

Heartbeet Lifesharing
218 Town Farm Road
Hardwick, VT 05843

Heartbeet Lifesharing Newsletter

www.heartbeet.org

NOVEMBER 2006 • Heartbeet Lifesharing • 218 Town Farm Rd. • Hardwick, VT 05843

Dear Friends of Heartbeet,

Can you believe it? The leaves have changed from green to gold, and already the Vermont fall winds have swept them from the trees, leaving the hillsides bare. It brings to mind the similar landscape that welcomed us into the new house one year ago.

This has been a special year, with all the upheaval that accompanies any significant change in a community. It has been a year of learning, of improvements, and of relationship building. Practical considerations have demanded much of our attention, from deciding where light bulbs should be stored to getting trash and recycling systems into place. Our accomplishments include completion of the siding of Kasper house, the laying of the tile floor in the kitchen and entrance, making the office space ready to move into, building shelves in storage areas, and much more. There is still a good deal of finishing work left, such as trim and painting in the basement, which we look forward to completing during the coming winter months.




The Heartbeet family in front of the farmhouse.

Jonathan, with the help of many others, built a beautiful new woodshed that will make feeding the outdoor wood furnace a much more enjoyable experience. Last winter we had frozen fingers from digging out logs from snow and ice. The red tin roof and sturdy wood walls will not only spare our hands and backs, but already affords a cheerful and welcoming addition to the landscape. The recently added heart-shaped garden in the center of the circle drive completes the emerging design in front of Kasper House. Your support has made all these wonderful projects possible!

What is on the horizon? White Pine is in need of some tender loving care. With so much emphasis on the new house, the needs of the farm house were set on the back burner. Next summer we will focus our construction efforts on a badly needed new roof, a paint job, new windows, and a furnace that gave out on us just a few weeks ago. The cost of the White Pine House construction is estimated at \$65,000.00. This winter we will also be researching the history of this over one-hundred-year-old farm house, and we look forward to sharing our findings with you. This historical treasure has been the heart of Heartbeet's work for the last five years, and lots of care has already gone into the building. But a true restoration that will keep the cold winter outside and the warm heat from the stove on the inside is a necessity that can no longer wait. This is a very exciting project for everyone at Heartbeet, but especially those living in White Pine House. Please help us to accomplish this much-needed work.

Thank you so much for your ongoing support of our endeavors at Heartbeet!

Sincerely,


Hannah Schwartz

We are actively searching for long-term, co-workers interested in helping Heartbeet into the future. If you are interested, please contact Hannah Schwartz at (802) 472-5598.

Mission:

Heartbeet Lifesharing is an initiative that recognizes the importance of interweaving the social and agricultural realms for the healing and renewing of our society and the earth. We fully acknowledge and live out of the understanding that every human being is unique and unrepeatable. In light of this insight, our mission is to offer both a vacation and respite program and a permanent residential program for developmentally disabled individuals that focus not on a person's disability but rather on his or her capacities. 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 Heartbeet 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).

Donations

Heartbeet Lifesharing • 218 Town Farm Rd • Hardwick, VT 05843 • E-Mail: Heartbeeth@aol.com

Phone: (802) 472-5598 • website: heartbeet.org

Creative Donations

Corporate Donations can be supported through business matching grants. If you are giving a donation to Heartbeet, check with your business or corporation to see if they would be willing to match it.

If you are thinking of giving money but would like to give it over time, we can organize a pledge donation.

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 renovations of White Pine (the old farmhouse).

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Welcome to Heartbeet!



