

# Community Homestead Newsletter: Summer 2022

501 280th Street, Osceola, WI 54020 (715) 294-3038 [www.communityhomestead.org](http://www.communityhomestead.org)

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

## The Garden this Summer ~Hannah Gregor

There's quite a lot of people in the garden depending on who's on the schedule. We meet in the overhang to see what jobs there are to do then we split into groups. We have different jobs in the garden like weeding, and harvesting carrots. Nadine is more of the organizer. Adrian just follows but he directs people not to step on the beds or the vegetables. Some of us carry crates and other people harvest



and we walk down the line until we get to the end of the row so we can complete the whole thing and not leave anything. We don't want to do a half-done job. We also have people that have more energy than others and they just continue to weed a garden! I can do whatever, so long as I know what I am doing and I feel comfortable.

Some days I can commit and some days it is really hard for me. Its really good for me because I get to be with all the individuals and meet new people and tell stories and have a good time talking to each other while we get things done.

We bring the vegetables into the packing shed and then we set up tubs for washing them, like the lettuce we have to be careful and gentle with so we don't damage the leaves. There is a special way of holding a lettuce by the core and putting it in and pulling it out and shaking it gently, not violently. Some of the vegetables go through a different thing, like a car wash, but just for vegetables. Sometimes the zucchini falls through and then we can't use them, and then the big ones can get stuck so we poke them through. We do it with water melons too and it comes out on a turn table which

is nice. Some of us clean out crates so they are all fresh. Alex Hansen is good at that: he takes pride in cleaning out crates. Hillary likes passing the empty crates out when they are needed.

This summer, I have learned not to be going too close to the vegetables with the hand hoe because you can tear up the roots, which is not a good thing. I can hand pick the weeds out of the middle where the hoe can't go. I really like the carrot harvest when the tractor goes through. It is fun to watch Adrian dig all the carrots with the tractor and we all wait for him to pass through and then we all rush to get the carrots. It is like Black Friday! I learned how to drive the jalopy which was

very exciting for me because I have always wanted to learn to drive. I have learned a lot about self- reflection and how to deal with my mood so people can trust me to accomplish things they want to trust.



Scott



## Farm Harvest Time ~Joel Nester

Right now we are filling the silo. We are chopping up the whole corn plant into silage, into very small pieces. It's like after you mow grass, the texture is chopped and exposed to the air, and then normally of course it would spoil because its exposed to the air so we put it into the silo where it ferments.

Its cattle feed in the winter until it runs out in the late Spring. Then they eat haylage which is alfalfa, chopped up in the same machine very fine, and it has high moisture so it goes into a silo to prevent spoilage. Hayladage seems to last longer.

When we put the silage in the silo often the left overs spill out and we pick it up in wheelbarrows, mainly me and Nastia, Hannah, Goose, Dustin, and take it to the MooTel. Filling silos is pretty much an all-day job maybe for about a week or two weeks.

By the time all the silos are empty, it is summer again so the cows can go out to pasture. I like working with the cows because it is different from bakery or orchard.

## A Community Wedding ~Desi Peterson

Alex and Brendan's wedding was pretty exciting! It wasn't a regular, conventional, wedding. It was outside behind Evening Star's house in the backyard, very shady with trees. It was almost like an enchanted forest.

Alex' dress was like a vintage feel dress, like a milkmaid dress but nicer. Brendan also went kind of vintage with a man's blouse. That was really nice, almost like they were from the original colonies. It was very beautiful.

I cried in the ceremony it was so beautiful! There was a lot of guests and Alex and Brendan led a dance in the backyard. It was like a unifying dance. The cake was beautiful and it tasted good (Cake before dinner-hello!) later on they had karaoke but I went home by then.

It was beautiful weather for a wedding.



*Alex and Brendan*

## In Memory of Lauri Pierce ~Christine Elmquist

Lauri was one of the "moving pieces" that came together to form Community Homestead back in 1995. With her then husband Randy, and their two daughters, she was initially drawn to the goals of Philadelphia Farm, moved to the neighborhood, and joined their board.



*Lauri Pierce*

A couple of years of transition later, Lauri, her new partner Garth, and her now big blended family of mainly teenagers, made the move to Community Homestead to lead a lifesharing house. Lauri took up the "bread baking" and turned it into "the bakery", Garth kept teaching and the community kids filled the van every day for the hour drive to the Minnesota Waldorf School. Over

the next ten years, Lauri and Garth balanced community and Waldorf school life, switching part-time or full-time teaching, and running the bakery and a busy house.

