

Down on the Farm

From the Director

"Other projects can give you files, reports and statistics. But we can give you a flat of strawberries!"
Bill Tracey, early HGP trainee

How do you measure success in your life? What is the most meaningful use of your personal resources? These complex questions translate to the nonprofit; the answers involve a search for balance between efficiency and values. Wendell Berry, farmer, essayist and poet offers a long meditation on this search for balance in "Another Turn of the Crank". The world of efficiency, he says, "must reduce experience to computation, particularity to abstraction, and mystery to a small comprehensibility. Efficiency, in our present sense of the word, allies itself inevitably with machinery... Machines eliminate complexity, doubt and ambiguity. They work swiftly, they are standardized, and they provide us with numbers that you can see and calculate with."

Objective measures of success, communicating clearly our purpose and how we are doing are valuable to every aspect of our operation— but that doesn't mean easy, or transparent. The number of hours of paid training provided, the number of pounds of produce grown, the income of our Holiday Store, all inform our planning and indicate strengths or challenges that need to be addressed; these numbers do come pretty easily. Our impact on the community or on a trainee's life is less transparent and defies accurate measure. Are we helping our trainees to articulate specific goals and to take steps toward those goals? We want to know if working at the Project fosters hope, self esteem, self confidence and personal responsibility in our trainees. We know trainees are gaining skills; will those skills help to improve the quality of their lives? When trainees graduate from the Project, will they have a sense of belonging, will they be safe, will they feel they have the power to determine their own future?

We hope to answer these questions without leaving the truth behind. As a child, the phrase, "The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," always had a big impact on me. Here, at the Homeless Garden Project, we emphasize "the whole truth." One hundred thousand details and experiences lie behind each statistic. What was the texture of the effort, how many bus rides did it take to get to the farm, what portion of a paycheck was spent on bus fare, how many nights were spent camped in a car, what stigma had to be overcome, how many rental applications made before one was accepted, what did perseverance achieve... Trainees telling their stories inside these newsletters in their own voices help us to get to this one whole truth.

We exist for individuals. We persist because we know that an individual is much more than a statistic. To continue with Wendell Berry, an individual "belongs to the world of love, which is a world of living creatures, natural orders and cycles, many small fragile lights in the dark."

—Darrie Ganzhorn is Director of Programs and Operations

From the Board: What's in store for our store.

Many of you who are reading this article have visited and shopped at our Holiday Store next to Depot Park, at the foot of West Cliff Drive. You have admired the cheerful holiday window, painted by glass artist, Syndi McNett, the same lady who paints the seasonal windows at Shopper's Corner. Thank you Syndi, for this wonderful gift! You will also have admired the store lay-out, a yearly gift from Beth MacGregor. Thank you, Beth, we couldn't have done it without you! And you will have bought scarves and baby clothes knitted by our tireless knitters who each year donate these wonderful items. So much appreciated! And, last but certainly not least, a Thank You to all our trainees who made stunning wreaths and the volunteers who helped staff the store and, especially you, our shoppers, without whom none of the above would matter!

So what's in store for our Store? For one thing, we have decided to keep the Store open year around, Wednesdays through Fridays from 10am to 2pm with special added hours for special occasions— think Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and Father's Day. Of course, we will always have our beautiful beeswax candles, made by our long-time candle maker Dawn Brandberg. She is exploring making soy-based candles, which will allow her to add scents. Our lavender cookie and biscuit mixes were a big success, and we will continue making them, as well as the herb salts and the flavored vinegars that flew off the shelves. And we still have strawberry jam, made from the organic strawberries grown at our Natural Bridges Farm. Another big hit were the lavender dryer sachets. We could barely keep up and will be ramping up the production so that they will always be available. New products will be salt scrubs which will make your skin feel so smooth, bath salts for a luxurious bath (perhaps surrounded by our candles?), gardener's salves to soothe hands roughed up by gardening, and sweet smelling soaps, the making of which Mary Jessen, owner of Deerhaven Soap, has volunteered to teach our trainees.

We will also be revamping our website at www.homelessgardenproject.org. We have noticed an increase in online sales and realized that this will enable us to market our products more effectively. We will be uploading pictures of all our products, old and new; it will make shopping from your home a breeze.

