

# Down on the Farm

*Harvest*

Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.

— Rachel Carson



*The transition from farm to workshop* is in full swing at the Homeless Garden Project. While a small team of staff and trainees remain at the farm planting strawberries and cover crop and preparing for winter, most of us are down at the workshop learning to make wreaths and other gift products we'll be selling at our (13th Annual!) Holiday Store. The farm is very present in the workshop— in the lunch we eat, the flowers we are working with and community that has grown there.

*Also present* is that which trainees try to leave behind— the chaos of homelessness, loss, or a painful past. At this morning's circle meeting, I asked trainees to talk about what they believe is important to communicate about the Homeless Garden Project to our customers at the Holiday Store. Their comments took the form of a Thanksgiving and I want to pass on a very small part of what was said.

*You don't feel ugly when you're in a beautiful place.*

*When you can step away from being on the streets, you get to be human. I never in my life thought I'd be homeless. When you're down and out, just get back on your feet and something will open out for you.*

*HGP is a place where I belong and can say I come from. I appreciate the second and third chances to try again and get it right.*

*In the eight months that I've been homeless, I've seen several people overdose and another die of hypothermia. The Project does a lot of stuff—there are a lot of benefits—but the end result is that it saves lives.*

*The Holiday Store is about end results, finished products. I look at a wreath and think about everything that went into it, all the hands that touched it.*

*This Holiday season*, please help us provide these opportunities by shopping at our store and contributing to our programs. We can't do it without you. And please extend an invitation to your friends to do the same. We hope we can be of service to you all in providing beautiful, meaningful gifts, and we wish you a Happy Holiday.

— Darrie Ganzhorn is Executive Director

*Your support creates a real solution!*

*"Lettuce Thank You"* headlined our postcard to donors in 1991. Growing lettuce, strawberries and basil was changing people's lives and we were thankful. Thousands of personal contributions from the Santa Cruz community had lifted the Homeless Garden Project into existence. Land and water from the City, a small grant from the Lutherans, a garage to start wreath and candle making, strawberry starts, tools, and expertise of every ilk made the Project a true reflection of Santa Cruz County's generous spirit. Over the last 20 years the number of individual contributions has undoubtedly grown to hundreds of thousands of personal "yeses" for the Project. This enormous number of contributions represents the manifestation of people harmonizing around a common value. The ongoing existence of HGP is like a huge vote for something we believe in together, something beautiful, something human and something very real!

*What* is real? The challenge to respond to needs as circumstances change. While the face of homelessness has changed in the community and at the Project, from a mainly male population, to include the hidden homeless, homeless families, and an everyday reality of more and more homeless youth and teens, the need continues to be great. Simultaneously, we are watching our city and county financial support reduced, our local services cut, our job training grants disappear and our financial base becoming even more dependent on individual contributions.

*What* is beautiful? The gratitude and dignity our participants feel, both housed and houseless, when working together to grow food for Santa Cruz families and organizations. For the homeless citizens of Santa Cruz County there is also sanctuary— a safe place to go, an alternative to the streets, somewhere to be during the day, a place of beauty and renewal.

*And* what is human? That we need to ask for your personal "Yeses" more than ever! Your small and large financial contributions are greatly needed now to show that you want the Homeless Garden Project to continue. Think of yourself in the web of community that brings this model project to life. *Will you please send us your contribution as a vote of support for our continued work?*

— Lynne Basehore Cooper was HGP's founding Director



Something beautiful, human and very real.

# Voices from the Fields...

## 20th Anniversary Profile

*In honor of our 20th Anniversary, interns have been reaching out to past participants and conducting interviews or collecting written statements about how they remember their time here and its impact, and what work may lie ahead for the Project.*

*Michael Walla— Trainee beginning in 1990*

*I was with the Homeless Garden Project their first full season, which would be the spring of 1990.*

I was told by a volunteer on the street that this place was growing these really great strawberry plants and that they had put in the fall before. I was told it was over by Lighthouse Field. He gave me the inside scoop that they were looking for employees for part time work. As a young child, I was raised by my grandparents in New Jersey. And they had a nice little piece of property in suburbia New Jersey with some farmland. And they raised me as their own, and every year they had the grapevine, and every year they had the garden, and every year I prepared the soil.

*So t-then it came to the Homeless Garden Project,*

I believe it was around maybe early May, and there was a man who had to do a bit of community service. So he would come with his tractor and plow. And that was it, it was me and maybe about a dozen other guys, who I recognized from being on the streets. So I volunteered for a couple weeks, and since I had known a lot about tomato plants from living with my grandparents I was hired.

