



Down on the Farm

Respond

While attending university in Berkeley over 30 years ago, I saw a lot of people who were homeless on the streets, especially on Telegraph Avenue and in People's Park. Even with Berkeley's "anything goes" attitude, these people did not have anywhere to belong. One man in particular stood out to me. He walked with crutches because one leg had been amputated. He was thin and always wore a dark leather cowboy hat. I imagined he was a Vietnam vet, but I'll never know now who he was or why he was homeless. Although I felt compassion and sadness about homelessness, I wasn't certain how to make a difference about homelessness in general or reach out to him specifically. The answer came years later, when I discovered the Homeless Garden Project.

When I first heard about the Project, it made immediate sense to me. HGP envisions people who are homeless as belonging and contributing to the community. At the HGP, it's been easy to respond. Working here, I found a compassionate way to value homeless people—our trainees—and to work in solidarity with our trainees as they strive to realize their potential.

At HGP we work to "bring together people in the beauty and security of our organic farm." That spirit greets you when you walk in off Shaffer Road and are gathered into the natural processes of growth, the diversity of life and the work we all must do in order to meet our basic need for food. Stigma—a "mark of disgrace or infamy," means that there is an invisible barrier between society and the person who's stigmatized. Reflecting on my experience in Berkeley and contrasting it to my experience at HGP, I learned that we are all affected by stigma; on either side of that barrier, we are affected.

The HGP creates exceptional opportunities for you to respond, the same as it did for me. Rose brings food to the farm and often an extra few sweaters or blankets, Matt volunteers alongside trainees at the farm and hired a trainee to do some side work in his home. Jeremy joined our U-Pick CSA, and Teresa writes a check each month.

Maybe you don't have an extra coat. Maybe you don't have time to come in to cook lunch for our trainees and volunteers. But chances are you do have something you could give to help someone move forward. Whether it's time to come work at the farm or a skill you could teach, or something very simple, it means something to the people here. It means (to us, and the people we work with) that no one is alone who is cared for. So we're asking you to come in. To help in whatever way you see fit. There's a place here for everyone who wants to reach out to another person.

This 'place' is a place where you and they become we. We work to solve homelessness. We need you.

— Darrie Ganzhorn is Executive Director

From the Board

My family and I moved to Santa Cruz four years ago from a big city on the East Coast. Truth be told, we were a little unsure of what we'd find here. I had never even been to Santa Cruz, but I had definitely heard of it. In fact, when I was in the 7th grade I, like all my suburban skate rat friends, had a Santa Cruz skateboard and a Santa Cruz t-shirt. But otherwise, Santa Cruz was a mystery to me.

So I was delighted to discover that my new hometown is a pretty remarkable place: a place of great natural beauty, a place with a rich history of innovation, and a place that puts an enormous value on the notion of community. Like many new comers, my family and I became quickly captivated by Santa Cruz. So we bought a house, started a business, added another kid to the family (we're now up to three—yikes!) and decided to make Santa Cruz our home for a good long while.

Shortly after arriving in Santa Cruz, we were introduced to something that seemed like the perfect combination of beauty, innovation, and community: the CSA, or Community Supported Agriculture. **Beauty:** Have you ever taken a moment to marvel at the beauty of a fresh, vibrant, organic strawberry? **Innovation:** Community Supported Agriculture is a bold, sustainable response to the "innovation" of the industrial food supply. **Community:** from the very beginning of human history, we have built our communities around growing and sharing food.

Since arriving in Santa Cruz, we have supported various CSAs. Now, I am urging you to support the Homeless Garden Project's CSA. For just a few hundred dollars, you can enjoy fresh, local, organic food all season long. As important, you'll be supporting the Project's social justice mission of providing a "hand up, not a hand out" to some members of our community who are embarking on a path of self-sustainability. This year, my family and I have selected the "U-Pick" option. We'll be at the garden every Saturday morning, picking our week's worth of fresh deliciousness and trying to prevent the kids from getting too dirty (yeah, right!). We hope to see many of you out there as well. Will you join us? Here's how: www.homelessgardenproject.org/programs/csa.php

— Jeremy Neuner is a HGP Board Member, Co-Founder and CEO of NextSpace

This place is a place where you and they become we.

Voices from the Fields...

FACING HOMELESSNESS

as an older single woman.

When I'm here at the farm, I'm pretty happy and content.

