

Heartbeet Lifesharing Newsletter

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A 'Thank You' to All!!

Thanks to all the wonderful and generous individuals and foundations, Heartbeet has been able to accomplish phase one in its three phase plan. On July 1, 2002 Heartbeet became the owner of 218 Town Farm Rd, in Hardwick Vermont. This beautiful 160 acre farm provides Heartbeet Lifesharing with the opportunity to achieve its vision. It was necessary for Heartbeet to work with the Rudolf Steiner Foundation in receiving a loan that would allow the program to develop and grow with healthy dynamics. We look forward to reducing our debt over the next few years.

Early this spring, with cold fingers and toes, we planted our garden with hope. Now we are now busy with processing all the fruits and vegetables that our garden has provided.

We here at Heartbeet have felt the joy of rooting ourselves to this land and we fully recognize that it is only through the efforts of many people that we are able to call ourselves an established organization. We are still a tender shoot but our roots are strong. Sincere thanks from all of us at Heartbeet Lifesharing; Hannah, Jonathan, Brett, Ann, Sequoya, Renna, Josiah, Lyla and our volunteer staff.

Heartbeet's Summer Season

Heartbeet has surged to life with its first full vacation / respite season. We have had visits from Kirsten Rowel from Triform, Natasha Lorick from Triform, Mimi Rovner from Beaver Run Special School, Molly Coackly from Maine, Jerome Vermette from L'Amittient (Canada), Kevin from New Jersey, and Charles Tygiel from California. Each vacationer has joined the Heartbeet life with enthusiasm and love. We all feel so lucky to have gained the friendships of many over this summer. Each vacation was unique in that it integrated the special needs of the individuals visiting community member. Some of the things that we enjoyed over the summer were visits to Burlington, Montpelier, Ben & Jerry's factory, The Music Box, Bread & Puppet, Circus Smirkus, swimming at Caspian Lake, dining out, and of course our dates to the movies on Friday night. In between our vacation fun we all contributed to growing our food and remodeling our



barn situation to accommodate a smoother winter experience for our growing farm family. Our winter workshops (weaving, wood work and painting) are saved for rainy days.

In early July we hosted seven students and seven caregivers from Beaver Run Special School as a camp group. What a blast!! We turned our large sun-room into a sec-

ond dining room and enjoyed the community feeling that came with the crowd. A lot was accomplished during their stay. They worked most mornings and spent the afternoons enjoying our rural Vermont setting as well as outings to swimming at Caspian and Elmore Lakes and beach areas. Things that were accomplished during their stay were: renovations on a small cottage, grounds clean up, gardening and weeding, and the building of a large recycling bin for organizing the different types of recyclables.



Overall, this was a heart warming experience that we look forward to having and hosting again. We will need to build an outdoor pavilion to accommodate the dining and social life that such a large group brings. We are already making plans for this new structure and look forward to further relationship with Beaver Run. Contributions are more than welcome!



The Farm

As we walk through the surrounding fields and forests, old stone walls are a reminder of those who first opened and settled this land. It is an honor to all of us at Heartbeat to work at rejuvenating this farm after twenty years of rest. As we slowly work small corners of this land we strive to bring light and love to the earth as well as to each other. The chore crew is usually up around 6:00 am, gathering in the barn to share all the work that needs to be done: feeding and watering of the animals, grinding grain, collecting eggs, milking cows and goats, mucking out, re-bedding, sweeping and setting up the barn for the next chores that happen at 4:30 pm. Each individual at Heartbeat has found his or her place in the farm work. We are all doing well, even if once

in a while we have a hard time getting up so early every morning.



Spring was amazing! It brought with it many baby animals. Between our two sows we had 24 piglets; we also had 7 kids from our mama goats, 2 bull calves, 50 little chicks, 15 turkeys, and five baby ducks. Our barn was filled with the squawking, mooing and chirping of spring chaos.



We also had an early start in the greenhouse, planting the seeds for our 1+ acre garden. We did lose

quite a few plants when our bunnies escaped from their cage and helped themselves to our fresh garden salad, cabbage and broccoli. Luckily, they did not like the onions and tomatoes. Despite our set-back, the garden has done tremendously well, offering a generous harvest; enough for us here at Heartbeat, and plenty to share.

Some of the accomplishments that kept us busy through this last agricultural season: renovations on the inside of one section of the barn, whitewashing the walls and fixing the windows, building a hay wagon, building a bridge over a creek to enable us to get haying equipment to the hay fields. We also renovated a small out building that was the old milk pick up room into

a small cottage space; we made a beautiful compost pile, grew two seed crops for High Mowing organic seed company, and raised a large garden including 400 gladiolas for market and independent herb garden. We hayed 30 acres of fields (*this was a big job for our old machinery that we could afford. We are hoping for an up-date on some of the equipment by next season. It is on our wish list.*) In August the farm received Organic Certification. None of this would have been accomplished without Jonathan and the farm crew's incredible vision, enthusiasm and dedicated hard work.



We are now getting ready for the long Vermont winter, harvesting all the vegetables, processing and canning. We are also splitting and stacking firewood. We have had a wonderful season filled with adventure and growth, and we are grateful to mother earth for her generos-

ity and patience. We have our work cut out for us in bringing this farm back to life, but recognize this work as an honor.

It is hopeful for us here at Heartbeat to know that this farm has an established future. In just one season we have witnessed how this land meets the vision of Heartbeat and recognize how fortunate we are to be here. We wish everyone a heart filled with warmth for the cold winter to come.