—Woutje Swets is Vice Chair of our Board of Directors

Voices from the Fields...

Rhythms we live by

One aspect of Natural Bridges Farm and Garden everyone— employees and visitors alike— inevitably notice and comment on are the deep feelings of peace, calm and serenity. Located at the far end of town, near the ocean, in the midst of open fields and other agriculture, nature and weather create the rhythms we live by. We work outside during the growing and harvesting season, which keeps us in tune to an organic sense of time. Our energies and efforts are positive and productive. We create space for plants by weeding and preparing tidy beds full of compost. We sprout the tender seeds in our greenhouse, and then plant them out on the farm to flourish. More weeding to keep the babies happy and strong, the right amount of water for each crop, and then harvesting for our CSA. One of the trickiest parts of running the farm is figuring how to rotate various crops, both for long-term production, and appropriateness to the seasons.

In addition to the veggies we harvest from May through October, we also grow a wide array of flowers, both for bouquets for the CSA, and to dry and use in making wreaths for our downtown retail store. We grow herbs for other products at the store, and tons of lavender, some of which is added to our shortbread. Our amazing (best in the county?) strawberries provide enough extra to cook up some super scrumptious jams.

Before the recent fires that destroyed our kitchen, many community members came by to cook lovely hot lunches for us, or sometimes we used our (former) supplies to whip up some good ol' rice-n-beans. Lunchtime was both a time to get together and relax a bit, and to observe some of the local goings-on. We often watch a hawk who perches on a nearby lamppost, which seems sort of not-of-nature, but from there she can survey many areas to hunt from. A heron occasionally stalks majestically-looking for gophers, we hope. Ditto kitties Tiger and Mama, and our ten sweet ducks absolutely gobble up snails.

During the warm seasons, we held classes here. We studied local insects; with guidance, we learned to see a phenomenal quantity of them, usually cleverly disguised, frequently performing extremely specific tasks. It is SO fun to discover the endlessly myriad complementary webs of life and nature. We've also had weed/herb walks, in which we explore how to identify an astonishing array of medicinal/edible local plants. We've had

folks from the Ag department at Davis show us beautiful photos of hedgerows, an older style of planting fields which intersperses crops with hedges that harbor beneficial insects and animals. We had an excellent lecture that was a brilliant blending of nutrition and philosophy. We've been taught a tiny bit about nomenclature, and were assured that upon further exploration, nomenclature would be "totally obvious" (!). All these lessons help us find out more about so many different subjects, and vigorously stimulate the desire to stretch our minds further. We also expand our knowledge by talking and working with our interns, some of whom are only with us for a week, or once a week for a while, or for a semester. It is absolutely fabulous and stimulating to interact with so many young minds so enthusiastic and full of new ideas. These programs are only one of the many best parts of working here: meeting so many different people from so many different environments. Layla's program, Cultivating Community, brings school-age kids to the farm, so we pretty much run the gamut age-wise from toddlers who accompany siblings, to seniors who have been coming for quite some time to help us with bouquets or cooking.

*It is SO fun to
discover the
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and nature...*



Karalee

Aileen and Noriko

In addition to our two greenhouses where we sprout seedlings for planting out, and plant 6-packs for our spring and fall plant sales, we also have a nursery where we tend fruit trees and landscape ornamentals. We are trained to recognize how different amounts of moisture and humidity and warmth best serve each plant through its different stages. We try to absorb enough information to answer questions during the plant sales about how and when and where the plants can best be situated.

The one best word to describe the farm is: nurturing. We nurture the plants and each other, and they nurture us. We hone skills we're familiar with, and tackle new tasks. Each person comes to us with his or her own special capabilities, and together we weave the bigger picture. So, too, we all have our own challenges to overcome. The gentle and welcoming nature of the Farm provides an easy environment that allows us to blossom at our own pace, and provides us tools to grapple with our setbacks.

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Voices from the Fields...

Obviously the fires have been an absolutely devastating and overwhelming sorrow; one we're struggling to develop a constructive and forward-looking attitude towards. Part of our budget comes from sales at our Holiday Store and income from our CSA, but we also rely on the continuing and always-generous support of the community and the ongoing influx of donations, large and small, to enable us to provide the essential training and support for all our staff.

