



NEWSLETTER

Community Life and Meaningful Work for People with Disabilities

Fall 2015, Vol. 7, No. 1

High Spirit Community Farm

fulfills an essential need for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities by providing meaningful work, a dignified home and a rich social and cultural life. To that end High Spirit:

- Provides and supports life-sharing homes where our community members live as a family.
- Directs a land-based program, offering on the job training in agricultural work and sustainable practices.
- Expects our members to be responsible, participatory, considerate citizens of the High Spirit community and the larger world.
- Trains young volunteers to provide care to disabled peers and inspires them to be leaders as respectful, inclusive and conscientious adults.
- Serves as a catalyst for investment in this model of care, community and service.

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Lesley Eshelman
Head Householders and Farmers

EXCITING NEWS!

Our second High Spirit house will open in February. We will welcome two new Householders and new residents. Watch for updates!



Meeting our Mission: The Inspired Communities Conference

In October, three members of the High Spirit community, Bob Swain, Ginny Swain and Lesley Eshelman, attended a three-day conference on “Inspired Communities: A Practical Workshop for Parents and Providers Serving People with Special Needs” at Camphill Village, Kimberton Hills in Pennsylvania. Attendees gathered from Maine, Minnesota, Louisiana, California, and Canada. The broad scope of initiatives participating ranged from

programs working with the elderly and the disabled to college inclusion of disabled students to biodynamic farmers integrating those with disabilities in the work. Program sites were rural, suburban and inner city.

High Spirit, introduced as a leader in this growing field, was honored to run a workshop sharing our history and methods, and to be fulfilling our mission by serving “as a catalyst for investment in this model of care, community and service.”



Lunch at High Spirit: First Derek and Rory get the goats lunch, and then Rory and Lesley enjoy Butternut soup. Yum!



Therapy for Improving Neurological Functioning

by Lesley Eshelman, Head Householder

At High Spirit Community Farm, the residents with whom we live and work have challenges with many of their physical senses and bodily systems. If a person cannot rely on their sense of sight or hearing, or if they struggle to produce language or maintain balance, it can lead to increased anxiety and the loss of some independence. Over the past year, we have been introduced to a therapeutic approach called HANDLE that addresses these issues.

HANDLE is an acronym that stands for “Holistic Approach to Neuro-Development and Learning Efficiency.” The therapy uses gentle exercises to strengthen the nervous system. At introductory trainings with our local HANDLE practitioner we learned a few therapeutic activities that we could practice at home. One example is called “Face Tapping.” In this activity we steadily and lightly tap our fingers along a path around the individual’s face, following the trigeminal nerve. This activity strengthens the trigeminal

nerve, which supports speech production, increases facial muscle tone for improved non-verbal communication, and increases tactile sensations in the face, which can decrease drooling.

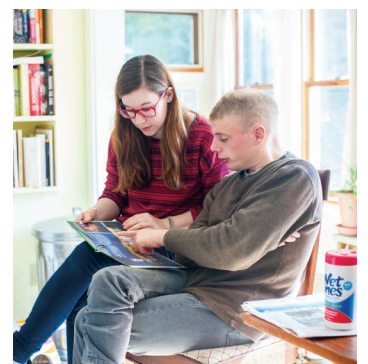
We will also be working with our local HANDLE practitioner to officially assess the neurological needs of our residents and design individually tailored HANDLE programs for each of them. Ultimately, with this therapy, individuals can experience less anxiety and enjoy greater independence.



Jana and Bar pause from work for conversation



Will setting the table



Jana and Bar find a quiet time to read

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Thank you to all of you who gave and supported High Spirit between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015. Your gifts are profoundly supportive and deeply appreciated.

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Note: Please contact the office with any errors or omissions. Thanks!

Recommended Reading

*The Reason I Jump:
The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-
Year-Old Boy with Autism*
by Naoki Higashida, K.A.
Yoshida (Translator), David
Mitchell (Translator)

Written by Naoki Higashida, a very smart, very self-aware, and very charming thirteen-year-old boy with autism, it is a one-of-a-kind memoir that demonstrates how an autistic mind thinks, feels, perceives, and responds in ways few of us can imagine.



Using an alphabet grid to painstakingly construct words, sentences, and thoughts that he is unable to speak out loud, Naoki answers even the most delicate questions....“Why do people with autism talk so loudly and weirdly?”...“Why

don’t you make eye contact when you’re talking?” and “What’s the reason you jump?” Naoki shares his unique point of view on not only autism but life itself. His insights...are so startling, so strange, and so powerful that you will never look at the world the same way again.

—*GoodReads.com review*

Food Forest Farm

Our farmers, Lesley and Derek, are working with Jonathan Bates of Food Forest Farm to develop our several acres into a balanced, productive and sustainable growing space. With analysis of soil types, sun and wind patterns, and an eye toward spreading the harvest over the course of the year, they hope to use the land more effectively, meeting the needs of our hungry crew while also creating a healthier ecosystem.



A Greenhouse Raises Our Spirits High

A gift designated for the purchase of a greenhouse has been made by friends of High Spirit. The greenhouse, a gothic arch frame designed to withstand our snowy winters, will be large enough to accommodate wheelbarrows and

work tables. We look forward to working in a warm, sunny and sheltered spot during the cold months, to growing greens for our winter meals, and to starting plants early for a jump on the spring. Joy!



We have chosen this educational greenhouse by Rimol Systems

Contact us at the Farm... or at our Office:

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