Beauty


One of the qualities of our farm that engages me and sustains my work at HGP is beauty. In this article, I want to celebrate the farm’s beauty and invite you to engage with it also. In the world of survival, beauty may seem a luxury. At the farm, beauty may seem accidental or unavoidable—the sun breaking through the fog, the rows of colors as you look across the beds in full bloom, dew on dahlia petals, or the bronze heads of lettuces with their nesting leaves.

In my experience, beauty connects me to the moment, and to larger questions concerning what it means to be human. Why is seeing a beautiful painting or reading great literature nourishing? In her book, On Beauty and Being Just, Elaine Scarry “argues that beauty continually renews our search for truth and presses us toward a greater concern for justice.” The processes at the farm—photosynthesis, germination, companion planting—are marvelously elegant. It has always fascinated me that there is a part of photosynthesis that takes place in the dark. To be able to coax life—and this kind of beauty—from soil is a life-affirming experience.

And of course, there are the people who make the farm work—the trainees, volunteers and staff. Watching these people change and grow is beautiful. As Tomlyn, an early HGP trainee says in Growing Hope: The Story of the Homeless Garden Project, “The Project is a gentle soft way for people to learn about homelessness and to see that people are people. It’s not dirty, or ugly. People are people and they’re beautiful.”

This farm is something we’ve all made together; we can’t do it without your support. And together, let us sustain the beauty that is the Homeless Garden Project.

— Darrie Ganzhorn is Executive Director

[If you’d like to share your thoughts and experiences on this topic, please check our blog at: http://homelessgardenproject.org/blog You can also find the whole text of Laurie William’s article there, find out about upcoming events, watch the Growing Hope video and sign up for the HGP e-mail list there.]

From the Board: Be part of the Solution

Gardening is a talent (one that I apparently don’t have.) A green thumb. It is also a skill that can be learned. But like any skill, it takes time, repetition, exploration, and learning from your mistakes. The Homeless Garden Project provides the structure, expertise, support, and compassionate staff for the trainees to learn horticulture and retail job skills. The trainees make a commitment to themselves, their teachers, and their fellow gardeners. And of course they learn much more than the names of flowers or the correct ratio of brown to green matter in building a compost pile. They learn job skills, life skills, people skills. They gain confidence, feel empowered, begin to have hope again. I wish I could volunteer to dig in the garden along with the trainees, and feel pride in seeing the garden grow. However, having a full-time job I don’t have time to volunteer during the day time.

Like all of us living in Santa Cruz, I’m aware of the issues of homelessness in our community and I decided I wanted to somehow be part of the solution, and not just turn a blind eye. What could I do? Buy a CSA—that’s easy. Honestly, that feels like a gift to myself every week, though of course it is a fundamental part of the program, not only providing revenue, but a place for all of those vegetables, strawberries and flowers to go! I’m now a new board member and I have been able to contribute a lot in just a short time—doing outreach, sharing ideas, helping with events—it’s been very gratifying.

Finally, I decided to make the Homeless Garden Project a philanthropic priority. A matching gift from my husband’s company will double the impact. If you’re reading this newsletter, you’re already involved with the Homeless Garden Project in some way. Do you volunteer? Do you give? Can you increase your donation this year? Whatever way you find to help that makes sense for you, please do it. You’ll be glad you did—and so will so many others.

— Allison Garcia is Director of Regional Programs, UC Santa Cruz
Voices from the Fields

I WAS A SURVIVOR and now I’m living.

I have been a trainee at the Homeless Garden Project’s Natural Bridges Farm for nearly a year, and what a wondrous year it has been. The wisdom, knowledge, compassion and support, the camaraderie and bonding, as well as understanding and patience that have been showered upon me is without measure, appreciated, and surprisingly now welcomed.

It was not always so. For many years I survived the unstable homeless life of an addict; couch surfing, living in motels, staying up for days on end running myself ragged, and until just recently I’ve been camping, adding to my list of illegal activities. I am pleased and grateful to say that all of that is behind me now.

I am now living in a 1-bedroom apartment with my partner, David, (who is also a trainee at HGP). We are enjoying the responsibilities of paying rent, bills, and dealing with other domestic issues. It may not sound like a big deal but when you haven’t done these “normal” things they seem very important especially knowing I’m only one step away from homelessness.

I’m determined to make that one step away two steps then three steps and so on... I won’t go backward. I have worked too hard, been blessed too much, and am just plain too old and tired to allow my good fortune to slip away.

Simply surviving had become a coping mechanism for me at the very young age of 12. I was heartbroken and devastated by an abuse that continued throughout my teenage years. Although I was alive and breathing, I was merely existing, not living. I think of all the special little moments I missed afraid to explore life in a mode of numbness induced by drugs.

That ain’t living folks!