Janet is a new trainee who has raised three kids, mostly as a single mom, working as an executive assistant, and in various administrative jobs. Her resume lists "highly resourceful and creative" in her summary of qualifications. This comes across strongly when talking with her; also she is very comfortable to talk with, open and intelligent. In 2008, she left her home and full-time job in Portland and returned to Santa Cruz to help out with her grandchildren when her daughter became unable to care for them. While caring for her grandchildren, she found and worked a full time job at a local private school. When the school went out of business, Janet lost her job. Unemployed now for one year, Janet's grandchildren are back with their mom, and Janet is facing homelessness. "I never planned for the future and always made just enough money to get by, which worked out fine until a series of layoffs and running out of unemployment hit me. Now at 56, I find myself losing my home and not finding employment for a year, until the HGP opportunity came my way."

"These hard economic times haven't helped and here I am, the new face of homelessness. I feel fortunate that I am not dealing with addiction or mental illness due to the fact that homelessness alone can be overwhelming. I am also fortunate to be working at HGP where support from my co-workers and the good food help a lot. I've been couch-surfing and that will end at the end of May. I'm not sure what I'll do then. I'm kind of beating myself up right now. It costs \$35/day to stay at a campsite and up to \$6 for a shower. Or, for \$5/day you can ride your bike down to New Brighton State Park and camp with other bicyclists, but after the bike ride it would be challenging to work all day at the farm." (HGP trainees earn about \$40/day).

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"I've been doing a lot of soul searching.

One of my goals is to get a car. I think it would be safer to sleep in a car than to camp. When I'm here at the farm, I'm pretty happy and content. I like what I'm doing here and do whatever I'm asked. I really enjoy my co-workers. We can all relate to each other in a weird way. There's a respect that doesn't happen in the rest of the world. This is a really healthy, supportive environment. People here are really trying to get out of their addictions (if they have one.) None of us have much and we make a lot of jokes about it."

One of the trainees was very helpful.

While we were harvesting together, she gave me a lot of tips. Usually women don't camp alone, but I have heard from a couple women who have been camping alone for years and haven't had any problems. I hate the whole addiction scene. I've been around addiction—it affects everyone around you. Addiction causes people to become so messed up and self-absorbed. My daughter's addiction affected not just me, but her kids and the entire family.

There's a photo of my

(ex) husband, my three children and me. My husband is dressed in a fine suit, my three daughters are beautifully dressed, and I'm wearing a very plain shift. My mother pointed out to me, "You take care of everyone but yourself." When I grew up, I had so much. My mom was a stay-at-home mom, we had kids over all the time, had the best yard, my mom would bake cookies for us when we got home from school. She did it all. We had everything we ever wanted. When I left home, I didn't know how to do laundry, I'd never boiled an egg. I wasn't prepared to go into the world. To this day, I have a very high regard for mothers, they're supposed to be the rock. I feel responsible to my children and grandchildren, but not to myself; I think that's the problem.



—Janet is a new trainee at HGP



Thanks to Raphael Solomon for photos used in this newsletter.

Voices from the Fields...

MAKING LUNCH

Volunteer cooks:
Nate & Oai!

Tuesday through Friday, lunch is prepared and served at Natural Bridges Farm, an important part of the day, a time to gather and be nourished by the fruits of our labor and the company of our co-workers. I interviewed Nate Levy and Oai (pronounced "Oy") Phan, who volunteer each Thursday to cook for us. Nate Levy is a student in the Cabrillo College Culinary Program who first came from Forest Grove, Oregon to Santa Cruz to surf and get out of the rain. A couple years ago he set a goal to get out from behind a computer and start cooking. He enjoys creating healthy food that surprises people. "When people eat healthy food, they feel better; it's very simple. Very different from computers, very organic." Nate's thoughts about his experience cooking continue:

With most cooking in professional kitchens, there is kind of a military mentality—it's competitive, you work long hours, there are a lot of systems to organize production. I'm amazed at how many people we feed here and how good the food is with only two people cooking in a very humble kitchen—compared to the energy, work, space and number of people who cook in a fine dining restaurant kitchen. We usually feed between 30 and 45 people; meals are prepared from very fresh ingredients from the garden or donated ingredients—simple pure tastes, spices, herbs. I really enjoy coming in the morning and make the menu based on what we have. It seems Oai and I always seem to cook up enough dishes to feed everyone.