And, of course, the Project has a long history. With the many, many years of dedication from the famous Patrick, all of us, even those who have never met him, benefit endlessly from his participation. His encyclopedic knowledge and deep understanding of each of us provides the bedrock upon which we all thrive. Piloting us forward, Paul is a wellspring of compassion and giving and personal involvement, plus extremely expert at all aspects of farming; absolutely EVERYONE comments on how incredibly beautiful and extraordinarily fantastic the Farm looks. It is exceptionally inspiring to have Paul and Karalee here at the helm— so much knowledge; so many fresh ideas. The future is wide-open and boundless!

— Anonymous

Notes from the Garden

It is hard to believe that the season has passed us and we have almost moved through January. But, before we take a look at 2008, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the past year. In so many ways we were successful at the Project. We had a great CSA that fed fifty families each week in our community. Feeding those around us— and good nutrition helps all of us to have healthy relationships— is an important tenet at the Project. Our thanks goes out to everyone who participated as a member. Another big thanks goes out to Paige Concannon for welcoming all of our members each week with a warm smile and a couple of recipes to go with some of those more unusual vegetables (i.e. black Spanish radish).

We have big plans for our CSA this year and hope that some of you will consider participating. We are offering 65 shares up from 50 in 2007 and we hope to fill all of them. Members who pay in full by March 15, can save \$50. It is very important to all of us at the farm that we provide some of the best local and organic produce in the area and I think that our strawberries can serve as a testament to that. As a member of our CSA, you not only make

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sure your family eats healthy and nutritious food from our farm, you also ensure that we are able to pay low-income and homeless members of our community to farm with us on a daily basis. If you are interested in receiving more information about CSA 2008, please contact Darrie at 426-3609, extension 2#.

A wetter than normal winter has greeted us at the farm with over 13 inches of rain for the season. That is good news for us (and the cover crop) and even better news for the snow pack up in the Sierras, which provides much of the water we use at our homes and in the Garden. As planned, we planted our strawberries before Thanksgiving and I'm happy to report that we had over 95% of our plants "take." That is going to mean a lot of strawberries in our bellies this spring and summer, which I can't wait for. We decided to go with "Albion" berries again, a day-neutral variety that produced monster berries throughout the summer.

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2007—
In so many
ways we were
successful at
the Project...



Paul and Noriko



Stephen and Layla

Voices from the Fields...

There have been challenges this winter. Many of you may have heard there were two fires on the farm. Arsonists burned down our storage shed and kitchen, essentially destroying our kitchen, classroom, and community meeting area. I have found strength in the support that we have received from the community around us and am grateful for all of the phone calls, emails, and donations. I am confident that this tough situation has presented us with the opportunity to persevere together as a group and we are doing just that. As one trainee, Deborah, said, "they can't burn the soil." I couldn't have said it better myself. For years we have added compost, aged manure, and organic matter to the soil to build it up from the sandy loam that it was over 12 years ago and every day I am amazed at how well plants and people do in the Garden. Someone can burn our buildings but they will never destroy the microbial activity in the soil and they can't burn down the lavender. We are already looking forward to lavender harvest in the spring as the waves of purple will complement the beautiful green that the farm is awash in currently. We have a great crew of trainees right now. I'm looking forward to learning and working together as we continue to build off the success the Project has had over the last 17 years.

As always, you are all welcome on the farm every single day of the week from sunrise to sunset. It is a great place to watch the sunset, check out the birds, and see where carrots actually come from. We find ourselves out there working Tuesday through Friday if you want to say hello. Thanks and we look forward to seeing you soon. Take care. — Paul Glowaski is Farm Director

Scarves are still available at our store.