— continued

Being hired as a trainee at HGP has greatly enhanced my life. My self-esteem and self-confidence are boosted and I am reminded of who I am, who I want to become, and what I want to accomplish. Many positive people, experiences, and possibilities have crossed my path, opening the door for many new possibilities. Even though I’ve made countless poor choices, and wasted a lot of precious time, there was always an inner part of me that survived the turmoil and wanted more out life than I was receiving. I’m getting that now.

As I continue to heal and grow, I think about my future and life after HGP. Furthering my education is part of my plan, and working with those who come from a similar background, and assisting them in their transition is very appealing to me. In whatever capacity this may manifest itself, I want and need to give back to keep the flow of healing and change happening in our community. I hope that whatever I can contribute will enhance life just as HGP has enhanced mine.

— Laurie M. Williams, HGP Trainee

[You can see Laurie’s unedited, moving article on our blog: http://homelessgardenproject.org/blog/]

Thanks to Jon Kersey and Dana Forsberg for photos used in this newsletter.
**Volunteer Profile:**

**Sarah Owens**

*Why are you involved with the HGP?*

The Homeless Garden Project’s name is very familiar in our Santa Cruz community yet, I didn’t know much about it. Once I learned fully what the project did and all that it stood for I was immediately drawn to want to be involved. Being somewhat a fresh volunteer now, only involved for five months or so, I feel more fulfillment being a part of such a great non-profit program and community.

*What type of projects/activities are you currently involved with for HGP?*

Right now, I’m heavily involved in building the Sustain Dinner fundraising program—a concept that brings seasonal dinners from the farm to unique settings in our community while raising awareness and funds for the Homeless Garden Project. The next dinner is in September and we’re featuring the farm’s fall harvest of padron peppers.

*What’s your favorite veggie from the farm?*

I picked and tasted kohlrabi first the first time a few weeks ago on the farm. It’s currently my favorite. I made homemade kohlrabi and squash empanadas—with almost all filling ingredients from the farm. YUM!

**Donate online:** www.homelessgardenproject.org

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**Donor Profile:**

**Paul Johnson**

*Why are you involved with the HGP?*

The HGP feeds two birds with one worm. Growing luscious organic produce provides jobs and training and volunteer opportunities on one side, and CSA shares for the public on the other.

It is especially hard for people who “fell through the cracks” of our society to hit bottom to find a way back up. Horticultural therapy helps many people who gave up hope to find their way back to homes, jobs and lives.

*How are you currently involved with the HGP?*

My household has been a CSA shareholder since the second year it was available, around 1992 or 1993. I became a volunteer supporter for the CSA by participating in a committee that focused on that. Then in 1999 I became a member of the Board of Directors and chaired the Board for a couple of years before I left in 2003.

I kept close contact with the HGP and helped out with specific donations when needed. A telephone system. A fax machine. A vacuum cleaner. A computer. I helped collateralized the first line of credit with a deposit at the Santa Cruz Community Credit Union. I also made annual financial contributions until about three years ago when another HGP supporter, Quentin Hancock, challenged people to become monthly sustainers. So I did, and continue to give every month instead of only once a year.

*What’s your favorite memory of the farm over the years?*

My favorite memory is all the wonderful people who have served on the staff and board all these years. Especially Darrie! And the resilience of the HGP in the face of adversity: fiscal, program and political challenges all have been overcome. With strong roots in the community the living plant that is the HGP has managed to survive and thrive!
SUSTAIN | Seasonal Gourmet Dinners in Unique Settings

Join us for dinner in this ongoing series that focuses on sustainability. Each dinner features local organic food prepared by exceptional chefs, local wine, and speakers on topics of sustainability. All to sustain HGP’s innovative programs.

"...From the coastal outdoor venue to the elegantly set tables, local wines and grass-fed lamb entree, Sunday’s inaugural community dinner for the Homeless Garden Project was an affair fit for a Zagat rating." — Santa Cruz Sentinel

Please sign up on our email list to receive notice of upcoming dinners: http://www.homelessgardenproject.org (Look for the Keep in Touch heading)

Voices from the Fields

YOUTH at Homeless Garden Project: C.C.’s Experience

C.C. Parsons has played a significant role at the garden over the past couple of years. He was introduced to the Homeless Garden Project during the summer of 2010 as a member of Food What?!, he then returned to the garden for an internship during his senior year at Natural Bridges High School. During this time he also spoke at Real Food Challenge Conference called Strengthening The Roots, where he spoke on food justice and youth empowerment. He returned this past summer as Junior Staff with Food What?!, and we are so excited to congratulate him on receiving a full scholarship to attend culinary school in New York this fall.

Hey folks my name is CC Parsons. I’m part of a very diverse community here in Santa Cruz, and within our unique culture we have amazing people and places. One such place is the Homeless Garden Project.

At the HGP, you do things like learn agriculture skills from the pros, work with great local individuals that are kind and caring and eat delicious food, all while helping our community. My first visit to the HGP was with twenty of my crew members in our program Food What?! Food What?! is a youth empowerment food justice program that uses sustainable agriculture, along with culinary arts training and workshops as a vehicle for personal growth and job skills.

