

5 Years, A Reunion & A Gourd of Epic Proportions

by Jake Teitgen, Coordinator of Youth Ministry, Our Lady of Grace Parish, Noblesville, IN

"I'm too young to be going to a reunion," I thought as my wife, Alicen, & I traveled east over Labor Day weekend. Not only that, but I expected my first reunion to be at my high school, college, or really anything but a reunion for an intentional Catholic community on a mountaintop in West Virginia. And yet, here we were, turning onto Clayton Road in the early hours of Saturday morning.

In September, Bethlehem Farm celebrated its 5th anniversary in true Farm fashion: by inviting everybody to come back home. Past volunteers, summer servants, caretakers, friends & neighbors packed the house for a weekend of sharing, Mass together, celebrating, & prayer. A few brave souls even

The weekend included a variety of activities. We got our hands dirty doing chores around the farm & even built a composting toilet. We participated in prayer services asking us to reflect on the gifts inspired by Bethlehem Farm. We played KanJam while Rugs (Tom Ruggaber) beat everyone in horseshoes. We visited with friends & neighbors like the Manns & stopped by the Big Wheel for milkshakes. The Farm hosted a Community Night with dozens of neighbors & friends. Andi the Girl planned a scavenger hunt, which included a gourd of epic proportions as a prize for the winning team. We celebrated



In October, Bethlehem Farm celebrated our 5th Anniversary

(Continued on page 3)

Yes, We Can ... 481 Delicious Winter Treats

by Colleen

The end of summer is always a busy time at the Farm, as we wrap up our summer group season, continue home repair projects, & bring in the fruits (& vegetables) of many peoples' labor from the garden. Eventually, the day comes when the big black pot comes out of the pantry & the sound of clanking jars ascends from the basement—it's time for canning!

While canning involves a whole lot of washing, cutting, mixing, & sweating over the stove, it is also fun. It is one of those activities that results in a visible product—and many times, all those glass jars lined up in a row are even pretty to look at. There is something very satisfying about walking into the pantry & seeing shelves of homegrown food put up for the winter.

For me, preserving food for the winter is part of living out our cornerstone of simplicity. Certainly, it could be argued that spending a day in the kitchen to produce 24 jars of tomatoes, which we could buy in the store in five minutes, is not everyone's immediate definition of simplicity but it does put us in closer touch with the food we eat on a regular basis.

A pantry & freezer full of home preserved foods also is a bright spot in the long winter months. In January we aren't able to walk to the

(Continued on page 4)

Things to appreciate about home preserved food...

- ✓ It is fresh.
- ✓ You know exactly where it came from & how it was treated.
- ✓ You know that it does not include any undesirable "extra" ingredients.
- ✓ No packaging.
- ✓ When using glass jars, the unhealthy aspects of plastic-lined metal cans are avoided.
- ✓ It has needed no or minimal petroleum to be transported to your kitchen.
- ✓ It tastes really good!

Welcome!

Miriam Kateri Fitts

Bethlehem Farm's newest member of the community who was born

7 lbs. 9 oz.

on

October 6th, 2010

Coming Soon:

Baby Pictures!

www.BethlehemFarm.net

Wish List:

- 12" Planer
- SqueezeO Food Mill
- Canning Jars
- 6' Levels
- 5 Passenger Vehicle (2000 or younger)
- Laptop/desktop Computer (5 yrs. old or less)
- Dewalt or Milwaukee Cordless Drills
- Cordless Phones w/ Caller ID
- Glass Bowls w/Lids
- Prayers

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

Project Update Raisin' the Roof!

by Joe

This summer, we spent a good deal of time (16 days, to be exact) working with our friends Carl & Rhonda on their trailer. Carl & Rhonda have two trailers pushed together for a larger living space. Leaks developed throughout the trailer where the two trailers met, but the worst one formed in the living room. Heavy rains brought a waterfall into their living room & the rubber tubs that caught the rain had to be dumped every few hours. Though Carl did his best to fix the problem, the roof would not cooperate.

In order to fix the problem, the best solution was to build a free-standing roof (think large pavilion) over the two trailers. With the help of over 100 different volunteers, Carl, & the guidance of Colleen, Joe, & Andy, we put in around 800 to 900 hours of labor into the project, & Carl & Rhonda now have a home that is once again leak-free.

Naturally, when we spend

a lot of time at one site, we have the chance to get to know the homeowners. Carl & Rhonda shared so much of themselves with everyone who was there. From their homemade pulled pork & sweet tea, introducing us to their horses, to taking in the beauty of their property, working with Carl & Rhonda was a truly memorable experience.

We also had the privilege of working alongside Carl, as he was out there every day joining in the tasks we were doing. And let me tell you, that man can swing a hammer & dig a post hole with the best of them. Many of the volunteers talked about what a powerful experience it was to meet Carl & Rhonda & to see how appreciative & hospitable they were, which is further proof of what we often find to be true here at the Farm. Namely, that we get just as much as we give when we go out into the community to work with people.