Community children all had music lessons from Lauri. Our Nativity play was filled with recorder music and we walked the Advent Spiral accompanied by Lauri's harp. Lauri and Garth led the magical visits of St Lucia every year, ran around finding dragon jewels at Michaelmas, led us in sunrise singing at Easter, and sunset singing at St Johns.

Lauri strove always to do the right thing. Community is a messy, sometimes struggly business, of joy, effort, mistakes and best guesses, with breathtaking lights of love. Lauri gritted her teeth through our terrible community singing and the day to day challenges of lifesharing. She threw her head back and laughed in real freedom at the warmth and irreverence of community. She carried, with Garth's help, most of the cultural life of this musically hapless community and when she shifted her life balance back to the school, the city, and most importantly, her grandchildren, and moved out in 2012, we were less because of it.

Lauri continued as a board member, always interested, and committed to this life, even while she immersed herself in her family, friends, Waldorf education and music. Always music! She resigned as a board member just three months before her death on August 24, 2022.

Our first Covid outbreak prevented us from attending her memorial but, her life's breath, her joy, her wink, and above all, her radiant smile is woven into the history of our community. It is a living memorial. Thank you Lauri.



*Temperance River*

## Road Trip to the North Shore of Lake Superior

~Ann Sophie Schultze

The road trip to the North Shore started real early at 4am, so we all snuggled down in the van tried to get some sleep. But I can't sleep that much, because I was curious about the day.

Around 6am we arrived in Duluth and watched the sun rise above the lake and the city, it was beautiful. After that we ate breakfast at the lake, took some pictures, collected rocks and we tried to let stones jump over the water. Grand Marais was the next stop, where we walked around the bay and it was hard to believe that it's not the sea. We also got introduced to the ice cream at the deck tradition. Then we went on a hike along the river, where we saw some waterfalls and a nice nature. We jumped in the cold river from some rocks, it was fun and we were proud that we were brave enough to do it. The next stop at the road trip was a visitor center where we start a hike along the lake where we had many viewpoints to see diverse nature and the steep cliffs. We also saw climbers on the cliffs, it was impressive. The last stop on the road trip was Two Harbors, where we had pizza and good talks next to the lake.

I really enjoyed this road trip!



*Elvis*

## People Coming and Going ~Christine Elmquist

It's been a weird last couple of years because of Covid. January 2022 saw the arrival of our first international volunteer. Johanna was our one and only until March when Rachel joined her for three months. These two, so different, became good friends and added a lot to community life, each in their own way. Johanna left in August. Paul, our self-declared, "old dog learning new tricks" also arrived for two months in the Spring and helped hold the new Altair constellation with Michael who was here for a year and a half, and left in May. Big, happy, news was Goose (aka Sophie Macaulay) who came back to join Desi and Dustin at the helm of Altair. Similarly delightful was the arrival of Elvis Cormican at Farmhouse.

Otherwise, lots of turn around here folks, as volunteers wanted to come for much shorter times than they used to. Zuzska came from Czech for two months before she went traveling, Ceci, oh, wonderful Ceci, from Viroqua, came back for the summer from college, Maya came for an extended, and of course, working visit. Wim came for three summer months. Three Hibernia Waldorf Students (or "Baby Germans") Valentin, Ben, and Melvin came for six weeks. Raphael was our first French volunteer and now everyone expects all French volunteers to be kind, fluent, interested in everyone and everything. Always.

The late summer sees the arrival of four young Germans; Tammy, Anne, Ann Sophie and Janika, for a whole year through Freunde, along with Aiden, who is French, and 16 year old Bruno, also German, doing his six weeks of Waldorf School service. We all gain so much from all this laughter, learning and friendship, but you can get emotional whiplash from the pace of it all!

Looking to fall, we are settling down to everyone knowing where things are kept, getting a bike sorted out and learning more English. Want to come experience community life for a year, or longer (alright then, 2 months?) If you love gardens, and cows and baking heaven, we'd be particularly delighted to hear from you.



