

A Poet Emerges at Heartbeet...

Annie came to Heartbeet last year and has become a creative voice for the community

"Heartbeet Lifesharing is a community. People here are different in their own way. Heartbeet Lifesharing is a place of growth. We grow lots of veggies, fruit and many foods that we eat here. They are so fresh that you can taste it in your own mouth. When you enter Heartbeet Lifesharing, you come up a steep long hill where the mailbox is. You see White Pine. The sun is right on your face. When you turn you will see the Kasper House, then you will see Karl Konig House. At White Pine you will enter the double doors, then you will see one door. You open that door then you see coats and shoes. You take off your shoes and your coat as well. Then you will see the stairs and you start climbing them. You see the inside of White Pine. You see the kitchen as you can see it in your mind. White Pine is like a home that you can live in. And then you start walking toward the Kaspar House. This house is like a family house that you can live in. There is a family who lives in the family wing. You are always welcome to say hi to Jonathan and Hannah's family. Now when you go to Karl Konig House, it is sort of like White Pine. It is also a home as well. There is a sweet family at Karl Konig House. There are children as at Kasper House. There are paths here at Heartbeet that you can walk on or hike if you want to. The trails are wonderful. You see the trees, the hillsides and the sun going down at nighttime as well. You should try that or a moonlight walk sometime. You can go and see many animals. They will say "Hi" or "Hello" to you. If you go to the back barn there are sheep to visit you and one goat to see you too. So that is Heartbeet for you. Come see us if you can because you are welcome here. Heartbeet Lifesharing comes from all of our hearts." - Annie Jackson



"You don't choose your family.
They are God's gift to you, as you are to them."
~Desmond Tutu

Mission:
Heartbeet is a vibrant lifesharing community that includes adults with developmental disabilities and interweaves the social and agricultural realms for the healing and renewing of our society and the earth. Community members live and work together, in beautiful extended family households, forming a mutually supportive environment that enables each individual to discover and develop his or her unique abilities and potential.

Donations
Heartbeet Lifesharing • 218 Town Farm Rd • Hardwick, VT 05843 • E-Mail: Hannah@heartbeet.org
Phone: (802) 472-3285 • 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 New Barn.



Heartbeet Lifesharing Newsletter

www.heartbeet.org

OCTOBER 2009 • Heartbeet Lifesharing • 218 Town Farm Rd. • Hardwick, VT 05843

Summer...Come....Gone...Welcome to Fall at Heartbeet

Dear Friends of Heartbeet,

What a summer! We accomplished pulling down the old barn, building a new one (with some things still left to do), and we enjoyed an amazing open house and our first Family Weekend. Mixed into the big projects we all found plenty of time for swimming, playing, going to baseball games, picking berries, camp fires, making music, and enjoying each other's company in both work and play. An early spring blessed us with the possibility to jump start



Welcome to the Jungle

our agricultural season in our new greenhouse that we fired up in early May. We were eating wonderful greens -- kale, chard and spinach -- much earlier than we ever have. June brought with it many a rainy day but the shelter of our greenhouse provided a wonderful working environment: starting seeds and developing raised beds to host our tomatoes, basil, and salad. By June 10th the greenhouse was a jungle of growth, giving hope to those of us that didn't believe that summer would really get here.



Raising The Barn

By mid June the community was filled with enthusiasm for what we all began to realize was really happening—a new barn! The old barn came down, the old foundation was moved out, a new foundation was poured, and before we knew it Liberty Head Post and Beam Framing Company brought our barn and assembled it in three days. It was like an old fashioned Amish barn raising. It was truly amazing to watch. Some of us helped and others simply witnessed this historical event with awe. Following this event, a work day open to the local community brought 18 volunteers, many of them skilled carpenters, to work tirelessly for a whole day. Heartbeet members and friends from the local community worked side by side and managed to completely enclose the new barn and put in about



Storage

half of the second story floor—an unforgettable day that encouraged us that the barn would be ready for winter. There is still a lot to be done: windows need to be framed and put in, stairs built to the second floor, walls finished and stalls built for the animals. The roof is on and hay is already being stored under it, and it is a beautiful sight to see the onions and garlic laid out on the new second floor. Funds are



Nearing Completion

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Jared helps with haying!



