

Heartbeet Lifesharing Newsletter

September 2004 • Heartbeet Lifesharing • 218 Town Farm Rd. • Hardwick, VT 05843 • Special Edition

An Update on the Happenings at Heartbeet

What a rich and wonderful year we have had at Heartbeet! Many of the processes with which we have been involved for some time have come to fruition. After finding our way through the paperwork, we received our first civil service volunteer from Germany, Yannick Kuch. Thomas Cusick, a graduate from Beaver Run Special Schools, was welcomed as a new resident. After nine (and a half!) months preparation, Jasper Aaron Charles Gilbert was born June 24, 2004. On the farm front, a new shed was added, gardens were expanded, and permanent fencing has made pasturing the animals a pleasure this summer.

Heartbeet continues to be as full as it possibly could be. It hosted a rich vacation program for both new and old friends to it this year. We enjoyed a cold, cold winter that inspired us in the fiber arts to bring about the creation of a felted Christmas tree ornament that was a successful item for the winter craft shows, and that we

took to the last conference held through the North American Council as a wonderful workshop idea. We all did a lot of cross country skiing and snowshoeing to stay active during this record breaking cold winter. Our third season of Special Olympics Basketball brought us home a gold medal, new uniforms, and warm hearts.

We are happy and proud to have hosted our third season of the Beaver Run Summer Camp in June 2004. This experience is always very special, bringing a tremendous amount of life and activity to Heartbeet. It is amazing how



finds a mutual enrichment through this collaborative effort with Beaver Run Special School. We also enjoyed hosting a group of teenagers from Philadelphia that came to our farm through the Urban Nutrition Initiative. The program and the children impressed us tremendously and we look forward to a continued relation.

As Heartbeet looks to the future we see our second house waiting to be built. This new house needs all of Heartbeet's friends and supporters to come together. We have been gifted an opportunity through the Rudolf Steiner Charitable Trust with a matching grant of \$75,000. If we raise \$150,000 this year, the RSCT will match those gifts with \$75,000. To every dollar that is given this year, fifty cents is added. Let's build this house and grow Heartbeet's capacity to do great work!

Heartbeet is registered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation and its primary purpose is serving individuals with developmental disabilities. We are a youthful organization with significant capital expenses, so your support is greatly appreciated and can be directed towards the following areas of need; General Operations, Building Improvements, Equipment Fund, or the Campaign for the Second House (which is now in full swing). EIN#

Heartbeat Lifesharing:

Let's make the NEW HOUSE happen!

Mission:

Heartbeat Lifesharing, set on a 160-acre organic farm in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, provides respite and a permanent residence for developmentally disabled individuals. We are an initiative that recognizes the importance of interweaving the social and agricultural realms for the healing and renewing of our society and the earth.

Vermont is already recognized for being at the forefront of the movement to deinstitutionalize and develop strong community support for people with developmental disabilities. In light of this insight, Heartbeat's mission is to provide respite care, vacations and day programs for individuals with special needs, as well as long-term residence to adults with developmental disabilities. We focus not on a person's disability but rather on his or her capacities. Heartbeat provides a caring, therapeutic environment in which each person's humanity, dignity, freedom and purpose are fully recognized.

With a holistic approach, we offer a diversity of fun-filled activities that improve personal and social abilities. It is essential to our program that we are located on a beautiful organic/biodynamic farm that not only provides us with high quality food, but also gives us the opportunity to offer land-oriented activities.

As Heartbeat is an unfolding organization, we have added a new commitment to our mission that includes a farm based education program. Children / school groups of all ages are invited to experiences a land oriented program led by individuals with special abilities (with assistance).



Long Term Plan:

We have a ten-year vision to significantly expand our residential program for developmentally disabled individuals. In response to an overwhelming demand, we are undertaking Phase II of our development plan. Phase II will create a second Lifesharing household to provide office



space, therapeutic space, and a year-round home for four individuals with unique and special needs.

The vision of Heartbeat Lifesharing will be achieved when we have developed a five household sustainable community. This would provide home and work-life for twenty-five people with special needs. It will also provide:

- ♥ The foundation for a land-oriented, holistic Lifesharing approach to social therapy.
- ♥ More space for the respite / vacation aspect of the program.

- ♥ A stronger and more diverse coworker base to share tasks.
- ♥ A more dynamic social exchange within the community and without.