*Dustin & Wim*





*St. Paul College Chef*



*Kelley & Alex H.*



*Alex F. & Ceci*



## **The Garden Party ~Oscar Rauch Borgerding**

On Sunday, the community set up the tents and that was 8am. Put out tables and chairs and help set up for the craft sale that was in the community center. The weather was very nice. St Paul college came on Friday to pick up boxes of Community Homestead vegetables that were used to cook with back at the college. On the Sunday, there was hay rides of the farm if people wanted a tour. There was food in the garden and each station had different kinds of meat, salad and cheese was in a different spots. Wine and beer and juice and water and grape juice was in the overhang in the garden. The community is using the money so that we can build a new bakery. About a hundred people were at Community Homestead.

## **Thank you Sam ~Goose Macaulay**

This summer, we saw several volunteers come and go. Most were freshly 18, just leaving home for the first time and adventuring across the country (or from another country!) to farm with us. Some were in their 20s, with a few years of adulthood under their belts, gardening for a summer between semesters of college. But there was one volunteer in particular, who biked five miles every day to and from the community to work tirelessly and enthusiastically with us - Sam, who now enters eighth grade at Osceola Middle School.



*Ceci, Sam & Goose*

At 13 years old, Sam showed us the work ethic and yes-man attitude of those many times his age. Having grown up for several years in Community already, he helped the newer volunteers get acquainted with all of our rhythms and idiosyncrasies. Entering the garden, you would hear Sam's presence before you would see him, via the laughter that followed his quick jokes and clever (sometimes too clever...) pranks. On Friday afternoons, you could find Sam at Osceola Farmer's Market, playing a game of chess while also mentally tabulating the price of a customer's bag of vegetables (and pulling chairs out from under some unfortunate souls who dared sit next to him). Or maybe you would see him riding his bike, on 100 degree afternoons, refusing offers of a drive home, from an afternoon of tomato picking.

Wherever he was, Sam brought dedication, humor, and a strong love for Community to us, all summer long. Now that school has begun, we miss his lively energy around the community - but are always glad to see him bike around the corner to say hello at Farmer's Markets or up the driveway to the occasional potluck. Good luck in the school year, Sam!



## Rhubarb Fest ~Christine Elmquist

So, what does your little town do to celebrate the beginning of summer? Here, Osceola turns out for a festival of Rhubarb at the beginning of June. This is co-ordinated with the Lion's rubber duck race, yep, really, a race of rubber ducks over the millstream. Community Homestead is delighted to have been a part of it from the beginning; just the right kind of whacky, eccentric, wholesome, community fun we love.

Aided by neighbors supplementing our supply of rhubarb, we bake over 100 pies for the pie sale; every one of them some version of rhubarb. Alex Hanson, who loves the excitement and the buzz, is all over this pie-making craziness and markets this event wonderfully. Janette elects herself as official pie counter despite not being able to count very well: never let small things hold you back. Nastia figures any harvest haul of rhubarb less than a wheelbarrow full is not worth having and urges us, and particularly Oscar, ever onward, while Hannah and Bruce are the stoic backbones of this group. In and out of this are international volunteers who grapple with the, increasingly bewildering, explanations of this event that fellow bakers are happy to offer. I love Pie Crew!

After a Covid hiatus, in 2022 we partnered with the PTA who ran the craft fair, and the Lions (of course), and Main Street businesses who we could add to our walk-about map of all things rhubarb. The businesses responded with impressive creativity. You could eat, drink, snack, admire and wear rhubarb in all forms on June 8. Not to be left out, Community Homesteaders turn up in force, all over the Millpond, eating their way around town, visiting the library book sale and chasing ducks down the stream. So, at the end of summer, we look back fondly on this event and anticipate what we might do in 2023.



