

Down on the Farm

“Radical simply means grasping things at the root” — Angela Davis



This year, the Homeless Garden Project celebrates our 20th anniversary. Please join us as we pause, reflect and celebrate 20 years of working to fulfill our mission. Essential to HGP's vision is an understanding that sustainability wastes nothing and no one, that it includes the potential of all who want to find a productive place in society. And sustainability cannot afford to separate people from the environment.

Our approach in following this vision has yielded the capability to work simultaneously for social and environmental sustainability. By supporting a strong and compassionate community, we address a root cause of homelessness; and, by working with our trainees to identify solutions that are meaningful to them, we have a long-lasting effect. One of the root causes of homelessness, as well as a result of homelessness is isolation and lack of a social support network. But isolation runs both ways. Our mission statement calls us to— *“bring together people from throughout the community in the beauty and security of our certified organic garden.”* Lynne, HGP's co-founder explained it like this, *“Each year as HGP hosts and trains volunteers from all parts of the community a two-way interaction takes place that is key to HGP's mission. The farm and its trainees receive the labor, love and material support from countless community members while in turn these volunteers learn— hands-on— about homelessness, sustainable agriculture, therapeutic horticulture and social justice.”*

An HGP intern, Liz, says, *“Before ever visiting the farm I had imagined in my head that it would be very obvious who was a trainee and who were the volunteers and interns working there. Upon arriving at the farm, however, I found that it was very difficult to tell. We all become part of the same class level when working on the farm and people were judged for their work ethic and skills opposed to the latest fashions that they were sporting.”* To remember and honor the last twenty years, we are working on three separate projects. We'll hold a 20th Anniversary Celebration, Organic Dinner and Fundraiser at Natural Bridges Farm on October 2 from 2:30 to sunset. Thanks to our hard-working, capable and passionate volunteers, we are launching a new, dynamic and interactive website.

And finally, we are gathering profiles from past participants about where they are now and how their time at HGP impacted their life. These profiles will be featured on our new website, in upcoming newsletters and at our event. If you'd like to contribute a profile, please contact me at darrieg@homelessgardenproject.org We are grateful for the support of the HGP community over the past 20 years. A vital part of reflection on and celebration of this anniversary is the garnering of the strength, sustenance and solidarity to sustain us for the next 20 years. Please support HGP as we continue this radical work.

— Darrie Ganzhorn is Executive Director

From the Board

I'll never forget that dark, cold, and snowy evening in Vermont while I was working at a homeless shelter in Vermont, searching the internet for any information I could find on “urban agriculture.” In the very limited literature on the subject at the time I read about a place called the Homeless Garden Project in California. It seemed like a million miles away from the shelter where I was working. Yet, it was one of my main inspirations for leaving my job in the shelter, and going to work on farms to learn about agriculture. For me, and so many others, the Homeless Garden Project showed us that things could be different. Instead of simply giving temporary Band-Aid answers to a large problem, we could be part of a solution by offering people opportunities for personal change through the dignity of work and farming. I, along with many others, will be grateful forever to the visionaries that helped to create the project two decades ago.

This past year I left my position as HGP's Farm Director to begin a new adventure, starting my own farm called Dinner Bell. While this decision was a hard one, it became more palatable to my heart and mind when I considered the possibilities of joining the Board of Directors. My goals are many, most important of which include helping to support all of the wonderful men and women currently at the Project and to articulate our mission and goals to others as we move into this exciting new chapter.

At times, the day to day rigor that many of the trainees feel can be challenging and like any challenging situation can start to feel myopic. We often said while working together out on the farm that the work we were doing, no matter how mundane it may have felt at the time, was for people we were never going to meet. The work we were doing was for others who may need the Project, months or even years down the road. Please help us to continue our work at the Homeless Garden with your financial donations and volunteerism so those people that we may never meet will have the same opportunities that we did. We hope to see you at the 20th anniversary celebration on October 2. It truly will be a good one.

— Paul Glowaski, HGP Board Member

To bring together people...



Voices from the Fields...

Full Impact: An Interview with Lauri Girard.

