

WANTED: Project Coordinator

Have carpentry skills?
Looking for community?
Want to serve? We
have the job for you.
Apply to be our Project
Coordinator! Call Laura
at 304-445-7143 or email
hiringcoordinator@
bethlehemfarm.net.

Like a Good Neighbor

by Moira

'Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.' (Luke 10:36-37)

The first time I went to Jackie's (name changed) house, I felt at home. The décor reminded me of my great-aunt's house. Jackie's home has been in her family for generations, and the hallway is filled with old family photos and pictures of Jackie growing up. Jackie works for very little money as a housekeeper at a local resort and went through a bad separation from her husband. When we arrived on the scene, water was seeping through the flat sections of roof over the back of her house. There were huge holes in the roof, and even tree seedlings and grass growing in the depressions. The house was getting very wet and Jackie was in despair for lack of options. We were there to replace those leaky sections with new, steeper roofing that would keep Jackie's home warm and dry. I left the site that day thankful that I've always had a roof over my head—how overwhelming it would be to live alone, work full-time, and have a leaky roof with no resources to fix it!



Jackie's old roof

(continued on page 2)

Wish List:

5-8 Passenger Vehicle
(2000 or younger)

Hammocks

Dewalt or Milwaukee
Cordless Drills

Heavy Duty Flashlights

LED Head Lamps

Tape Measures

Paint Brushes

Garden Hand Tools

Prayers

MAIL TO:

Bethlehem Farm
P.O. Box 415
Talcott, WV 24981

Recipes for Simple Living

by Colleen and Mariana

Part of the journey toward simple living that can be a lot of fun is to find less expensive or less wasteful alternatives to store-bought household products. In many cases, commercial products contain harmful (or at least questionable) chemicals and preservatives that you can avoid by making your own homemade versions.

A quick search on Google (or better yet, GoodSearch) can yield recipes for homemade substitutes for anything from baking ingredients to personal care products. Here are a few ideas we've tried at the Farm. We'd love to hear yours, too!



Vanilla Extract: Split 3 high-quality whole vanilla beans lengthwise, leaving the last centimeter still attached. Soak beans in 1 c plain vodka in a sealed glass container for 6-8 weeks. The extract should be kept in a cool, dark place, and can be topped off as you use it.

Brown Sugar: The brown sugar sold in stores is usually white sugar with molasses and food coloring added. To make your own, use a fork to mix 2 Tbsp of molasses into 1 c of white sugar. Add more molasses as desired.

(continued on page 2)



NEIGHBORS (continued from page 1)

Eric, Laura, and I brought teams of volunteers to help rip up old shingles and rotten roof decking. As soon as Jackie got home from work, she would be in the backyard, hauling away piles of discarded shingles. On her days off, she greeted us in the morning, worked alongside us all day, and regaled us with stories from her work and family history as we ate lunch.

Jackie and I faced our fears of heights head-on: hers of climbing a ladder, mine of walking around on the (significantly steeper) roof of the main part of the house. I showed her how to use the circular saw, and she cut wood to use as fascia boards. She was a natural! One day we arrived at Jackie's house to find the old trees in the backyard freshly pruned and the garden plot cleared of brush. When I exclaimed on how bright and spacious it looked, she laughed: "I could put in a golf course back here!" For the first time in years, Jackie's house stayed dry during a downpour. That night, she called us to tearfully express her deep gratitude for our help.

Anybody can get a leaky roof. Nobody can replace one alone; it takes a community effort. We hear that in "the good old days" a whole neighborhood would get together to help a family in need. Today, we are still called to look after the well-being of our neighbors. And as Jesus tells us in the parable of the Good Samaritan, our neighborhood has no boundaries.