A Volunteer's Experience of Heartbeat by Holly Peters

Being a volunteer at Heartbeat is a joyful and positive experience. I look forward to my Friday contribution to Heartbeat, where I can take part in their way of life for a day. I help out with various daily tasks or projects that are going on. I have helped with planting in the garden, weeding, chores on the farm (cleaning stalls, feeding animals, and milking), cleaning house and preparing meals. I have learned how to make granola, pickles, and sauerkraut and had the pleasure of helping harvest strawberries. I also spend time with the community / family for outings, some of which have been swimming, walking, bowling, art class, and movie night.

It is inspiring to see how Hannah and Jonathan offer residents rich life experience that allows them to learn capacities and strengths that they may not have discovered in other settings. They have created a healthy and vibrant way of life for the community. Members of the community appreciate each other and live with an awareness of each others' strengths and challenges in a way that enhances the strengths and works on the challenges. As a co-worker, witnessing these dynamics has added much to my experience.

I have also enjoyed the exposure to the ethics behind Heartbeat. These ethics come through in how people are treated, in the songs that they sing, the prayers that they say at each meal (giving thanks for the food), the way that they farm, the reuse and recycling of older equipment, etc. I think that Heartbeat is a fascinating place doing wonderful work and I feel privileged to be involved as a part time community member.



The Heart of Heartbeat

Who lives here at Heartbeat? Currently we are an extended family of eight: Brett Chelnik, Ann Blanchard, Sequoya Cheyenne, Hannah Schwartz, Jonathan Gilbert, Renna Schwartz, Josiah Gilbert, and Lyla Gilbert. We also have visiting community members such as Holly Peters who comes every Friday for work and play. We are looking forward to accepting two volunteer co-workers in the near future.



BRETT CHELNIK

Brett Chelnik came to us in July 2001, as our first Companion. After graduating from Beaver Run Special School he was searching for his next step. What a year for Brett! He has blossomed over this year with his ability to stay with a job to the end and increase his interests. Brett has become a contributing carpenter to our community. He has been active in the wood workshop as well as on the construction crew. He took part in building the hay wagon, taking down a shed, reconstructing the outside barn wall, re-building a new shed, put-

ting tin on the greenhouse roof, and general maintenance. He also has made incredible steps in his art work. At the art class that we go to once a week he found that acrylic paints make wonderful colors. He has done a beautiful series of paintings and drawings of horses that we are all amazed by.

Brett has become a central member to our community through his growing conversations and his ability to express his interests. We have also seen growth in his work ethic and joy to contribute. What a change we seen this year, and we look forward to the many years to come.

ANN BLANCHARD writes about her year at Heartbeat (with a little help in spelling)

I had a lot of options after leaving the Fellowship after my twenty-five-years there at the Fellowship community. I learned a lot there but it was time for



me to move on. I looked at my options and tried Heartbeat. My trial went very well. It was the best choice; the support that I would get is what I needed.

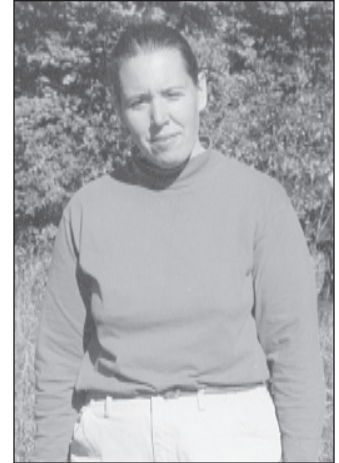
I like it very much and have learned to become a farmer which is new for me. I love working on the farm and the wood workshop and art class and cooking on Mondays and shopping and movie night with popcorn.

I have learned to milk the cows and goats and feed the animals and give water to animals. The animals are so sweet and we all care for them very much. I also have learned to do carpentry and like working on projects with Jonathan very much. I like my morning to sleep in on Sunday after a long week of getting up so early that is not easy and I like brunch very much.

We have taken a break from the wood workshop this summer, only on rainy days we worked on the egg sign and name signs for the animals. We also did the farmers market that was fun. We sold flowers and tortes and Clips we made in the workshop and flowers. I liked doing the money.

I am so proud of myself because at forty-two I have my own bank account. I over spent my account but am learning to keep my money and to know about money and checking accounts. I was able to go on vacation and liked my vacation very much in Canada. I went to L' Amitient, a community in Canada. I made lots of new friends. I made a new friend TJ at art class, and she is a artist and a good friend and we talk on the phone.

I like it here at Heartbeat and want to stay here at my new home. I have learned very much this year and like my bank account and am glad I had such wonderful Birthday party with chocolate mousse cake and lasagna and carrot salad and ice cream. I like that my many new friends and my mom could come.



SEQUOYA CHEYENNE



Sequoia just arrived at Heartbeat last month but has quickly found his spot as a community member. He is such a loving and warm person that we all have taken to him very well. We are looking forward to getting to know him better, but two things we are sure of are: he loves shopping and cooking. Sunday nights he is diligently making out the list of things needed for our Monday shopping, and right after lunch on Saturday he is eager to get going on making supper.

The work here at Heartbeat has just begun. We are still a new and tender organization, but we have grown strong roots. We have stretched ourselves out into the community in many ways. We have hosted all the local Waldorf schools for farm visits as well as becoming a farm site for the Greensboro Early Learning Center.

Heartbeat has had a hard time establishing a good source of volunteer workers but has begun the process of establishing sources through different programs such as vista, Americorps, and a program from Germany that brings conscientious military objectors to be volunteers for civil service. We have been feeling very positive about the recent applicants.

I would like to end with a thanks to all, recognizing that it has taken many different kinds of support to make it possible for Heartbeat Lifesharing to be where we are.

Hannah