Phase I

Heartbeet's Phase I of the Development Plan has been successfully completed:

- ♥ A Lifesharing household was established and settled in July 2000. The farm was purchased in the summer of 2001 after a trial year, and is being revitalized with animals, hay and pasture, gardens and field crops.
- ♥ The barn and house have been upgraded through renovation, painting and creation of workshop spaces.
- ♥ A rich program of work and recreation is in full swing for the Heartbeet residents with special needs, and vacation and respite programs have operated for three summers and on holidays.
- ♥ Healthy active community relations have grown in the local community of Hardwick, Vermont.
- ♥ Good working relations exist with the State of Vermont.
- ♥ Heartbeet has provided services in Phase I to 256 individuals through its residential, respite, vacation and educational programs.
- ♥ Heartbeet has become a hub of cultural activities through its commitment to festivals and open events.

Phase II

Preliminary steps have already been taken to prepare for the second house:

- ♥ A site has been chosen and permitting is in place.
- ♥ All site preparations have been made (septic and water).
- ♥ Contractors are lined up for excavation and foundation work.
- ♥ The architectural design of the house is complete.

Donations

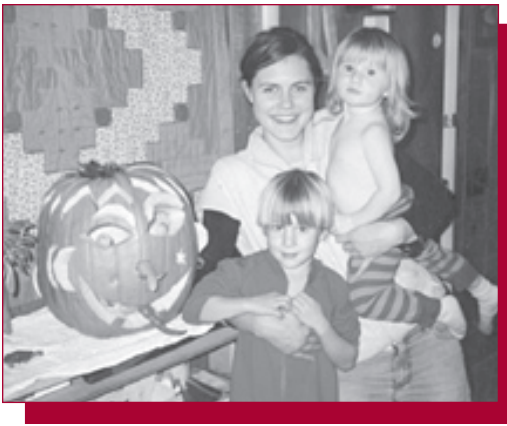
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What do we need now? We need your support to make this a reality!

Artist's sketch of Heartbeet's second house.



LET'S MAKE THIS HAPPEN!!



From the 2003-2004 Coworkers / Volunteers

Looking back over ten months as a co-worker at Heartbeat Lifesharing, I can say that I made one of my richest life experiences in this little community in rural Vermont. Through sharing life on a farm with a family, people with special needs and other coworkers, everybody contributing to this life and being part of the whole, forming the character of this place, I have learned much more than I expected.

Farming and gardening, food processing, cooking and cleaning, all kinds of crafts such as weaving, felting and knitting as well as taking care of other people's needs, did not only teach me a lot of practical skills, more patience and tolerance and more about life together with people with

special needs but also a lot about myself.

I am very grateful for all the experiences I have made at Heartbeat and know that this place will keep growing and blooming.

Jana Knapp, Co-worker August 2003 - May 2004
 and where should I start? Just the new kinds of work and activities I learned about here would fill pages. Working with all kinds of animals; sowing, planting and harvesting; cooking good meals (hopefully) and eating good meals (certainly); tearing down walls and building new ones; cutting trees and planting trees; animals being born and seeing them die; watching water become ice and then water again.

Then the people I lived with – every single one of them made themselves a part of my life so easily that I can't even imagine my life without knowing them. Working with Ann, Eric, Thomas and all the others taught me responsibility. I am grateful for every little moment I shared feelings with them. It was great fun to learn from them and live with them.

Now I am leaving this place, but I am also leaving something at this place: one year of joy, hope, work experience, sadness, happiness – one year of my life.

Yannick Kuch, Co-worker September 2003 to September 2004



I want to end by thanking *Katy Baker-Cohen* for joining Heartbeat as a part time

coworker for the last season. She worked four mornings a week at a local Waldorf inspired early education program as the lead teacher but spent most of her free time living and helping at Heartbeat. She was an asset to our team effort this year, cooking, cleaning and bringing her life long experience in the field (her sister is a student at Beaver Run Special Schools) to our program. Following our extremely successful Special Olympics basketball season she was inspired to spearhead our involvement with the spring sports, and took Ann and Thomas to a weekend tournament that ended with three gold medals.



These three very special individuals brought a social aspect to our program that warmed all of our lives. Together they enriched everything that happened over the last year. All of us that lived with and experienced these three volunteers are grateful and look forward to keeping in touch.

Hannah Schwartz

My Fourth Year at Heartbeet as a Vacationer

I am now an advising visiting member of Heartbeet Lifesharing. I enjoy my time in the United States.

I enjoy making beautiful wood work and wool work and the Heartbeet Sign which I finished this year, 2004.

I really enjoyed my stay, and the trips I took to Berlin Mall and Montpelier and Burlington and living and visiting with the Pope (*Jerome decided that Ed, another resident, was the Pope*).

I like seeing Gabbie again and her music is beautiful. I liked very much the children from Philadelphia that had hair braided like the Swiss Guard.

I would like to keep coming to my hotel at Heartbeet in the United States and eating the good food at the Ben and Jerry's ice cream.

Jerome Verment



Special Olympics!



Summer 2004! ~ Heartbeet Lifesharing