Today I made asparagus, cabbage, leek and curry pasta soup. We served the soup with thinly sliced bread and pea sprouts on top—looked beautiful. Oai made salad with apricot cardamom Asian dressing and asparagus broccoli stir-fry with rice. And there was a cold pasta dish with green beans, thinly sliced asparagus, strawberry jam, hot sauce and red wine vinegar. I usually come Thursday morning between 9 and 9:30 and check what we have (or don't have). We get by somehow every week. When donations come in about 10 or 10:30, we may change the menu. We try to use everything so there's not a lot of waste. For example with kale, we might slice the stems very thinly and put them in soup.

I started cooking at HGP, because I needed to do some volunteering to get my certificate from Bauman College. I got HGP's name from the SC Volunteer Center, then I called Kelly and she suggested I come by and check out the farm and kitchen.

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That first day, I ended up cooking. I'm kind of glad it worked out that way—I just jumped in and people liked what was cooked; it was fun. After I finished my 40 volunteer hours for the Bauman certificate, I liked cooking here and decided to continue. Coming here is my Thursday morning now. After I spend the day here, I feel better; it's a positive in my life so I keep coming.

I enjoy taking the skills and knowledge of finer dining and presenting prepared food this way to people who aren't going to be so critical, who may not be accustomed to refined dining. People here are very appreciative; it reminds me of why I started cooking. When I'm serving the food I've cooked, I see a lot of joy in the eating of quality food communally. I've learned about humanity, mine included. I'm reminded of the importance of people working and eating together and how that can really change your outlook on the world. The Project impacts people's sense of self-worth. I love seeing UCSC students working alongside people who don't have the same opportunities. They're doing the same work and the person who is homeless is probably better at it—this could be a reality check for both people.

I feel good that I'm giving people food with healthy ingredients and not just cooking to fill people up. Your body is always healing and this food promotes everyday health and mental health. Healthy food helps someone dealing with stress—such as being homeless, or when you need to be working at full capacity. Oai stopped by to help one day and we got along so he just kept coming. We've gone on a few food-related shopping trips together. He's a very joyful person and makes the experience even more joyful. Somehow there's always just enough food—it's amazing how it always works out.

— continued



Donate online: www.homelessgardenproject.org • Help support our programs • Buy at our store!
Follow us on Facebook! • Get involved!

I'm amazed at how many people we feed here and how good the food is.

Voices from the Fields...

Oai Phan was born in Vietnam and has lived in California for 27 years. As the youngest of five boys, Oai came home from school and cooked for his entire family. He remembers going to the farmers' market with his father and one brother, and his father showing them how to prepare some special dishes. From 17-24 years of age, Oai lived and cooked in a Buddhist temple in Vietnam. Oai began cooking for HGP with members of Santa Cruz Zen Center who prepare and serve lunch every Friday, year-round. Oai, famous for his stone soup method of cooking, (Chuck of the Zen Center says, "Oai could cook stir-fry on a rock!") is now cooking every Thursday and Friday. When I commented on Oai's refreshing way of speaking, he responded, "The Vietnamese language have some compassion built in, way we act, talk, treat each other, always have some compassion in it." I hope I have captured some of that compassion and been loyal to our conversation.

"In Vietnam, the main dish is stir-fry. We don't have a lot of money, so we find a way to turn fresh vegetables into good meals. My passion is vegetarian cooking—100% vegan cooking with fresh fruit and vegetables. Ten minutes from the field to the pot and 10 minutes from pot to table—how good is that? That's why I'm here. People say, "How you cook is so good!" I'm just using simple cooking techniques, but it's fresh. I came to support Nate; he's a professional cook, cooking alone on Thursday. I decide to be his sous chef. I call him 'Master.'"

"One story, very touching [to] my heart—one time I make a [salad] dressing—very, very simple—with soy sauce, olive oil, fresh garlic, red wine vinegar, brown sugar, salt and pepper. The students come like a kid in a candy store with eyes wide open and say, "I eat a lot of salad dressing but never so good! You don't mind to give me the recipe?" Some kids come back two or three times—I make two BIG salads and they're always gone at the end of lunch. It makes me happy, that's why I'm here."

"Nate is awesome to work with. Very quiet, creative. Besides his professional career, he has compassion about cooking. When I cook with Chuck and Patrick [of the Zen Center] we chit chat and have lots of fun, we talk about work, about the week. On Thursdays, we don't do that; we only chat about what we're cooking. [I say to him,] "You are not Buddhist, but you doing working meditation." If he doesn't have to talk, he doesn't, but he's there. He doesn't talk, just smiles. Cooking is my passion. [Since coming here, I've had] non-stop learning. How we cook in United States is very different from Vietnam—we have totally different vegetables and fruits. I see volunteers and trainees work so hard, it makes my heart want to do something good for them, motivates me to make something very good. So they can go back out and do good work."