Shirley sifting lavender



Karalee

Introducing Karalee

My name is Karalee Greenwald and I have recently started working at the Natural Bridges Farm. How did I come to this, you ask? Well, I am the girl whose grandparents and father were farmie people. Tractor rides, climbing trees to watch cows give birth, delicious home-grown food at family picnics... those are my roots. Fastforward: As a young adult my mind mulled over college and career and how I could best spend my time and energy. I boiled it down to the basics, which to me are something like: clean air and water, sunlight, fresh organic food, dancing and love. Of these I began to procure a profession that is an old and somewhat forgotten profession. Did you know that less than 2% of Americans are farmers and the average age of those wise folks is 65? All political rhetoric aside (and that's a lot of rhetoric), people must eat to survive. Farming is the most complex and amazing endeavor I have pursued. There are no assumable constants, every season is full of surprises. There is a saying something like "Even if you have farmed for thirty years, you still have done it only thirty times."

So here I am, grateful to have a chance to work for an innovator like the HGP. I invite you to come to the farm and take a look at what the trainees, volunteers, interns, and staff have been creating on a beautiful piece of land right here in Santa Cruz. Surprise yourself. Get involved with the land that feeds you.

— Karalee Greenwald became Horticulture Director at Natural Bridges Farm in November, 2007

Volunteers Needed

Karalee is seeking volunteers for the Plant Sale.

To be involved in the pre-event tasks or the big day itself, call 423-1020.

CSA 2008 Community Supported Agriculture

- We'll be offering our shares— "The Works"
- Weekly pickups of organic produce/flowers from June through October at 30 West Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz
 - CSA 2008 "The Works" pay in full before March 15 \$500. After March 15— \$550.

Order form available online soon!

Mark your calendars... **June 21**

Solstice, Strawberries and Silent Auction
Natural Bridges Farm

Donate items for the Silent Auction.
Contact Layla at 426-3609, extension 0#

Recent tribute gifts

made to the Homeless Garden Project

A tribute gift to the Project is a great way to show your support of our programs while honoring the generous people in your life! We'll acknowledge your gift promptly by mailing a beautiful card of our organic flower farm to the individual, family, or organization that you are honoring or remembering. (Please remember to send their addresses!) For gifts of \$50 or more, we'll also send your tribute person a pair of 10" handmade beeswax candles created in our workshop program. The gift amount is not included with the card or candle. You'll receive our grateful confirmation of your gift for tax purposes.

Recent tribute gifts made to the Homeless Garden Project:

In Memory Of:

Mary Ellen Brittan	— Jeff Brittan
The F.O.G.	— Joseph Matheny
Marilyn Dreampeace	— Orli Loewenberg & S. Shalom Bochner
Marianne Hamilton	— Carolina Bayne
Lucille Boorstein	— Muriel Salmansohn
Eleanor Davis	— Pamela Davis
Jean Stewart	— Barbara Cokelet

In Honor Of:

Evy Cambridge & Lalo Fiorelli	— Mark & Pat Benjamin
Ann & John Dizikes	— Caitlin Brune
Joe Brune Jr.	— Caitlin Brune
Edith Daniels	— Amy Daniels

Judy & Paul Parsons	— Amy Daniels
Jamie Josephson	— Betty Deitsch
Peter Katzlberger	— Joan Deneffe
Angela Finfrock	— Andrew & Betsy Finfrock
Jesse Finfrock & Rachel Lichte	— Andrew & Betsy Finfrock
Paul Johnson	— Joan & George Hall
Cate Mugasis	— Karen Harwood
Josh Pechthalt	— Jon Kersey
Grandma Vi Lawton	— Paul Lawton & Patty Durkee
Mary & Ghassan Rubeiz	— Phyllis Norris
Katherine Beiers	— Ellyn Schwartzman
Diane, Connie, Bernadette & Cobra	— Bertine & Ken Slosberg
Cindy Wasserman	— Donna & Peter Thomas
Marjorie Sa'adah	— Lynn Kersey
Davidson Family	— Sara Cunningham
Karl, Julie, Amber & Nate Zeise	— Anonymous
Ann Rogers & Mary Turner	— Christine Sodt
Eva Wise, Cathy Shanahan, Sylvia Sutherland	— Christine Sodt
Soleste Hilberg & Will Doherty	— Vanessa J. Lee
Mike Welch & Vanessa Spofford	— Lois & Bill Linford
Adam Brunner	— Linda Clevenger

We do Wedding Flowers!