Feeding Time!

still needed to complete the project; we have raised \$55,000 of the \$75,000 needed to complete the barn with a ramp to the second floor.

The barn was the last of the rundown buildings to be addressed on the Heartbeet property and we can already feel the gift that this barn will bring for the farm, the landscape, the animals and above all, the therapeutic aspect of our land-based program. We are infinitely grateful to those of you who have already offered your support, and for those of you still waiting, there is no time like now! Please help us finish the barn so that it can house our animals and provide a space for chores that will bring light to the winter's chore crew--and the sheep, goats, cows, chickens, pigs, dogs and cats will thank you too!

Sincerely,

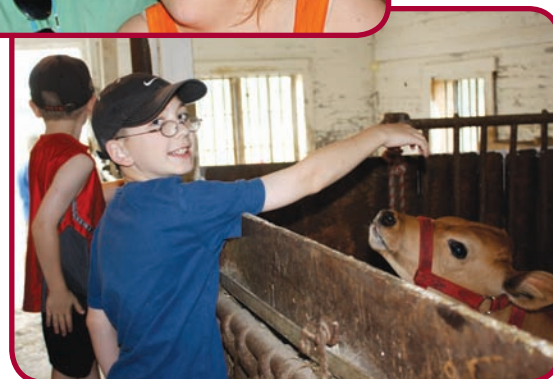
Hannah Schwartz, Executive Director

For alternative ways of donating please check our website: www.heartbeet.org

Heartbeet's First Family Weekend...

Heartbeet was proud to welcome all the residents' family members to visit for a weekend. They experienced life at Heartbeet and created a true feeling of extended family. Brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, moms and dads, came from as far as Florida and as close as Greensboro, Vermont to meet and enjoy each other's company. It was a glorious weekend of fun, swimming, good food and games.

Heartbeet community members prepared poetry, music and food and loved sharing all the art and bounty of the community. It was a heartfelt gathering that we look forward to hosting as an annual event.



Max's Family Finds Heartbeet...

By Amy Gleicher (Max's mom)

I remember very clearly the first time I visited Heartbeet. It was magical. It just felt right.

I had decided to visit because I kept hearing, from people who I greatly respected, about a wonderful life-sharing community in Vermont called Heartbeet. I was told that it would be a good fit for my son, Max, when he became an adult (he is now a teenager). And, that it would fulfill my "Wish List" for Max --- i.e. a vital & stable community, warm and supportive people, purposeful living, a farm environment, potential for growth -- and also involvement in the community-at-large. It was a long list and topped-off by my most important criteria -- that I, myself, feel happy there.



So I called Hannah and we set a date for a visit. I was keenly interested in meeting both Hannah and Jonathan who, together, had created Heartbeet from their shared vision of a community in which they could raise their children and share their lives with other families and adults of special needs, in a world of caring and purpose. It was their determination, their energy, their know-how ---- their sheer WILL --- that caused me to want to meet them, and to see Heartbeet.

From the moment I drove up the dirt road and saw the carved wooden sign announcing "Heartbeet Life- Sharing" I felt very comfortable and happy. All around, were rolling green hills, acres of trees, a pond, a barn with chickens, a vegetable garden, wild flowers, horses. It was gorgeous.

And then I heard laughing: There was a pick-up volleyball game being played, energetically and hilariously; some players had technique, others didn't, yet the ball kept moving back and forth across the net. And there, in the thick of it, was Hannah, playing her heart out.

Walking up to the (almost-completed) Kasper house I found Jonathan outdoors playing with their children. On the road up, I passed a man in overalls on his way to relocating the cows for the night.

Heartbeet was in my heart from the very beginning. Important also, is that it was in my head, because it makes perfect sense to live in a community of respect and support and love with opportunity for growth, all the while surrounded by physical beauty. It just doesn't get better than that.

I've been back to visit Heartbeet a number of times since that first sweet visit. I've participated in a conference and a parents' weekend and also gone with my husband, Warren, and Max's older brother, Adam. We've met many Heartbeeters, and I continue to be impressed with the dedication of Hannah, Jonathan, now Rachel (and soon, Raphael) and with the vitality of the Heartbeet community.

