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Wish List:

- Mini DV Camcorder
- Dewalt or Milwaukee
Cordless Drills
- Stamps
- Ladder Leveler Kits
(see link on the online wish list.)
- Fuel Efficient Passenger
Car
- BP Gas Cards
- Maglite heavy-duty
flashlights
- Prayers

> Ashley
on Bill
Mann Hill

MAIL TO:
Bethlehem Farm
P.O. Box 274
Pence Springs, WV 24962

The Roots of Our Garden by Eric Fitts

Increasing awareness of the threats of global warming, overconsumption, and pollution to our global ecosystem have called many of us back into a closer relationship with God's Creation. Imagine the surprise on our faces when we find that our eating habits may very well have a greater impact on the environment than any other choices we make.

Our U.S. Catholic bishops agree, stating in Food Policy in a Hungry World:

The right to safe, nutritious food includes the right to ask questions about our food system. The Catholic bishops have asked: How do our food and agricultural policies enhance or diminish the life, dignity and rights of the human person? What is their impact on human life, hungry people, farm families, and the land that sustains us? ... We fear that the global food system often seems adrift without a moral compass.

What we eat, how it is raised, how it travels to our table . . . It can be disconcerting to try to answer these questions about much of the food sold in grocery stores today. And, when the answers do come, it can get downright scary. *(Continued on page 2)*



> A special
thank you
to this year's
summer

servants, Stefanie (right), Caitlin, Carley, Danny, Alise, Emily, Jake, Katie, Lauren, Reid, and Sarah for all their help!



Welcoming Ashley

Easy Mac, sleepless nights, cut-throat competition and dingy classrooms. As a freshman at John Carroll University in Cleveland, OH that's how Ashley Boone pictured her life in five years: Medical School. Instead, after a post-grad year working at JCU making YouTube videos

for admissions and acting as a Resident Minister, twenty-three year old Ashley now finds herself at the Farm as the new Americorps VISTA.

On non-group weeks she's happily putting her Communication and Theatre Arts degree to work, coordinating volunteers, and working on development projects, visiting Runt and BJ, the cats napping outside the office, in between tasks. With like-minded house-mates, energetic volunteers, work she's passionate about and a stellar location, for her this opportunity represents a synthesis of the the values and ideas she's been building towards.

"I've always loved yoga," she says, "I'm just happy my main ambition to do it isn't just stress-relief anymore. Now, I just look outside and think, 'Why not?'"

GARDEN (continued from page 1)

I don't have enough space on this page to list the different foods recalled over the past few years, nor the time to speculate about how many unsafe foods passed through the grocery aisle unnoticed. For these reasons and others, one aspect of teaching sustainability that we focus on at Bethlehem Farm is growing and eating organic and local food.

This moral dimension of eating is one reason that we have had so much passion for our beautiful, bountiful, chemical-free and no-till garden this year. We have planted onions, lettuce, kale, spinach, swiss chard, cabbage, broccoli, sweet and hot peppers, tomatoes, green beans, melons, zucchini, summer squash, winter squash, pumpkins, potatoes, sweet potatoes, edible flowers, 20 different herbs, garlic, onions (see the fundraising update), radishes, collard greens, mustard greens, beets, sweet corn, rhubarb, and asparagus. And we are also learning more about the wild bounty right at our doorstep that we didn't plant at all: dandelion, lamb's quarters, pigweed, pokeweed, sourweed, and Jerusalem artichoke among them.

I enjoy eating from our garden because I know what it is that I am eating, how it was raised, how many footsteps away it grew, and because fresh-from-the-garden food tastes so good. As with all explorations of our relationship with God, finding out more about our food system may seem scary at first, since we can see the need for change, but, in the end, our lives are fuller as we find ourselves more intimately in relationship with our food, our God, and each other.

Love. Faye Miller Style

Community night is always a great time, but is especially memorable when Faye Miller is in attendance. Her dancing, kind smile, infectious spirit and deliberate advice are cherished by volunteers.