BEFORE

Up on the roof: the seam where the two trailers meet



^ Carl & Rhonda's finished roof

AFTER

Visit our new project update site at: www.bethlehemfarm.net/projectupdates



^ A few of this year's summer servants crew: Brent, Anna R., Anna W., Caitlin & Margaret

The Wind Beneath Our Wings by Laura

Once again, we had another memorable group of summer servants. The group of sixteen volunteers who spent from two weeks to two months at the Farm included one who had been to the Farm every year of its existence, a few who were spending their 2nd or 3rd summer with us, one from Germany, others who had been here on group weeks, & others who had never seen the Farm before. How ever the Summer Servants found themselves here, they came to help. And help they did.

The summer servants were truly a blessing to have at the Farm, & added much to our program. They shared their gifts in a number of ways by: baking numerous loaves of bread (& some cookies too), mowing & weed whipping, assisting caretakers on home repair sites & home crew, leading some work sites & garden crews, getting their hands dirty in the garden with plant-

ing, weeding, watering, & harvesting, preparing veggies to be frozen or canned, creating wake up mixes, taking care of lights out duties on group weeks, & washing LOTS of dishes.

While this is an impressive list, it doesn't even come close to conveying the amount of energy, passion, & enthusiasm the Summer Servants brought to the Farm. On top of all this, they brought the fun with the creation of *The Summer Servant Song* & the first Annual Bethlehem Farm Olympics.

The Summer Servant Program is a valuable part Bethlehem Farm because it allows people to join us in living out the cornerstones on a short term basis & assist in the mission of the farm. It is no exaggeration to say we couldn't do half the work we do without the Summer Servants. So to all of our summer servants, we say thank you!

Thanks to our 2010 Summer Servants

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Caitlin Baummer | Karl Oberle |
| Brent Brown | Moiria Reilly |
| Colleen Doyle | Anna Robertson |
| Tricia Gawlas | Vanessa Ruiz |
| Madeline Gemoules | Margaret Shaia |
| Maggie Henderson | Paul Smith |
| Sarah Jones | Chelsea Tanous |
| Lauren La Coy | Anna Wright |

Thanks to you

It's a Sunny Day at Bethlehem Farm! A big thank you to everyone who generously contributed to the Sunny Day Fund to pay off our solar panel installation.

We are currently within a few hundred dollars from our goal. Your donations are helping to power us with the sun, thereby saving coal & our beautiful West Virginia mountains.

\$10,754 - OCTOBER 4th **\$11,000 GOAL**

\$8,360 - JULY 15th, 2010

\$4,725 - NOVEMBER 13th

\$2,400 - AUGUST 27th, 2009



REUNION (Continued from Page 1)

games around the campfire until some folks literally hit the ground laughing.

The fun & celebration of the weekend will not soon be forgotten. But the reason for this joyous occasion is what struck me throughout the reunion. Author Matthew Kelly claims that, "We become what we celebrate." At the Bethlehem Farm Reunion, we celebrated the Gospel.

Eric shared how much the Farm has grown in the past five years. The number of caretakers, summer servants & volunteers have more than doubled. The home repair projects have put more than \$1 million worth of repairs & labor into the local community. The Farm is now solar-powered, grows most of its own food, & is a genuine part of the Summers & Greenbrier Counties communities.

These are incredible feats for a small group of people to achieve. But what brought a tear to my eye upon hearing them was that it was all achieved the right way. For the life of me, I can't find a place or community that authentically lives the Gospel in a way

like the Farm does. Prayer, community, service, & simplicity are truly worked into every facet of Bethlehem Farm.

I recall a time one summer when I was a part of a discussion amongst the caretakers about bumper stickers. They wanted to order some bumper stickers to quench the thirsts of those of us who can't get enough Farm merchandise, but realized they didn't know where the bumper stickers came from. I remember thinking, "Who cares where they come from? My goodness, they're just bumper stickers." But the community reached a decision that, until they could find stickers they knew were from a responsible source, they would wait to purchase them.

Maybe that's why I keep coming back. For five years now, I've been making the trek to West Virginia & returning home changed. It seems every time I visit I find myself learning that creation, faith, community, &, yes, even bumper stickers, are not separate, but instead all of this was part of the web of life. Thank you, Bethlehem Farm, for providing a home worth celebrating.

Recipes from home...