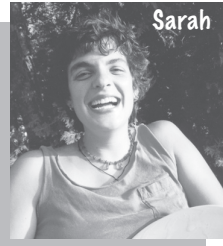
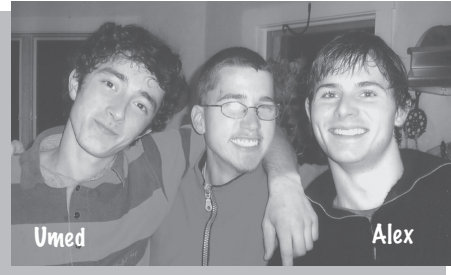
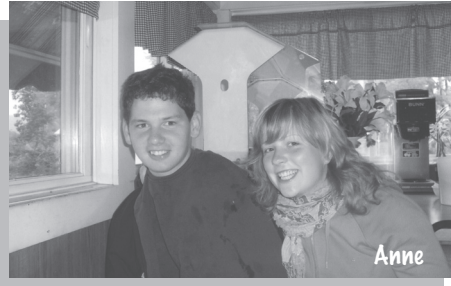
We are stronger than we have ever been with Rachel Schwartz joining our long term team. She is establishing our office practices and creating systems that support the growth that Heartbeet has made. We are working hard to institute the infrastructure that will allow us to make future-bearing decisions that currently rest with us with confidence. With the growing interest in Heartbeet we are carefully assessing our situation and setting a ten year plan in place. We are working hard to create a supportive and healthy relationship with our state as we work towards our future intentions.

Umed joins us from Tajikistan, and Anne and Alex join us from Germany as our 2006-2007 co-workers. We already know what a wonderful team they are and look forward to a great year.

Sarah is staying on as our first second-year co-worker. We are infinitely grateful!

Goodbye!

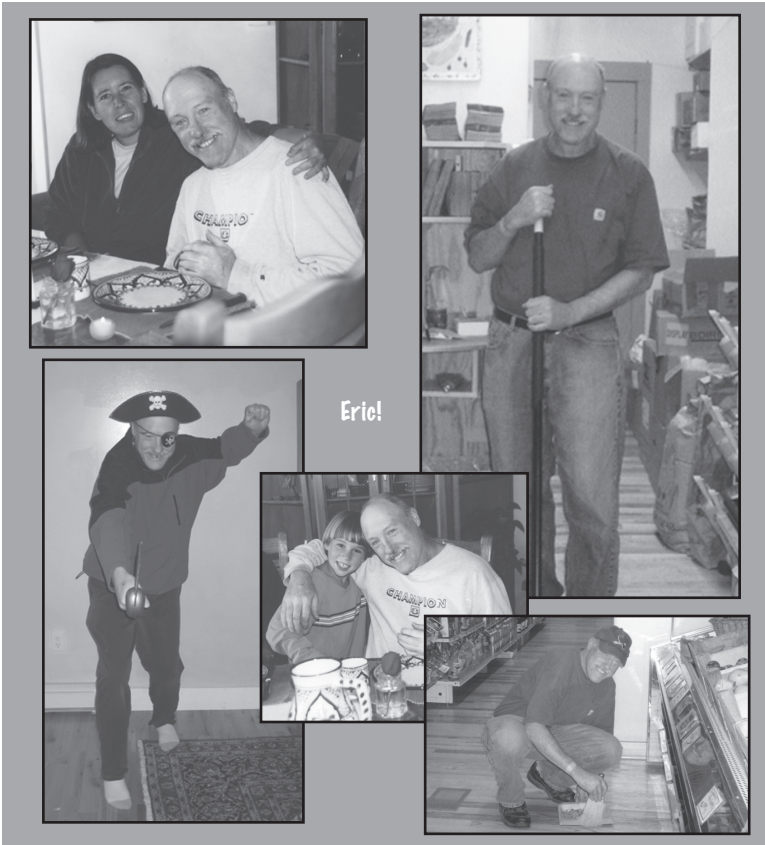
Goodbye to Annika and Miro.... two wonderful co-workers who held our year together 2005-2006!



Eric Sondhaus at Heartbeet for Three Years

I like Heartbeet, I believe it's my home and I made friends with people like Sarah and Parker. I made friends with Ann and my boss Berry and a guy named Joe that cracks jokes at the local Buffalo Coop which is where my new job is. I enjoy sweeping the floors upstairs and downstairs and I get compliments all the time on my great job. When I am ready I would like to work two days a week and to check if that would work two days a week. My family surprised me and came for my Circle of Friends meeting (birthday meeting). I was sitting in the middle and we sat down and had a good talk and we talked about not smoking cigarettes and how I found a good home. I had a good time all day long. This is the longest time I have been anywhere in a long time and I am at home at Heartbeet after three years.

– Eric Sondhaus



Beaver Run Summer Camp will keep returning to Heartbeet!