*Next season we really expanded, and I ran into a woman who was a teacher from the Gateway School, and she wanted to bring her class to the farm.*

So right then, we started a program where the kids got come twice a week. They grew lettuce from seed, harvested it, then sold it for the school.

— continued



So that was one thing we started. Another thing was that at the beginning, employees were only paid 9 hours a week for work Wednesday through Friday, 3 hours a day. But since a lot of us didn't really have anything else going on, we would come and hang out and try growing other stuff.

*There was this one guy, Bill Tracey, he was a great mechanic, Vietnam Vet, and all-around great guy.*

I was more into staying late and harvesting flowers for the bouquets we would sell at the farmer's market the next day. And within a year or two, from 91' to 93' we went from being this little project to having a full-blown crew. I think it went from 9 hours to 12, to 24 hours a week. Everyone had their own areas of expertise, and mine was harvesting.

*We went from harvesting for the farmers market, to wholesaling to local restaurants and health food stores, but mostly at that time it was New Leaf.*

And then we took it from there, and we brought in the CSA. And it just exploded, we had so many shareholders, we had markets, and we had so much stuff being produced by this small plot of dirt. My specialty was giving tours, working with the school kids, and doing the farmer's market on Wednesdays.

It was a really groovy scene to be somebody who was on the streets but wasn't really considered on the streets anymore, because hey, we are gardening, we got this one little thing to help us here. You know, a lot of people have been on streets for years and years now because they have nothing to connect with.

*What was going on with you before the HGP?*

Basically, I had a really severe broken heart. So I left the east coast, decided to come down to Santa Cruz, and since I had worked in kitchens for years, I thought it wouldn't be hard to find a job. I couldn't get a job as a cook, and was getting desperate. Then I ran into this guy going on about these strawberries, and I said, well— "It would be a place to get off the streets, and who knows, maybe I can get off the streets for a few days and get fed. Unfortunately there are a lot of people who are really poor in this town, living on and off the streets". There really are a lot more than you think out there.

*What did you see the HGP do for your coworkers?*

It helped give a lot of us dignity, and we were all very dedicated. We all had our own little niche— mine was harvesting, and another person's was composting, and so on. Over the years, we have fine tuned the garden so that people could come in and just have a place to be to get off the streets, and possibly make some money. It even encouraged me to grow my own vegetables on my own, like basil, and I sold to local markets.



Thanks to Jon Kersey, Kelly Mercer and Sharon King for photos used in this newsletter.

Overall, I just loved walking through the garden on sunny beautiful days in the summer.

# Voices from the Fields...

*Is there any particular memory you have, a favorite memory?*

*My favorite memory was in 1993, during a harvest festival, and we had the biggest crew ever, along with the man who owned a local restaurant, great live bands, and lots of help and support from the community in general. Then, someone asked me if I wanted to live in their garage; all I had to do was to clean up a bit. Finding a place to live was wonderful. Overall, I just loved walking through the garden on sunny beautiful days in the summer.*

*What work do you still think lies ahead for HGP?*

*I hope that the HGP gets a larger site in the future, so that they can help even more people, and expand in general. No matter where you live, you will always have a certain section of people who are poor, but everybody should at least have a little something. We live in an age of such wonderful technical wonders, but we can't even feed everyone—I hope the garden goes on forever.*

*Edith Trainee— 1997- 1999*

*I was a trainee from 1997 to 1999. Making wreaths on the Washington Street flower garden was a main job of mine, along with teaching organic gardening to elementary and middle- school children. Giving the kids an appreciation for where food comes from was a great experience.*

*How did HGP impact where you are now?*

*I am now attending Kaplan University taking human services classes online. Coming to the Homeless Garden Project was like a new start for me. I left Sacramento and came to Santa Cruz with myself, my husband, and our 5 children, ranging from 11 to 14 years of age at the time. Upon arriving in Santa Cruz, much of our time was spent camping and living in motels. The first organic apple I had ever eaten was so good, it gave me a whole new perspective. The Homeless Garden Project taught me about the significance of sustainability in agriculture, which I never really knew about before. I now know how important it is to utilize land in a sustainable way, it is so important. My parents grew up in the great depression, and they eat and use every scrap of food. We now live in such a wasteful society, so learning the importance of sustainable farming has been very important. I definitely believe that working here for the HGP has made me a better person.*