FRIJOLE MOLE

- 1/2 lb. Green Beans (*trimmed & steamed until tender*)
- 1 Onion (*coarsely chopped*)
- 1 tbsp. Olive Oil
- 5-8 Garlic Cloves
- 3 Hard Boiled Eggs
- 2 c. Fresh Basil Leaves
- 1 tbsp. Lemon Juice (*optional*)
- Mayonnaise
- Salt & Pepper

Sauté onions & olive oil over medium heat until onions become slightly transparent. Next, combine beans, garlic, onions, eggs, basil & lemon juice in food processor & blend into a coarse puree. Put mixture in a bowl & mix in enough mayo to hold mixture together. Add salt & pepper to taste.

This recipe is a favorite from *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* with a few **BF** modifications.

Join us for...

a benefit for

Bethlehem Farm



December 11, 2010

7-10 PM

St. Ignatius College Prep High School
1076 W. Roosevelt Road, Chicago, IL

For more info, visit us at
www.bethlehemfarm.net/benefit



Service ♦ Simplicity ♦ Community ♦ Prayer

CALL FOR SILENT AUCTION ITEMS

You can contribute to the success of the Chicago Benefit with the donation of a silent auction item! We are particularly interested in items unique to the Chicago area like gift certificates, sports & cultural tickets, & handcrafted items such as pottery, paintings, quilts, woodwork, exclusive experiences like a stay at a cabin or timeshare & other unique items.

Contact Laura (caretakers@bethlehemfarm.net) if you would like to contribute.

Mission

Statement:

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

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

Caretaker

Community:

- Brent Fernandez
- Colleen Fitts
- Eric Fitts
- Andi Grandy
- Joe Prieboy
- Andy Rebollar
- Laura Zerhusen

Board

Members:

- Vern Bedel
- Liz Drapa
- Katie Feise
- Eric Fitts
- Gary Howieson
- Allison Leigh
- Allison Loecke
- Katie Noonan
- Tom Ruggaber
- Jana Strom
- Julie Tracy

Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper



by our friends at PostNet in Lewisburg, WV.

YES, WE CAN! (Continued from Page 1)

backyard & pick a fresh apple or a handful of raspberries, but we can crack open a jar of delicious applesauce or raspberry jelly.

Thanks to our productive plants & generous friends, we have canned 481 jars of food- not bad for one year! We have put up cherry, pear, apricot, peach, apple, & raspberry delights to brighten our winter menu. We even set a new Bethlehem Farm record for tomatoes in canning 132 quarts of diced goodness. Frozen green beans, snap peas, & sweet peppers will add nutrition & color to our winter dishes. For the first time, we will have homemade ketchup (*a la Laura*), as well as hot tomatillo & red salsas that will help keep us warm. And let's not forget our hard-working honeybees, who generously made us four gallons of scrumptious honey.

As we continually strive to make our farm menu

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

We are standing in the midst of a miracle.

A seed is sown on fertile ground. Maybe it receives some rain by chance. The seed sprouts & a seedling is born. The rabbits do not nibble it down. The beetles, aphids & caterpillars pass it by. The seedling produces leaves & roots. It receives adequate rainfall to grow & thrive. The plant flowers & yields fruit. The harvest is gathered in.

We all participate in the miracle of that seed becoming the meal before us, nourishing us, & empowering us to serve this lonely, tired world.

The entire process of creation & growth is wrapped in miracle.

We have all been co-creators in the growth & development of Bethlehem Farm in one way or another as we conclude the celebration of our 5th anniversary year. We are prayer supporters, donors, group week participants, Summer Servants, board members, community friends, & Caretakers. Our deep gratitude extends to all who have made this possible by giving their lives to this mission.

You can continue to breathe life into this mission by giving your time, talent & treasure. In the spring newsletter, I asked for help in raising an additional \$8,800 annually to sustain our eighth Caretaker position, which was funded through a VISTA position for its first two years. The spring newsletter raised about half of the amount, which was a great gift. As we begin interviewing applicants for open positions, please consider giving to raise the funds needed to sustain this eighth Caretaker position. In that simple act, you will be giving so much more than money: you will be creating an opportunity to serve, mending a roof over someone's head, forming new eyes of faith in a young person. You, too, will be a Caretaker.

Check us out online!

www.bethlehemfarm.net

A Special Thanks for

Your Extra Generosity:

- Patrick McNulty
- Unit Step Co.
- Tom & Pat Ruggaber
- University of Bloomsburg (PA)
- Newman Center
- Ruth Payne & Linda Wesp
- Mary Ellen & Bob Fitts,
- Jake & Alicen Teitgen,
- Adam Fischer
- Mark & Colleen Prieboy
- Diane & Tom Murray
- Katie Feise
- John & Chris Marasi
- Margaret Shaia
- Anne Barnes & Joe Hofmann
- Katie Feise
- George & Joanne Carr
- Mark Walser
- Donors to the Sunny Day Fund



Consider becoming a monthly donor. Doing so will enable us to spend less time fund raising in the office & more time working on the Farm & in our community.

Questions & comments regarding this publication &/or article submissions can be sent to the editor at caretakers@bethlehemfarm.net