Every time I return, I feel the same magic that I felt that very first time. And, as the community unfolds before my eyes, the magic expands. Heartbeet is my heart's desire for Max, for me, and for our family.





Dario / German Service Volunteer

Finding the human connection at Heartbeet

When I finished school in 2008, it was clear to me that I wanted to have an intermission between school and university in order to gain more experience and explore other countries and cultures. Through the organization "Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners" (friends of the education of Rudolf Steiner) I contacted different institutions all over the world, one of which was Heartbeet Lifesharing. To me Heartbeet seemed to be a very unique and interesting place. After a phone conversation with Rachel Schwartz, I just felt that this was the place for which I had been looking.

Some months later I arrived here in Vermont and was overwhelmed with the beauty and warmth of this place. There was so much love and such a high level of care in this community. I found important insights in the life of people with special needs, who I learned to love and who brought so much joy into my life.

As a future student of international management, I was very interested in what was going on in Heartbeet and Hardwick economically. What seemed at first glance to be an area that is a little rundown and perhaps boring soon proved to be a very exciting place from which all of us could learn a lot. There was a very high sense of community there, which is something so much needed in these days. Studies like the General Social Survey show that we are more and more disconnected from each other, that there has never been a higher number of people living on their own, and that we feel increasingly lonely. At the same time, we face a worldwide recession, a financial crisis, and the end of something which can be called "supercapitalism", which has shifted our attention away from real relationships towards networking and the maximization of profits.

For me communities like Heartbeet and the economic vibe of such places as Hardwick can teach us ways of overcoming so many of our present problems and help us to rediscover social values such as respect for and interest in each other, which are so needed in a globalized world on its way towards a brighter future.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who supported me during my year at Heartbeet, the incredible community and my friends with special needs who have helped me to figure out where I am in the world and where I will go.

The Festival of Life at Heartbeet....

Creative and artistic work with the festival life here at Heartbeet is such a transforming process. We chose a Michaelmas dragon as our first big "Festival Friday" creation and began by visiting Bread and Puppet, a local puppeteer troupe and puppet makers extraordinaire. The process of making a big puppet is very hands on with many different layers of interest ranging from tearing paper, shaping cardboard, paper mache, sculpting, painting, and sewing. To lead a project from inspiration into the physical expression of such a puppet is a very magical experience. Thank you to all for your hard and creative work!

Blessings,
Seneca



Tilman Vorhoff / German Service Volunteer

Recklinghausen, Germany

I came to Heartbeet Lifesharing last year as a recent high school graduate with virtually no experience with individuals with special needs or biodynamic farming. I was looking forward to the coming year, often wondering how I would succeed in this new job. As I was welcomed into the community with absolute acceptance and then infinite love, I realized that this was not really a job at all, but rather a different and unique part of my life. I consider myself lucky to have joined Heartbeet in this extraordinary period of expansion with the building of the third house when new and inspiring people were welcomed to this amazing community.

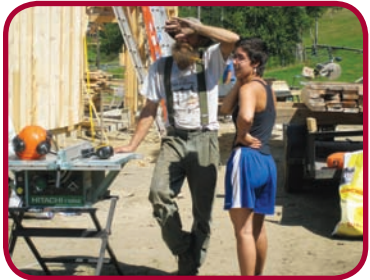
The greatest area of growth for me, however, came through the time I spent with the residents. The work with them enabled me to recognize my own strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, they helped me realize that everyone has his or her unique special needs, which changed my way of looking at people completely. An interest in the uniqueness of the individual was awakened. I learned that there is no one in this world from whom you cannot learn!

That is also one reason why I am so glad and thankful that I was given the opportunity to spend so much time with Sean. His beautiful being was full of surprises, which turn every day into a new exciting adventure. Being a guide in his life was a gift as he guided me to places I had not yet discovered. Amazement arose in me when I saw how much certain things made him really happy, for instance going shopping for "glow in the dark." In those moments of pure happiness for him you just could not help but empathize and feel the happiness coming up in yourself, too. To share this year with him has been a blessing and I wish him the best with all my heart.