*Jodi Croce and Ursula Vollbrath part of a huge volunteer team that cooked*

*What work do you think still lies ahead for HGP?*

*The Homeless Garden Project will always be necessary. There will always be homeless people to be helped by the Project. Giving homeless and at-risk people a chance to feel good about themselves, have a safe environment to go to, and learn skills to use for life is really important.*

*Do you have a favorite memory of the HGP that you would like to share?*

*Being around other homeless people made me feel not isolated anymore. And having a safe haven for women who have had domestic issues, a safe environment, was just really great. I also loved making wreaths, and loved all the smells that went with it.*



*Over 250 people attended our 20th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, October 2*

## Photo essay from our 20th Anniversary Celebration!



*Luminaria Parade*



*HGP Co-founders Lynne Cooper and Paul Lee at 20th Anniversary Celebration*

*Your donations are tax deductible if received by December 31 • Donate online: [www.homelessgardenproject.org](http://www.homelessgardenproject.org)*

*Help support our programs: buy at our holiday store! • Follow us on Facebook!*

*The Homeless Garden Project taught me about the significance of sustainability in agriculture...*

# Voices from the Fields...

Chrissi Brewer— Garden Director, February 1994 to October 2001

*How has HGP fulfilled its original vision? What work do you think still lies ahead for HGP?*

*HGP* continues to work with folks to help them strengthen their potential, find their calling and develop their skills. The work ahead is pretty much the work that preceeded, allowing homeless and marginalized people gain or regain a sense of personal value in the form of healthy, productive work.

*Do you have a favorite memory of the HGP that you would like to share?*

*The* amazing stories and memories of my time at HGP are so numerous, it's really hard to narrow it down to one. The images of people who have come and gone through the garden overwhelm my emotions. Trainees struggling to deal with issues in their lives and finding their footing to rise above those issues; trainees that weren't able to overcome that brokenness surrounding and inside of them; volunteers who were tireless in their dedication; kids in the community who came to learn about growing goodness and helping humanity; and folks who simply wandered through the garden for the pure pleasure and beauty of it.

*I remember my first day of work.*

*It* was a cold, wet, miserable day in February. I was so excited to have been hired to do what would turn out to be the best job of my life. But as I arrived at the Pelton Garden, it was muddy and cold, strewn with winter muck and waist-high in weeds. My first thought was— I can't do this, this is overwhelming. Then Michael stepped out from around the shed. He was wearing plastic wolf ears. He was a second year trainee and quite protective of the garden. When he found out I was to be the next director, he just casually said, "Don't worry, it gets better— we'll work together." We did and it did.

*Chrissi now manages some vacation properties in Mexico and does garden landscaping and maintenance.*



*Sunset at celebration*



*Rachel Cohen*



*Forrest Cook prepared a sumptuous feast for our celebration*

## To everything there is a season...

### *CSA 2010 comes to a close.*

*Another* beautiful season has come and gone. From delicious strawberries, to crispy, fresh lettuce to buttery summer squash to bright, gorgeous flowers, the farm has burst forth with a diverse bounty that has enriched our lives, our family's lives and made a difference in lives of the HGP trainees, inside and out. Within the few months that I have been here, I have seen how working in the soil, caring for the crops and then harvesting the fruits have brought joy, amazement and pride to all who have invested in the process. There is something unexplainable and magical when watching the miracle of a tiny seed change and develop into a carrot or kale or a sunflower. Often, the intrigue supersedes the other distractions in our lives, and we are able to take pause and reflect on the simple things and be thankful for the lives we have to live.

*Not* only are we learning how to grow vegetables and fruits, but we have also had the opportunity to eat and enjoy the benefits that come from eating fresh, local, organic produce. Staff, trainees and volunteers daily eat meals derived from the farm and benefit from the nutrients the plants provide to our bodies and minds. Having access to fresh produce is especially poignant for me when so many in our own community lack resources and education to eat healthily. This year, HGP has been able to help reach out to such individuals by providing scholarship CSA shares (supported by your donations) filled with "good for you" fruits and veggies. Programs, such as this, allow people the opportunity to try new foods and hopefully interest them in wanting to pursue a diet that is filled with more fruits and veggies.

*I* absolutely love that a little piece of land and many hands connected to big hearts can produce a gift to the community that goes beyond doing something "good" to doing something that is life changing, nurtures the earth, and actually feeds our bodies with healthy, local, fresh food. Thank you to our CSA members and donors for participating in the 2010 Homeless Garden Project CSA and we look forward to serving you in 2011!