Living in Hinton for nearly 55 years, Faye has been a friend of Bethlehem Farm since its inception. Three years ago, she sat down with a Laura, a Farm volunteer at the Hinton Senior Center and shared the sadness she was feeling after the recent passing of her husband, Charles. Faye felt the burden of his passing in more than her heart as she explained to the girl her house desperately needed to be painted. Within weeks, Russ from the Farm was one of Faye's new favorites, calling him, "My Blue Eyes" every day he came to paint.

Faye now refers to anyone associated with the Farm as part of her family, dispensing hugs, smiles and advice to all. At a recent community night Faye was asked about love and relationships.

"In dating," she says, "to make sure they are the 'one' you've got to agree on things. Being a good Christian is important and to make a marriage last, you've got to communicate, never go to bed angry." If your summer love didn't pan out, Faye says, "Don't sit around with a sour face. Be a friend to everybody and enjoy their fellowship." And for life in general, "Take my mother Bessie May's advice: 'never be idle!'"

With "summer loves" winding down, who better to offer up some advice than a woman seasoned in love.



^ Faye and Peppy
> Faye and Charles



Our New Board Members

We are happy to have **Cynthia Deighan** and **Michael Vincent**, both from South-eastern, WV, join the Bethlehem Farm Board.

Cynthia and her husband have just begun homeschooling their boys, Aidan, in first grade, and Francis who is four. She is also coaching Francis' soccer team and two classes in Philosophy at Concord University.

Mike lives with his wife, Linda, their dog, cat, and rabbit on four acres where he has a large garden and small apple orchard. They have three grown children, Callie, Anna and Will. Mike has worked with Catholic Charities for 24 years. For fun, he collects old (1900 era) WV postcards. We are excited for Cynthia and Mike's local presence and expertise.

Seeking Justice, Together By Our Friend, Kelly Swan

Bethlehem Farm. My two and a half year old has been reciting versions of this name for almost a year now. It was one of her first multi-syllable, two-word phrases. It shows quite well the remarkable role this farm and the folks who live there have and continue to play in our lives.

v **Ella with Brian**



My husband and I, influenced by our Jesuit educations and experiences working with the poor and living in community, have made many choices to strive to live a life of justice and radical faith. We are energized by our time at Bethlehem Farm by our friendships with those who call the Farm home, who welcome even the energetic tot-sized members of our family; encouraged by our knowledge that there are other young folks out there asking many of the same questions that we ask; and grateful for the invitation for people like us to come into their lives to seek answers to those questions and work side-by-side with them. Having such a community here, in West Virginia, is not only a blessing to those who are served in their community, but to those of us who make our homes in other parts of the state and work to blend justice and our everyday lives.

And, of course, it doesn't hurt that these friends love two and a half year olds, and have pigs.

From the Desk of Colleen Fitts:

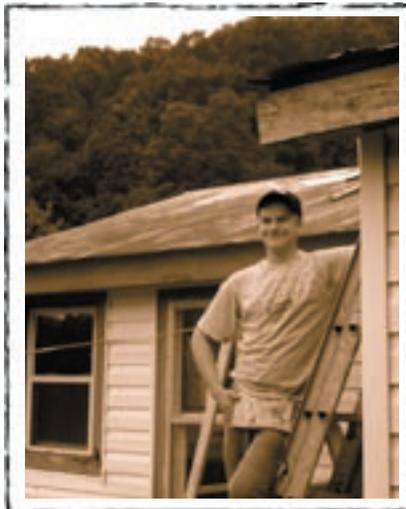
Project Updates

The June and July high school groups installed foam insulation board and vinyl siding with **Bonnie and Lawrence Bennett** who live just over the hill from Bethlehem Farm. We quickly became friends with the Bennetts and couldn't help but love their three-year-old granddaughter Amanda (and the kittens that romped around the yard while we worked).

Margaret Plumley treated Adult Week and Family Week Volunteers to some stellar cooking as we freshened up her home with a new coat of paint. A great deal of patience was exercised by the adults as they spent the whole week scraping paint. All agreed, however, that it was worth it for the lunch!

Adult Week and Family Week volunteers have the purple thumbs to prove that they hammered away" at putting up siding at the home of **John and Christina Crookshanks**. Volunteers enjoyed working with John and getting to know this young family in our area.

We returned to **The Second Baptist Church in Hinton** this summer to work on



^ Working at the Bennetts'

replacing rain-damaged plaster and to paint the second floor rooms. Church members Miss Ducky, Wayne, and Ralph were great to work with again.