When Lauri Girard first came to the Homeless Garden Project five months ago, she had already made tremendous strides in her recovery. To fully appreciate the impact the Project has had on her, one needs to know where she has been, what brought her here and what is in store for her next.

"It's a miracle I'm alive, and so grateful to have another chance."

Lauri began using drugs and alcohol in her teens; as it progressed to abuse, it started to show in negative ways including loss of relationships, jobs and self-esteem. "My bottom came when I ended up homeless on the streets of Reno contracting a serious infection and still I couldn't stop. As an educated professional, this wasn't supposed to happen to me!"

It took an intervention by friends and family to bring her to a medical detox, where the healing began.

Treatment centers, family, friends and her church were support for her, but "I had to want it for myself. I cried out to God for help and He answered." Lauri came home to Santa Cruz and entered the New Life Center, a 6-month residential program. New Life required participants to obtain employment; this was difficult for Lauri because of her lack of strong work history. She found a seasonal job, but was soon without work again.

While attending Project Homeless Connect, she visited the Homeless Garden Project table.

Greeted with enthusiasm, she was encouraged to complete an application. Lauri loves flowers and gardening and thought it sounded like something she'd enjoy doing. "I had no idea of the full impact it would have on my life." She was called in for an interview; there she found out more about how the Project works. "I was sure I wouldn't be hired because I planned to go to summer school and because I had begun living in a clean and sober house. Little did I know at the time that the Project is about helping people like me to start or to continue a productive path."

Lauri is now a trainee at the Homeless Garden Project, working four days a week, learning every aspect of working on a small organic farm.

This is a paid position which can last up to three years and is not seasonal. During the winter months, the trainees work in the shop making dried flower wreaths and other gift products for HGP's Holiday Store.

Lauri says, "There are so many benefits to working at the farm, but one of the most gratifying is getting a paycheck, paying my rent and finally being a productive member of society." While farm operations are important, the human component is the focus of the Project. Because the person comes first, once a week there is a circle meeting where trainees and staff have an opportunity to check in on a personal level. The staff is genuinely interested in how trainees are doing and what staff can do to help; all trainees are assessed in depth for individual needs and matched up with community resources.

While it is surely Lauri's strength and determination that have brought her to this place in her recovery, she believes that the Project has made a dramatic contribution to her success and her outlook about the future.

"The garden is amazing, there's so much love out here. For me spiritually it's about the healing power of preparing the soil, sowing the seeds, planting, watching them grow and then harvesting the crops. I spend time praying in the garden, lots of talk with God, while having a huge respect for creation."



Although Lauri is one that doesn't plan on a future in agriculture, she feels the education can also be used on a personal level.

"I'm learning so much on the farm; one of my favorite days out here is Wednesday, when we have a class in the morning. The classes are anywhere from pest control or composting to cooking with organic farm ingredients. "I don't know too many people who have watched their boss, who is also a professional chef, gather produce, and prepare it in a wok outdoors on a farm with an ocean view. Trust me, I had to pinch myself to see if it was real. I am truly blessed!" Lauri will be celebrating 18 months of sobriety, has a new grandson, is enrolled at Cabrillo College and plans a future in the medical field where she can give back all that she has been given. On top of her gratitude list, she says, is all those people that have supported the Homeless Garden Project in any way. "You are so awesome!"

Interviewer/volunteer, Stacy Everett's search for meaningful ways to spend some of her free time led her to the HGP.

Thanks to Pat McKee for taking the majority of the photos in this issue.

The garden is amazing, there's so much love out here.

Voices from the Fields...

Twenty years and we are proud...