Every Thursday during the summer, Food What?! came out to the Homeless Garden Project to help with various farm projects. I became fond of the farm and the vibes of the wonderful staff there and took up an internship through my school. I learned valuable skills at HGP that I use every day as a farmer. The awesome sense of community you feel at the Homeless Garden Project is what keeps me coming and supporting such a great program in our community. Thank you HGP for my experience.
Recent tribute gifts made to HGP
A tribute gift to the Project is a great way to show your support of our programs while honoring the people in your life. We'll acknowledge your gift promptly by mailing a beautiful card of our organic farm to the individual, family, or organization you are honoring or to the appropriate person to receive remembrances. (Please remember to send the address!) For gifts of $75 or more, we'll also send your tribute person a pair of 10" handmade beeswax candles made in our workshop. The gift amount is not included with the card or candle. You'll receive our grateful confirmation of your gift for tax purposes.

In Honor Of:

— Tashi MacMillen & Adam Slosberg — Bertine & Ken Slosberg

— Aileen Joy — Linda Civitello

— Wendy Kahn — Helen Kahn & Barry Prindle

— Joe Brune — Caitlin Brune and Christine Reyes

— Gwen Marcum (Happy Birthday!) — Caitlin Brune and Christine Reyes

— Matt Nathanson — Don Burgett

— Stacy Everett — George Haas

— Mary Bowden for her 73rd birthday — Robert and Elizabeth Imlay

— Bob and Betty Imlay — Robin Inlaiy and Jeffrey Hing

— Steve Dellamora — Mary and David Jessen

— Caitlin Brune (Happy Birthday!) — Karen Lambert & Clay Madden

— Rose Kuras for her 80th Birthday — Marcia Kaplan-Mann

In Memory Of:


— Paul Glowaski’s father, Gary Glowaski — Darrie Ganzhorn

— Mary Edmund’s Mother, Blanche Lippman — Darrie Ganzhorn

— Joey Dellamora — Mary and David Jessen

— Blanche Lippman — Mary Edmund

— Susie MacMillen — and to continue the great effort that she modeled—Peter Szylowski

Thanks to the foundations that have supported us.

— Lynne and Dan Alper Fund at the San Francisco Foundation

— Ralph Alpert advisor to The Spring Fund at Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County

— Clif Bar Family Foundation

— eBay Foundation’s Give Team in San Jose and eBay employee Gary Neier, an advised fund of Silicon Valley Community Foundation

— Dean and Sheila Gottesheer through a Charitable Gift Account at Schwab Charitable Fund

— The Quentin Hancock Fund, an advised fund of Silicon Valley Community Foundation

— Helen and Will Webster Foundation

— The Brian and Patricia A. Herman Fund at the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County

— Joseph & Louise O’Toole Foundation, an advised fund of The Rotary Foundation

— The Purple Lady/Barbara Meislin Fund, a donor advised fund of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties

— Monterey Peninsula Foundation, host of the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am

— Newman’s Own Foundation

— Carolyn Moore and the George L. Shields Foundation

— The Stocker Family Fund at Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County

— Wells Fargo Foundation

— The Wendy E. Jordan Fund

"Sweets and Treats"
Sneak Preview, Friday, October 28, 4 — 7 pm
From Our Garden, 30 West Cliff Drive

You’re invited to HGP’s Sneak Preview Party to sample some of the Holiday Products. From our Gift Store to your home... come and sample handmade organic sweet and savory products, music and much more... There’s no Trick to our Treats!

PARTNERS in DINING

Center Street Grill

Center Street Grill will donate a percentage of sales to HGP! Lunch 11:30,
Pick your own Produce

7 days a week, 10am-4pm
Till 6 on Friday
Natural Bridges Farm
Fresh organic produce that you harvest yourself! Choose from a menu of crops available that day including flowers, strawberries, herbs and vegetables. Come harvest and pay per item!

PARTNERS in DINING

Enjoy a great meal while supporting the Homeless Garden Project!

Center Street Grill
Wednesday Oct. 12
1001 Center Street
(831) 423-4745 Center Street Grill will donate a percentage of sales to HGP!

Lunch 11:30am - 2:30pm • Dinner 5:30 - Close
Call for reservations

4-week Trial Community Supported Agriculture shares, October 7, 14, 21 and 28

• Four weeks of our organic vegetables, flowers, herbs and more from NBF
• Choose from regular Pick-up ($120) or U-Pick ($85) share options
• More info at www.homelessgardenproject.org
• Call 426-3609.2# for details on pick-up times and to sign up

K N I T A s c a f f ! for the Holiday Store!

Knit a scarf or a beanie or baby booties— we’ll be delighted to accept whatever your imagination comes up with.

Proceeds will benefit the Project. Over the past years, knitters have earned over $10,000 for our programs.

Info: 426-3609 ext. 3#