In November, we said a fond farewell to Joe Prieboy after 4 years and 3 months of service at the Farm. Joe joined us in August 2007 as an Americorps VISTA worker for SARA, the nonprofit arm of our local housing authority. Joe coordinated SARA's low-income home repair program while also leading worksites during Farm group weeks and spitting wood in his free time. In the summer of 2009, Joe completed his VISTA term and transitioned to the role of Project Coordinator at Bethlehem Farm.

For most people who meet him, Joe is a memorable person. Whether it's because of his trademark long hair and beard, his straightforward manner, or his insatiable appetite for scrambled eggs, most volunteers and community friends associate Joe with their memories of the Farm. For the caretakers, Joe was a solid community member upon whom we could always rely for honesty, realism, hard work, and fun. He understood that community life requires sacrifice, so he regularly went the extra mile, did the extra sink of dishes, or worked a few extra hours just to be of service - without expecting any special recognition. In the last months before his departure, Joe worked more than a few long days (often until dark) in order to fulfill many of our home repair promises to local community members.

Even though we miss him greatly, we are excited to send Joe off to his marriage to Julie Tracy in May. Julie was one of the first two caretakers (with Russ) when Bethlehem Farm opened its doors in 2005, and she has served on our board ever since. We know that Joe and Julie will continue to grow together in their lives of service wherever they are, and we are very excited to celebrate with them in May.

Goodbye, Joe!

by Colleen



Micah and Joe

RECIPES (continued from page 1)

Household Cleaners: Use ¼ cup vinegar in the rinse water for your dishes instead of bleach. Put a mix of equal parts water and vinegar in a spray bottle for disinfecting surfaces. Use baking soda and a scrub brush to clean the inside of the oven.

Shampoo: Baking soda and jojoba will clean your hair without stripping the natural oils out. Add 1 heaping Tbsp of baking soda, a dime-sized amount of jojoba oil, and a few drops each of your favorite essential oils (lavender, tea tree, and rosemary are good for scalp and hair) to 6 oz of hot water, and shake vigorously. Apply to wet hair and massage into scalp. Let sit a minute or two before rinsing.

Conditioner: Acid and cold water help to seal the hair follicles, leaving your tresses smooth and shiny. Dilute 2 Tbsp of apple cider vinegar in 8 oz of cool water. Pour through hair after shampooing, then rinse.

Moisturizer: Reading the ingredients on a bottle of drugstore lotion can be a mystifying and horrifying experience. Instead, just use unrefined organic coconut oil – it melts at 76° and smells delicious! You can often find it at health or specialty food shops.

New Peeps at the Farm

by Bridget and Mariana

Get ready to meet some new friends next time you come to the Farm! A dozen baby chickens arrived by postal mail on Valentine's Day. Initially, the chicks (or "peep-peeps", as Miriam refers to them) are living in a warm, cozy brooder in the basement of the farmhouse. When they are a little older, they will move to their own stall in the barn, and by this summer, they will be laying eggs in the coop. The new flock is made up of heritage breeds - Rhode Island Reds, Barred Plymouth Rocks, and Buff Orpingtons. Unlike many modern chicken breeds, which are developed for the crowded conditions of industrial agriculture, heritage breeds are suited to the life of roaming on pasture and eating bugs that they'll have at Bethlehem Farm. Each breed has its own distinctive traits - Barred Plymouth Rocks have hardy constitutions and striking black-and-white striped plumage, for example, and Rhode Island Reds are among the most reliable egg-layers.



Peep! Peep! Peep!

DIY: Making Yogurt at Home

by Colleen and Mariana

We often get compliments from volunteers and visitors on the homemade yogurt that we serve for breakfast at the Farm, and many people have been interested in the idea of making yogurt themselves. You, too, could be spooning up thick, creamy yogurt for the price of milk! It's easier than it sounds. Here is how we do it at the Farm:

Ingredients and Equipment:

- ½ gallon whole milk (preferably non-homogenized)
- 4 Tbsp yogurt starter*
- ½ c dry milk powder
- (2) quart or (4) pint glass jars with lids (canning jars are best)
- Candy thermometer
- Small cooler to hold the jars

*Store-bought plain yogurt with live active cultures will do, or yogurt from a previous batch, or you can look for special yogurt starters online. You can also freeze yogurt in ice cube trays to thaw and use for starter later.