"I think the HGP's goals are about raising people out of the ground or dirt—like growing flowers. They really do an excellent job of accomplishing this. It's great the HGP works with people who need help in life; HGP really helps people get what they need."
Mary Cherry, Current HGP Trainee

"Planting Dahlias was just plain awesome. I didn't know what to expect when we planted them, but everyone was excited about how beautiful they would be. It was really rewarding to work with Robert, Amanda, and Robin because we didn't know what we were doing so we learned together. And now look at them! The Dahlias are beautiful!"
Mary Cherry, Current HGP Trainee

"I'm on a personal food quest, experiencing the real origins of food. I plan on going to Cabrillo Community College to take health and nutrition classes. I want to go to Bauman eventually to become a holistic nutrition consultant. HGP is helping me build communication skills, especially with younger kids. This is helpful since I hope to work with kids someday. And of course being around food and gardening is a new and beneficial experience."
Michael Curry, HGP Trainee

"I think HGP's goals are to develop teamwork and positive working habits in order to help participants find employment. Ultimately the HGP becomes an excellent reference for your next job because of the numerous skills they teach you. The program is successful in this way for people who really stick with it."
Deborah Grogan, HGP Graduate

"I'd have to say [my favorite memory of HGP is] working at the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) pick-up, when a bride and groom came to pick up their vegetables. They were all dressed up and had streamers coming off of their car; people were taking pictures of them. I also really enjoy when the kids would come get strawberries."
Deborah Grogan, HGP Graduate

"It was during the first few months of his time at the Homeless Garden that Bill, one night, stopped drinking. As he explained, because he had so many broken bones and trauma to his body over the years, he needed the alcohol to be able to sleep on the cold, hard ground, yet it was the alcohol that was keeping him homeless. But on that one night, his liver hurt so much that he just could not keep drinking anymore. Inspiration, which is a form of energy, from all the new people who had befriended him and pride in his work as a gardener, undoubtedly helped him make that leap.

"Immediately, Bill transferred the compulsive nature of his drinking into working the earth. He quickly mastered the array of tasks necessary to make life flourish, and his posture, skin, and muscle tone all began to improve."
Excerpt from Addi Somekh's tribute to Bill Tracey, 2006



www.homelessgardenproject.org

Serving, educating, and employing people within an organic farm enterprise for twenty years.

Voices from the Fields...

Three timely ways to support Homeless Garden Project.

1. Help us kick off our 20 Year Anniversary Campaign. Your contribution of \$20, \$200 or \$2,000 will keep HGP's education and employment programs going. We encourage you to consider a pledge of \$20/month for a year— this enables you to make a generous contribution that is easier on your pocketbook. Send in your initial donation with the coupon on the back, select, "I'd like to make this a monthly donation" and we'll contact you to activate your pledge. Or, go online to: www.homelessgardenproject.org/getinvolved/donate.php and select "Make a direct donation."

2. Buy a late season CSA Share!

It's not too late to have a taste of HGP's CSA. Enjoy the late season sweetness— pick up on five Fridays in October for \$132. Details are available at: www.homelessgardenproject.org/programs/csa.php

3. Support our volunteer coordinator position— help us take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to strengthen one of HGP's greatest services to our community. Through an arrangement with Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz, the HGP has an opportunity to work with Kelly Mercer, an AmeriCorps volunteer; this is a full-time, year-long position. HGP's share of cost for this position is \$9,000. That is quite a deal! Thanks to three generous donors, we've raised \$6,500 of our goal. Any amount helps as we build to our goal.

We are pleased to introduce Kelly Mercer, HGP's new volunteer coordinator!

Kelly will be trained as part of the AmeriCorps Volunteer Infrastructure Program while working full time with the HGP staff. This position will strengthen and develop programs that support children, youth and families coming to our 3 acre Certified Organic farm.

Kelly graduated from the University of New Hampshire, has been active in environmentally sustainable projects and traveled to farms around the world.

Kelly says of a pivotal experience in the Czech Republic when she was helping to provide a meal to hundreds of people at the train station, "As the line worked its way through, we soon ran out of soup.

— continued

Used to disappointment, it appeared as though they were not surprised and walked away. It was at this time after helping hundreds of people, that I felt the most helpless of all. Those feelings of powerlessness compelled me to learn more about financial struggles around the world."

For information about volunteering, you can contact Kelly at:

kellym@homelessgardenproject.org

426.3609.0# or check out:

www.homelessgardenproject.org/getinvolved/volunteer.php



Thank you to the foundations that have supported us in 2010.