At the beginning of past July I was the lucky head of a 4 vehicle car-train leaving Camphill Special School in PA for another fun filled two weeks at Heartbeet. Having experienced Heartbeet during summer camp last year there was no question where to take my group this year. Eighteen of us, including my two boys and nine high school students and an equal number of coworkers were heading north with much anticipation, a load of tents and sleeping mats and some worry about... well how we were all going to manage without all the luxuries and securities which come with living in a house.

We needn't have worried. We all got used to the outdoor toilet and shower and there were always flowers on the table in the kitchen tent, so we had ourselves a beautiful outdoor home.

But there was something I had not counted on and that was protests: "But I didn't come to Summer Camp to work, I came to have fun!" was Derek's frequent line, while Silvan refused to go on any outings saying: "I came to work and not to go out!"

But even such different expectations were met as work and fun flow easily into each other at Heartbeet.

It did not take long to figure out what job around the garden or farm fitted everybody best. Some went off to dig holes for fence posts others picked and prepared strawberries. There were plenty of hay bales to be sent up into the loft, and the herb garden got a good weeding. Michael was up every morning before the sun to help with chores in the barn and I was happy to finally learn how to milk a cow. Thank you (...) for being so patient. Naomi loved her volunteer morning in town where she helped to cook the community lunch and Shaan hit every nail with gusto as we fixed the floor of the our shower. As for Silvan, he

decided that work was all the fun he needed and he was off helping Jonathan with whatever came up.

We certainly all got a good bit more in touch with nature as we tried to keep the creek from running into Kaspar house during the rainstorm, picked potato beetles off the plants, went around finding and identifying healing plants in the fields and slept under the stars.

After all the work, the outings were double the fun. Between canoeing, scrambling around in waterfalls and hiking, eating ice cream straight from the Ben & Jerry's factory, watching glassblowers and teddy-bear productions

and last but not least visiting the chocolate factory in Burlington, the time passed quickly and too soon it was time for a goodbye party. And party we did! Even Silvan joined in as a live band filled the house with bluegrass music and we danced into the evening.

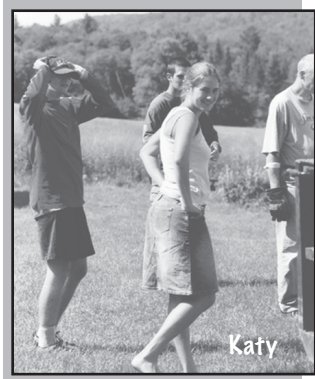
The joy in work and play together and the spaces created to meet the individual needs, the acceptance of and creativity in celebrating life's ups and downs is what makes Heartbeet special to me. Being there helps people breathe and makes you feel well. Steven loved Heartbeet so much, he decided he wants to move there. Most of us found reasons to return; Arne for the dip in the pond every morning, Cap for the music, Bryce for the tractors and Joey for the possibility to go barefoot most of the time, Courtney for the shopping. But everybody, I am sure, would return for the friends we have made.

by Sabina Callesen



What have short-term coworkers taken with them from Heartbeet over the last five years?

A NOTE FROM WARREN WILSON COLLEGE



Running along the trails of my college campus with a friend, I ask: “how can I put into words what I have learned at Heartbeet?” She has been there and heard me talk about it many times. Well, she says, “you have learned how to be an active part of a family”. This I think is really the only thing that can begin to encompass what I have taken from Heartbeet. Living with ten people in a household and embracing the fun of cooking and cleaning up meals, endless vacuuming and piles of dishes, we had no choice but to become a family. At the end of the day to have a good night kiss blown from Thomas’, an assuring “good night” from Anne and a smile from Eric, made all the hub bub of the day so satisfying. The three meals a day, barn chores, showers, and laundry felt endless and tiresome at times. Then there would be the batch of chocolate chip cookies made with such care by Anne, a bright shiny egg washed by Eric and a pile of dishes put away with expert efficiency by Thomas or the special gathering around a festival and whoosh the tasks were again new and exciting. Living with so many people, all of us with very different needs and expectations, was at times challenging but it felt like family, and my experience with this group of people has sustained me as I set out into the journey of college. I continue to come back to visit and love the friendships created.