Directions:

1. Pour milk into the jars, leaving about two inches of space at the top.
2. Place the milk-filled jars in a large pot and fill the pot halfway up with water. Place the thermometer in one of the jars. Bring the water to a boil. When the milk reaches 180° F, promptly remove the jars from the water and set aside to cool.
3. Allow the milk to cool to between 105° and 115° F (this often takes at least an hour). *It is crucial that the milk be in this temperature range for the next step.* If it gets too cool, reheat the milk in the pot of water until it reaches this range again.
4. If using quart jars, add 2 Tbsp yogurt starter and ¼ c dry milk powder to each jar. For pint jars, add 1 Tbsp yogurt starter and ⅛ c dry milk powder. Stir gently to combine, but do *not* shake. Put lids on the jars.
5. Place the jars in the cooler and fill any empty space around them with hand towels or other cloths. Close the cooler and let the culture work undisturbed for 8 to 16 hours - do *not* move the jars during this time.
6. Refrigerate and enjoy!



We have a little help(er) around the kitchen these days.

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 us in living the Gospel cornerstones of community, prayer, service and simplicity.

Caretaker Community:

- Bridget Dignan
- Colleen Fitts
- Eric Fitts
- Mariana Lo
- Moira Reilly
- Laura Zerhusen

Board Members:

- Vern Bedel
- Katie Feise
- Eric Fitts
- Gary Howieson
- Kate Kosydar
- Allison Leigh
- Katie Noonan
- Frederick Pratt
- Tom Ruggaber
- Jana Strom
- Julie Tracy

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by our friends at PostNet in Lewisburg, WV.

All Hands on Deck!

by Eric Fitts, Director

"Room to Grow" Campaign

I once saw a postcard from Ohio of a classic Amish barn-raising. It was breath-taking: the barn, the prep area, the homestead and hillside were all swarming with people helping in some way with the project. Every neighbor from near and far came to assist in whatever way they could to help a family do something it could not possibly have done on its own. This postcard spoke to me about the **power of community** and what we are capable of accomplishing together.

The building effort for the Caretaker Residence will require a "barn-raising" moment for Bethlehem Farm. We will need everyone's help planning, fundraising, building, and furnishing. Each of us has our gift of how we can most effectively assist in the process.

What will your part be?

- Do you have experience in sustainable design?
- Are you willing to include us in your regular giving?
- Can you spread the word to your parish, family, friends or colleagues?
- Will you come out to help with the build?
- Will the Spirit move you to contribute in a way that we are not expecting?

We once had a board member who was intimidated by the prospect of raising money. She said, "I have few people I can ask to give, but I do know how to throw a party, so let's host a benefit." Having just held our 6th benefit, which brought in over \$22,000 for the Caretaker Residence this past December, I can give this as a clear example of the Spirit calling someone to contribute in a way we were not expecting, reaping rewards far beyond what we could have imagined. **Who wouldn't want to go to a party** that also benefits a cause close to the heart of a friend?

Thank you to all the donors, volunteers, and attendees who contributed to the 2011 Winter Benefit. **Thank you** also to everyone who has given recently, especially to Robert and Pauline Hanich and family, who have given us a jump start on fundraising for the Caretaker Residence with a \$12,000 contribution. Through the generosity of all involved, we have already raised \$36,800 toward our \$500,000 goal.

Please consider including us in your giving this year. You can use the envelope provided, add us to your auto-bill-pay, or give on our website.

\$500,000
GOAL

\$250,000

\$36,800
FEB 2012



We've got a good start, but we have a good ways to go!

Check us out online!
www.bethlehemfarm.net

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