— Nate Levy and Oai Phan



Don Lessard, Compost King

HELP US reach our goal!

...and raise funds for 10 more Scholarship Shares. Your donation to our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Scholarship Fund strengthens and nourishes our community by—

- Funding the award-winning job-training program at the HGP.
- Providing a gift of local organic fruit and vegetables to low-income members of our community, through organizations such as Beach Flats Community Center, Santa Cruz AIDS Project, Women's Crisis Support, the Independent Living Program, Live Oak Family Resource Center and Hospice of Santa Cruz County.
- Send in your donation today or donate online: www.homelessgardenproject.org



Oai Phan and Forrest Cook

Recent tribute gifts made to HGP

In Honor Of:

- Susie MacMillen — Stacey Naman-Grant and Tony Grant, and Krista MacDonald
- Tashi MacMillen — Krista MacDonald
- Mary Burick — Mercedes Grace Laurencin

In Memory Of:

- Ricard Falconi — Margaret and Donald Fitzgerald
- Joyce Moore — Margaret and Donald Fitzgerald
- Margaret Woodland — Alexander and Jean Grillo
- Susie MacMillen — Matt and Peg Guerrieri, Claris Ritter

Learn to Garden *creatively using containers!*

Do you love to garden, but do not have any space for a garden? Or maybe you have always wanted to learn how to start a garden, but do not know where to start? Join us on June 25th from 10am-12pm at the Natural Bridges Farm (0 Shaffer Rd, Santa Cruz, CA) for a workshop on Container Gardening. We will be teaching about the basics of planting a garden (vegetable, herb and/or flowers) and how you can creatively use whatever space you have for a garden using a variety of pots and containers. Cost for the workshop is \$20. Along with the workshop instruction, you will receive handouts/instructions and 4 vegetable, herb or flower seedlings of your choice. **Sign up today by calling us** at 831.423.1020 or e-mailing Rachel at: rachelc@homelessgardenproject.org.

Look at all you can do on our website!

- **Find out** about CSA and buy a share online.
- **Sign up** to receive email updates about Homeless Garden Project and our activities.
- **Read** our blog.
- **Find out** about upcoming events and volunteer activities.
- **Make** a donation in honor of a loved one.
- **Send** a gift to a friend or family member and benefit HGP with a single action.
- **Pledge** your support to HGP programs.
- **Find** recipes for HGP produce on our blog.
- **Vote** for HGP to receive Envirotokens from New Leaf.
- **Link** to HGP's Facebook page featuring recent photos such as Human Race, volunteers at the farm, an HGP slideshow and more.

homelessgardenproject.org

Santa Cruz Mountain Brewery

402 Ingalls St, #7
(831)425-4900

Noon-10pm •

Enjoy a great hand-crafted beer while supporting the Homeless Garden Project!

\$1 of every beer purchased goes to HGP!

THANK YOU
Thursday

June 30

Put your support to work *for us each and every month!*

- Pledging to donate every month not only results in a steady stream of funding for our programs, but also manifests ongoing community support for our mission.
- Please consider becoming a monthly supporter of HGP and spread your gift over the entire year.
- Send in your initial donation with the coupon on the back mailing panel area of this newsletter, select 'I'd like to make this a monthly donation' and we'll contact you to set up your monthly donations.
- You can also set up a monthly donation through our website: www.homelessgardenproject.org/getinvolved/donate.php • Select "make a direct donation" and "submit". On the JustGive page, check "make this a recurring donation".

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 I'd like to make this a monthly donation

Bill My Visa Master Card

Card No. _____

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Name _____

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Fill this out
and send in.
Thank you
for your support!

Enjoy a great meal while supporting the Homeless Garden Project!

Invite a friend to join you at the Saturn Café

145 Laurel St. (831) 429-8505

Community Night Fundraiser. Wednesday, June 22

11am-3am. Print the flyer from our website and bring it in.

Saturn Café will donate 10% of profits to HGP!



PARTNERS in DINING

HOMELESS GARDEN PROJECT

presents

U-pick



Pick your own organic

vegetables, strawberries and flowers.
Each share feeds 3-4 adults per week.
(May 27th-October 28th)

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423-1020 or www.homelessgardenproject.org