We grow a wide diversity of flowers. We offer both fresh and dried flowers. Interested? Call Paul or Karalee at Natural Bridges Farm, 423-1020

Special Volunteers Needed.

We are looking for a few very dedicated and talented people to help HGP to:

- Manage and update our website
- Perform bookkeeping tasks
- Provide technical support for our computer network
- Complete office tasks

THANK YOU to our Partners-in-Dining:
Kianti's and La Posta for their recent events and their support!

The Homeless Garden Project

P.O. Box 617 • Santa Cruz, California • 95061

See our Web Site: www.homelessgardenproject.org
or call us at: (831) 426-3609

Be an active supporter:

- _____ \$1,000. Friend of the Garden
- _____ \$ 500. Cultivator of the Garden
- _____ \$ 250. Sower of the Garden
- _____ \$ 100. Supporter of the Garden

My Donation is enclosed Bill Me

Bill My Visa Master Card

Card No. _____

Exp. Date _____

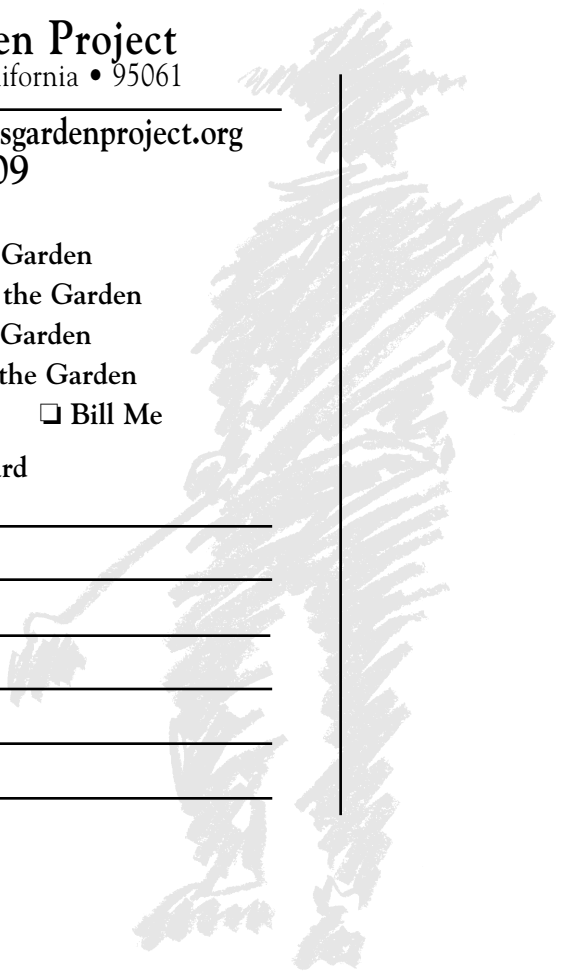
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Name _____

Address _____

Daytime Telephone _____

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Enjoy a great meal while supporting
the Homeless Garden Project!

Upcoming Dates!

Invite a friend to join you at

Clouds

110 Church Street, Santa Cruz

Tel. 429-2000

Tuesday, March 25

Our Partner-in-Dining will donate a percentage of their day's sales to our employment training programs.

Invite a friend to join you at

al Dente

415 Seabright Avenue, Santa Cruz

Tel. 466-0649

Tuesday, April 15

Our Partner-in-Dining will donate a percentage of their day's sales to our employment training programs.

Mark the date and bon appetite!

Spring Plant Sale

Friday, April 18

12-6 Plant Sale Preview & Good Neighbor Discount

Saturday, April 19

9-6 Plant Sale Extravaganza



Friday

• Plant Sale Preview 12-6:

Organic starts, 6-packs, 4" pots, gallons, herbs, diverse food crops, flowers, succulents, container plants, shade plants and more!

Saturday

• Plant Sale 9-6

• **Volunteer with National & Global Youth Service Day 10-1:** A community-wide volunteer event hosted by HGP and YouthServe Santa Cruz, all ages welcome.

• Gardener's Salve Workshop 2-3

• Farm Fresh Cooking Workshop 3-4

Live Music all day • Ceramics for your garden
Candles • Cookie mix • Goodies from *From Our Garden*

423-1020 • NATURAL BRIDGES FARM