*Scott & Hillary*

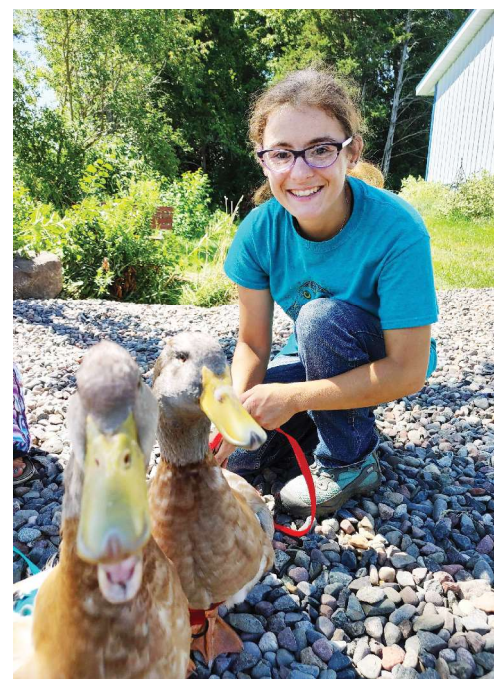
## Just Ducky Soap ~Nastia Baerg

I went riding my bike with Johanna in May and we saw some ducks so we stopped and visited. Lizzy was doing garden work and so we chatted a little bit before we left. It is Just Ducky Soap.

Last year, at Osceola Farmer's Market, I was selling Community Homestead stuff and doing money so I could get comfortable, and we decided to step it up this year. Liz asked me, to see how it goes, to sell soap, laundry soap and it is going very well, I think! I sell things for her every time I am at the market, all kinds of soaps. I also make hats and I sold 3 hats this summer. Liz made a sign for me and she is making another one for my bigger hats.

I have also worked in Liz's store, Just Ducky Soap. I clean windows, sweep, organize and be ready if any customers come. I also have fun with the kids so Liz can also do other things too. Three people from the Farmers' market came to the store so that is good because it means people know where the store is.

It is really fun because Liz has ducks and chickens and excited children. And she is awesome.



*Nastia*

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 Elizabeth Coffey to Alex and Brendan and all the folks there at  
 Homestead  
 Sean Cummings to The gardeners - for the bounty that nurtures  
 and sustains us  
 Laurel Desnick to The beautiful people of the Community  
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 Bruce Feldstein to Batyah Selis  
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 the years and more to come!  
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## News from the Bakery ~Alex Hansen

Michael left and then we had Richard. Same recipes! Same ingredients! New aprons! New hats.! New clips for counting! More cookies and more bread. Legend! Desi does the paperwork now. Steve Fons joined us and I am back making bread Tuesday now!

We bake cookies Monday with me and Steve and Desi and Anne and AnnSophie and Richard. And bread on Tuesdays; me and Scott and Richard and Janika. We bake on Fridays with Joel and Scott and Janika. Janika is nice. She is funny. She smiles a lot.

We are making a new bakery. Over at Evening Star at the shed. I'm SO happy! Get more space, more space on the tables, more people. And better sinks. I like baking bread and cookies. I like both!

## Upward and Onward. What is Community Homestead doing next?

Last Fall, addressing the longer term needs of sustainability and the shorter term problem of how we kept everyone housed here, we made a decisive plan.

**Step 1:** move people around to create a new Altair household. Done!



**Step 2:** convert Orion into two double occupancy apartments A: the upper floor B: the lower floor. Done!



### And this is next:

**Step 3:** build a new bakery and craft space in the pole shed next to the Community Center

**Step 4:** build the old bakery into a single apartment.

We need the last \$25,000, some muscle and time, to build the new bakery/craft space.



*Alex H. and the baked goods*



*Hannah*

## Transitioning from the garden to Advent crafts!

Our first craft is wreath making and we start at the end of October. For several years, we have been making seasonal wreaths with the beautiful "offcuts" from St Croix Valley Trees. This is a beautiful, multi-generational, family Christmas Tree Farm, run by some pretty great and very supportive, neighbors. Last year, with a lot of volunteer help, we ran the gift shop there on the weekends in addition to making all the plain wreaths for them which their team then decorates and sells. They also give us all

the greens we need for a joint fund raising venture we have the Minnesota Waldorf School this year. And then, because enough is not a word we know around here, we sell our decorated wreaths though the CSA, and at our local craft fairs.

Let the fun begin!

St Croix Valley Tree Farm opens the weekend before Thanksgiving until mid December

### Community Homestead Craft Fairs:

*November 12<sup>th</sup> 10-4pm*

*December 10<sup>th</sup> 10-4pm*

## And what about the stand-alone supported living apartments?

We set this aside, along with its funding, on hold, to allow prices and the material supply chain to stabilize. The bakery and the apartments are two separate projects both for funding and time line and can happen concurrently or consecutively.

We need a builder and some bids to start the apartments and we are looking right now. Any leads appreciated!