*Rachel* Cohen, HGP's Farm Supervisor, grew up in California and attended university at UCSC where she received a BA in Environmental Studies. During her years at UCSC Rachel became involved in finding ways to help feed those that did not have access to healthy food options. Rachel has six years of experience with small farm agricultural techniques in the United States and abroad. She has worked with ECHO in Haiti and Food for the Hungry in Peru.

*Welcome to Forrest Cook, HGP Farm Manager and Rachel Cohen, HGP Farm Supervisor.*

## Recent tribute gifts made to HGP

### In Honor Of:

19th birthday of Jessica Nemire— *Donna Cramer and Mark Zalona*

Nancy Brown— *Christina Lopez Morgan and Jerry Morgan*

40th birthday of Matt Thomas— *Caitlin Brune*

The 2nd wedding anniversary of:

Christine and Caitlin Reyes Brune— *Caitlin Brune*

### In Memory Of:

Jeanette Johnson— *Glen and Betty Broom, Jane Addams Peace*

*Association, Susan Krivin and David Obanesian, Joanne Matusas,*

*Celia and Peter Scott, and The Michaelsen Trust DTD*

## 2010 *Corporate and business supporters.*

- *Lush Cosmetics*
- *Plantronics*
- *Cruz Expo*
- *Emily's Good Things to Eat*
- *Village Yoga*
- *Quicksilver Voice Mail*
- *Redtree Properties*
- *Ristorante Avanti*
- *Top a Lot Yogurt, LLC*
- *Santa Cruz Mountain Brewing, LLC*
- *Rossi's Body Shop & Towing Service*
- *New Leaf*
- *Central Coast Associates*
- *DMG Systems*
- *Gayle's Bakery & Rosticceria*
- *Rapid Creek*
- *Resource Logistics*
- *The Walnut Farm*
- *United Natural Foods, Inc.*

**Jay Paul Co. has generously provided us with a downtown store for the Holidays!**

# Get a 15% match on donations to HGP.



*Here is Jason "Ratboy" Collins attempting a hole in one for HGP at the Birdies for Charity Shoot Out! Photo by: Jill Ayers*

*Birdies for Charity* is an exciting way for you to make a charitable donation, get a 15% match on it, and win some great prizes!

By making a pledge with Birdies for Charity, the Homeless Garden Project will cash-in on the birdies made during the competitive rounds of the 2011 AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am tournament.

It's fun and easy! Make a pledge per birdie or a flat donation. You can go online or go for the Guess the Birdies Contest by filling out a mail-in form. One lucky person who guesses the correct number of birdies scored by PGA TOUR players during official tournament play will receive the Grand Prize of Two Continental Airline Tickets (up to \$500 each) and a World Golf Village Vacation Package in St. Augustine, Florida. There's a chance for everyone to win a great prize. Whether you donate online or mail-in a form you will have the chance to win a one night stay at The Inn at Spanish Bay, Pebble Beach, and golf for two at The Links at Spanish Bay, a CALSTAR helicopter ride, Waterford crystal, golf memorabilia, and more. This is a huge opportunity for the Homeless Garden Project and your support will make it happen! The top four earning charities are eligible to host the Birdies for Charity exhibition booth for one day at the grand entrance of the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am during tournament week. This is publicity and promotion the Homeless Garden Project is unable to pay for.

**Contact Lily at:** (831) 426-3609 1# for information, questions, and to have a pledge form mailed to you.

**Make a Birdies Pledge:**  
<https://birdies.attpbgolf.com/charities/homelessgardenproject>.

# Hire *our trainees to help with maintenance at your home!*

- *Gardening • Landscaping • Painting • Clean-up*
- *Light construction • General repair • One time/weekly/ongoing*

Homeless Garden Project provides referral; you negotiate wage and work with trainee. Please call 426.3609 for more information or to get a referral.



# The Homeless Garden Project

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

See our Web Site: [www.homelessgardenproject.org](http://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

I'd like to make this a monthly donation

Bill My  Visa  Master Card

Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone \_\_\_\_\_



## HOLIDAY STORE

# GIFTS

*featuring products made in our training program from herbs and flowers grown at our organic farm.*



*We're downtown for the holidays!*

On Pacific Avenue between O'Neill's and Verizon (110 Cooper)

OPEN NOV 22-DEC 24 *closed Thanksgiving*

SUN-THURS 10-7 • FRI & SAT 10-8

BEGINNING DEC 17, OPEN 10-8 EVERYDAY

## HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE



*Join us...*

*for seasonal refreshments, fun company, music and an opportunity to do some holiday shopping at our downtown store.*

On Pacific Avenue between O'Neill's and Verizon (110 Cooper)

FRIDAY DECEMBER 3, 6-8pm