Earlier this spring, **Leota Spade's** front porch roof needed nails to be replaced with sheeters and needed a coat of aluminum paint. High school

Recipes from home...

A special recommendation from Kelly!

Corn-Squash Bake

Cut in 1" rounds:

3-4 medium zucchini or other summer squash, unpeeled

Cook in a small amount of boiling water until tender. Drain and mash with fork.

Saute:

1 T. margarine

1 small onion, chopped

Combine:

mashed zucchini

sauteed onion

2 c. corn, fresh cut, cooked or frozen (thawed)

1 c. shredded Swiss cheese

1/2 tsp. salt

2 beaten eggs

Turn into 9"x9" greased casserole

Combine and sprinkle on top:

1/4 c. dry bread crumbs

2 Tbs. Parmesan cheese

1 Tbs. melted margarine

Place casserole on baking sheet;

bake for 40 min., or until set.

Let stand 5-10 min. before serving.

Find this and many more tasty recipes in our cookbook! Copies are \$15.

Contact us at

bethlehemfarm@gmail.com to order!

volunteers this July helped tear off and replace Leota's back porch roof with sturdy metal roofing. She enjoyed meeting all the "good kids" that worked on her home. (Continued on page 4)

Mission Statement:

Bethlehem Farm is a Catholic community in Appalachia that transforms lives through service with the local community and the teaching of sustainable practices.

We invite volunteers to join in living the Gospel cornerstones of community, prayer, service and simplicity.

Caretaker Community:

Eric Fitts
Director

Colleen Fitts

Project Coordinator

Russ Plywaczynski

Facilities Manager

Brian DeRouen

Sustainability Coordinator

Kathleen DeRouen

House Manager

Joe Prieboy

SARA VISTA

Ashley Boone

Volunteer Coordinator

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PROJECTS (continued from page 4)

Last summer we worked to give **Rick Dolan** a shiny new metal roof, which has been leak-free ever since. This summer we added insulation and siding to cut the wind and hopefully Rick's utility bills as well. His satisfaction with our work is summed up when he says, "I'm proud of my house."



^ Before

v After



Fund Raising Update
by **Eric Fitts, Director**

We use onions in our cooking almost every day. Many of our meals begin with sautéing onions (usually with garlic), our fresh salsa has onions in it, and Kathleen's French Onion Soup is a big hit on community night. This year I attempted to plant enough onions to supply our needs for the year, since home-grown is the tastiest, healthiest and least expensive choice.

Our spring volunteers helped plant 22 beds with onion sets. We began eating green onions in May and pulled the mature onions in mid-July. We laid them out to cure in the sun, braided some, and now they line our porches as they continue to cure in the mountain breeze. Soon, we will gather mesh bags full of onions and hang them in the basement, hoping they keep until we have green onions again next spring. Those onions will stretch throughout the winter as they are complemented by our other garden veggies.

Fundraising is somewhat like growing, curing and stocking up onions for the winter. We assess what our needs are for the year and set out seeds that we hope will return a good yield. When we harvest the bounty that has been provided, we take care of it and set it aside to use for a purpose. Finally, we use God's many other gifts to us to stretch out our financial resources as far as we can, leveraging your donations with plentiful volunteer labor, collaborative partnerships, and creative planning. After receiving grants for our home repair program from the Dominican sisters of Springfield, Illinois, the Hollowell Foundation (Lewisburg, WV) and the Darien (IL) Rotary Club, along with donations from faithful partners, such as you, we have raised \$59,200 for the Annual Fund, contributing to our goal of \$79,000 for our 2008 fiscal year. If you believe that Bethlehem Farm should continue our important work in transforming lives, serving within our local community and teaching sustainability, then please consider donating to help us carry out our ministry more effectively.

* \$79,000
(GOAL)

* \$59,000
(SEPT '08)

* \$33,500
(MAR '08)



^ Lauren, a Summer Servant, transfers onions to the porch.

Check us out online!
www.bethlehemfarm.net

Questions and comments regarding this publication and/or article submissions can be sent to the editor, Ashley Boone at bethlehemfarm.net. We can all also be reached at 304.445.7143.