- The Quentin Hancock Fund, an advised fund of Silicon Valley
- The Stocker Family Fund at the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County
- Helen and Will Webster Foundation
- Newman's Own Foundation
- Mazal Foundation
- Monterey Bay Master Gardeners
- Sigma Alpha of Omega Nu
- Ms. Carolyn Moore and The George L. Shields Foundation
- The Purple Lady/Barbara J. Meislin Fund
- The Brian and Patricia A. Herman Fund at the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz
- The Estate of Mary Turner
- The Spring Fund at the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County
- Monterey Peninsula Foundation, host of the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am (2009)



Recent tribute gifts made to HGP

In Honor Of:

Stuart Kaplan— *The Purple Lady/Barbara J. Meislin Fund*

Joseph Loffredo— *Irene Abrams*

Cecilia Garcia— *Sherri Achten*

Mary Burick— *Laurencin Personal Physicians*

In Memory Of:

Jeanette Johnson— *Sandra Junier, Joan and George Hall, Jacob and*

Hila Michaelson, Bud and Judith Joseph, Joyce and A.D. McLean,

Shirley Schiffrin, Lucille DesJardins, Kate and Robert Burke,

Barbara Harker, Sharon (Bunny) Tavares, Bill Monning and

Dana Kent, Mr. and Mrs. Leon Grossier

Juanita Orlando— *Jon Butah, Ronald and Dukh Niwaran Whipp,*

Roberta Dunton, Santa Cruz Opera Society

Ronn Reinberg— *Deborah Reinberg, Delores and Charles Cook,*

Evelyn Renold, Joan Van Antwerp

Joyce Moore— *Margaret and Donald Fitzgerald*

Mary Turner— *Betty Gangware, Ann Rogers*

Nancy Newton— *Mary and David Jessen*

Mike Markell— *Irene Abrams*

Dori Bodenheimer— *Ronald Maysenhalder*

F.O.G.— *Gordon Bonge*

Growing our network of support!

A strong nonprofit, like a strong farm, cultivates a diverse, rich collection of sources of 'enhancement'. This collection includes resources and people that contribute to daily operations, but also help prepare for emergencies as well as opportunities while ensuring a cushion for lean times.

The HGP tries to raise funds from a broad swath of the Santa Cruz community and beyond: from individuals, who give in amounts both large and small; from foundations and government agencies; and from local businesses and larger corporations. Without these varied sources of support, the Project would be unable to grow community and maintain a healthy, productive farm. Thus, every penny, dollar, or share of stock dedicated to support the HGP plays a vital role in maintaining the organization's health and ensuring our continued success.

Please let us know if you are a member of or can help us connect with:

- Union Bank
- NVIDIA
- Avon
- Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
- An employee-giving or employee contribution-match program at your workplace.

www.homelessgardenproject.org



Serving, educating & employing people within an organic farm enterprise for twenty years.

HOMELESS GARDEN PROJECT



Thank you to our website team:

Delise Weir, Jennifer Friedman, Robert Sese, Bill Duemler and Jenny Hethwho volunteered their time, energy, expertise, taught us so much, kept us looking at the big picture and even cooked breakfast. We are so fortunate to have such capable and motivated volunteers.

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

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and send in.
Thank you
for your support!

*You're invited to our
Celebration &
Organic Dinner at the Garden
Saturday, October 2, 2010
NATURAL BRIDGES FARM
2:30 to SUNSET ♦ OCTOBER 2
Chefs — Forrest Cook and Joseph Schultz of India Joze
Bring your family and friends!*

Tickets available online at www.homelessgardenproject.org
For questions about the celebration please call 426-3609 ext. 1#.

*Bouquet of Thanks ♦ Tales of Success ♦ Crafts
Music ♦ Raffle ♦ Luminaria Parade*

HOMELESS GARDEN PROJECT
**Strawberry
Gelato is in!**



Made with organic strawberries grown at our farm and all natural ingredients; creamy and bursting with strawberries.



Help support our job training programs to people who are homeless in Santa Cruz County.

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