At school there is no shortage of repetitive tasks. There are many nights when I think longingly of Heartbeet and wish I could wash a piece of silverware instead of do a statistics problem. That is when I remind myself of what I learned at Heartbeet, to try to take pride in each of my “chores” and make it something new...relax take it one step at a time, there is no right or wrong but I at least need to try my best. Out of this attitude can only come the opportunity to share myself with the world, building the friendships and connections that lead us along our life’s path.

Katy Baker-Cohen

NOTE FROM FREIBURG

One year on a bio-dynamic farm, working with people with special needs... so I am surely doing my food shopping at whole-food stores now, and regularly visit my grandmom, right!? Well, I am trying. But that isn’t all I brought back from living in Vermont for one year, 4000 miles away from home.

Experiencing the impressive ambition of this place, my year at Heartbeet made me more ambitious towards myself and more conscious of my own independence of choice in every aspect of life. And it pronounced to me the importance of community. Dealing, sharing, caring about the people around me is always worth it as it directly comes back to me. Recognizing the importance of community and of ambition towards myself became a part of me. So I may be just another history and literature student, but the experiences of my year at Heartbeet – and I think about it every day – stay with me and distinguish me. My decision to become a teacher was based on exactly these experiences.

- Yannick Kuch

FROM ELANA WOOD-DRYER



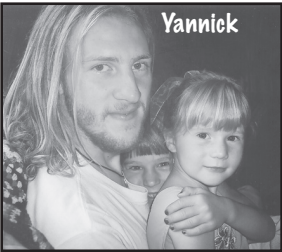
“I enjoyed my summer at Heartbeet – I took a lot of risks (remember when I took the kids on the waterfalls?), learned about gardening and the earth, community and caring for others.”

We were very lucky to have had a recent visit from Elana. She is such a love, bringing her music, kind heart and dedication. It always feels so natural to have her here!

– H.S.

Welcome, Andrea!

The Heartbeet family is happy to welcome Andrea, who is visiting for a long-term respite stay!



Goodbye and many thanks to Mac and Ellen Mead

What a year to have jumped into Heartbeet. Mac and Ellen braved the storm of transition as we struggled to find our way into community life. They brought themselves to the task with courage and heart. It was a year full of challenges but with grace and love we found our way through. They leave Heartbeet with many new friends and some old ones but much loved. The land was gifted by Mac’s dedication and we glimpsed the benefits of farming with horses. It was truly a gift to see the land worked through the efforts of man and beast. It was a highlight for the coworkers that participated in plowing the garden with the horses. They leave Heartbeet more penetrated. Thanks to them we have wonderful hooks for our tools, White Pine house is beautifully painted and the garden this year produces a bountiful season of food. Thank You, Mac and Ellen for all that you shared with Heartbeet!

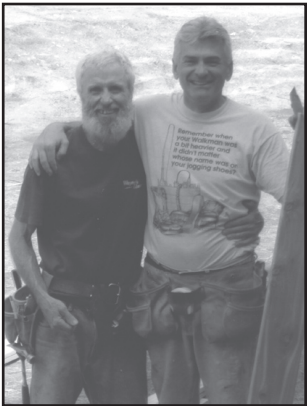


The New House

A life of service and service happening all around; Heartbeet is generating the most amazing activity. From the very beginning I found that Heartbeet creates opportunities to selflessly offer work and to learn the depths of personal resources. In conjunction with this one also finds as a member of Heartbeet that a social law is created in that Heartbeet’s needs draw the wider community to them. An example of this is the crew that came to help with siding the house when we most needed it. Sarah Schluep, our first Americorps volunteer shared the depth of what she was learning at Heartbeet with her parents. She inspired her father to gather a few men together out of his congregation in Tallmadge, Ohio.

Gary Myers, Claude Brunot and John Schluep worked tirelessly through rain and shine for three days. They also joined in the rhythms of community life which was quite a new experience for them all. Gary brought his insightful questions, Claude brought his Hummer and John brought the gift of connecting to each of our Friends. We send out a “THANK YOU” to each of them and hope that they stay in touch. Perhaps we will even see them again this coming spring for another work program.

H.A.S.



2006... A Colorful Year...



...at Heartbeet Lifesharing!

