond.

Nadine, Adrian and myself, and other people I think, laid the pipe and connected it to make it operational. The pipes are segments of 20 feet section and made of aluminum but they seemed heavier than that. They are not too hot, maybe a little but not too unbearable. We spent half the day often, but sometimes only an hour and a half maybe. I've done this a couple of times before, in other years, but not as much as this year.



Photo: Desi, Alex, Richard, Stephen, Nastia

I like doing it on a nice warm day and it is good to get the food growing. I am helpful at that because I am a strong, sturdy fellow. They put me to good use!



Photo: Culinary student serving

Cookie Baking ~Alex Hansen

Me, Tony and Makinzie, and Kelly are on the cookie crew.

I scoop them and put them in the tray. Makinzie does dishes. Tony puts them in the oven. Kelly delivers cookies to the woodshop, garden, orchard and the farm too. It's great. We get a lot done. It is fun!

We get a water break and a cookie break and I eat chocolate chip cookies. Chocolate Chip is the best.

I sell them at farmer's market by the church (in Osceola) We also sell them at River Market in Stillwater and online www.communityhomestead.org –click SHOP.

Thank you to our donors Feb August 2021

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Mary Clare Huberty August 21, 1948 - June 1, 2021

Looking through the list of donors, you might notice all those in memory of Mary Clare Huberty. Mary Clare and her partner, Sherry met us in the library, in the supermarket and then it seems, everywhere in town. When they came to the Pig Roast almost twenty years ago, they cast an eye at the biscuit tin money box and the messy juggling of tickets and maps and offered to help the following year. "We will bring our own cash box," Mary Clare added with a wink. So began a friendship with the whole community.

Mary Clare was interested in everyone here, from the newest baby to the latest day program participant. She remembered our kids' names, tracked their high school progress, asked for the latest updates, wanted the juice on the new Americorps and international volunteers, was tickled by every graduation, wedding, birth, and life event even remotely connected with us. But most of all, she loved the people.

She lit up when Oscar greeted her at Farmer's Market, when Kelly asked her to, "guess what Mary Clare" and never seemed to tire of Janette asking her what time she went to bed last night. No contrived patience on her part, this was pure, twinkly-eyed, humor and delight. Whenever Mary Clare popped her head around the corner, a small flock of people gathered. Over the years, Mary Clare and Sherry came to almost every event, contributed generously financially and humanly, and cheered us on.

We were so honored to be asked to have Mary Clare's celebration of life here in the community. We learned then, when her huge family turned up, and friends from all corners of Osceola social and philanthropic life, that "our"

Mary Clare was also everyone else's Mary Clare. Such energy, and buoyant zest for life. We miss her.



Photo: Mary Clare Huberty



Photo: Box crew; Scott, Terra, Hannah, Desi