As I go back to Germany to start my studies, this strong and loving community with all my new friends will remain in my heart. I want to thank everybody for making this year a wonderful experience and for all the contagious smiles that made my heart smile so often. I will miss everyone very much, and there is no doubt that I will come back here again someday.



Barn Work





Maxie / German Service Volunteer

Practice random kindness and senseless acts of beauty!
Being part of something larger!

I always wanted to go to the United States. I looked for a place which at the same time would prepare me for my future vocation.

So here I was ... at Heartbeet, surrounded by nature, nature and again nature => and 29 wonderful, special and unique people. I found myself volunteering in this beautiful spot with its spectacular seasons (Wow--a real winter still exists!). Slowly I discovered I was improving in a lot of skills, but mainly in social relationships.

I appreciated this place so much. It was amazing to see how well people can live and work together, day after day with deep respect, love and high expectations for and from each other. It is incredible what a caring and loving community can do to people and the change it can make in them. I changed so much.

It is a heartwarming experience to give and at the same time to receive, to be part of something and to be needed/to feel needed.

Now looking back at my year in Heartbeet I am convinced that this kind of life - no matter if in this kind of community or in a different one - gives people the most satisfaction, happiness, sense of fulfillment and inner richness in life.

I am sure it will be awkward - in some ways - to go back to Germany and to have a different lifestyle ... But now it is my turn to try to change something in the world - just like the people at Heartbeet do. Now it is my turn to bring "community" out there and to be the responsible, caring, respectful, loving and compassionate person I want to be. I hope my behavior will have positive reactions, which will (hopefully) lead again to more good reactions and so on ... That is how I want to give my part to the world: Practicing random kindness and senseless acts of beauty to make the world a little bit better. I want to make a difference even if it is just a little tiny step in

the right direction for humanity. That gives me the feeling of being part of something larger. I know I can change and influence at least something. Even if I just make one other person's day better - it makes a difference - because this person might make another person's day into something special.

And that is the gift Heartbeet gave to me - to have the feeling of being able to make a difference - to move in the right direction - to be part of something larger! Thank you Heartbeet!

In love, Maxie



Christoph / German Service Volunteer

My year in Heartbeet - a year of joy, happiness and personal growth.

After graduating High School, young men in Germany choose military service or a so called "social year." I did not like the idea of the army, so I picked the latter. After researching different places where I could spend my year, I found Heartbeet Lifesharing in Vermont.

I immediately felt at home: everyone was so kind and loving and accepted me as I am. Despite the occasional stress of community life, I always felt supported in this environment. House cleaning, cooking, laundry, farm work, Art Class, weaving, Community lunch - our schedule was always full!

My main struggle here was the food, because at home I always ate sweets, potatoes and chicken. At Heartbeet, vegetables and fruits are served at almost every meal, so I had no choice but to try them. Slowly, I started liking bananas and apples and I began eating more and more healthy food, although I still do not like squash (which seemed to be somehow slipped into every meal during winter). Through eating more healthy food, I started to appreciate the difference between fresh organic produce and Chicken McNuggets. Now I often read the labels on the food I buy.

Another important lesson I learned here is that our residents are not the only ones who have special needs. We should care for each others' needs.

When I came here I wanted to see a new culture, improve my English and become more independent. While I certainly achieved these goals, I got more out of this experience than I expected. I found really close friends, a second home and I discovered my passion for helping other people.

I will keep tons of memories: I will never forget Connor's excitement about the Chicken Dance, Tommy's sounds that made me smile so often, or Seany's face when he is happy! Neither will I forget the great team I worked with: Maxie, Tilmann & Dario - I had such a fun time with you! I would like to say thank you to the kids, whom I really enjoyed playing with and talking to when they were supposed to be in bed and especially my houseparents, Hannah and Jonathan - I learned a lot about love, life and relationships, food and nutrition and so much more from you!

It is hard to find words to describe my experience this year- it was truly amazing!! I wish everyone could experience the same! I am already looking forward to visiting Heartbeet again in the future!



2009-2010 Heartbeet Lifesharing Co-Workers

Noah, Alicia, Bruno, Johannes, Paul, Marciana, Sarah (Missing from Photo: Tony)