I was afraid having a different culture and I was afraid whether or not I would be able to survive in an anthroposophical community, being Muslim. The first couple months it was hard for me to settle down in Heartbeet. I was not used to eat vegetarian food and I was at a loss that I was not asked to eat but it was hard because I love meat. It was one of the differences between our cultures. Life was different! Things about Heartbeet that stood out immediately was the way in which Hannah, Jonathan and Rachel and other coworkers worked to incorporate me into the community. Heartbeet gave me a new, beautiful world, and people who work here showed me a new way of life. It was resident, however, who I feel I learned the most from. They showed me how to love. It’s the simple pleasures of life that provide me with the most valuable lessons. The early morning conversation with Corin over breakfast watching Eric show off his basketball moves and being surrounded by a warm environment that is always full of songs. This is not to say that community life is a stroll, it is a struggle to bring a household of more than 20 together to accomplish day’s tasks. It is in these daily struggles that the most obvious benefits of community life come to light.

The experience of the loving community that surrounds me each day at Heartbeet will surely color my future.

Andrea Berraton

What can I say about Andrea? She is a gift to wherever she is, to whomever she encounters. She brought laughter and singing, joy and light into our community. She loves life and celebration. Therefore every chance she gets she becomes a moment to rejoice. Andrea was an AmeriCorps for eight months as she transitioned from St. Thomas to Camp Hill Cape. She could imagine the challenge of picking just one moment to share, but here it is.

Andrea chose to participate in the trip that happened every Sunday morning at Horsehead’s supermarket. I had the joy of taking her for the first time. After we had been in the store for some time she noticed Mike, the general manager, and went straight to him. After introducing herself, she was adamant that the store needed some attention. She told him that we were not at enough food samples and that the lack of live music had not been her desired. Mike willingly participated in Andrea’s vision. He had the bakery cut up samples and then invited Andrea to watch Eric show off his basketball moves and being surrounded by a warm environment that is always full of songs. This is not to say that community life is a stroll, it is a struggle to bring a household of more than 20 together to accomplish day’s tasks. It is in these daily struggles that the most obvious benefits of community life come to light.

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Gaby Beraton

Gary came back from Kimberton Hills for another vacation at Heartbeet. Gaby’s vacation highlights included hiking, riding on a boat over Lake Champlain, and shopping at the mall. Her week-long stay was filled with warm weather, good friends, and friendship, visiting with the farm animals, helping in the gardens, and wetting her feet in the pond. She is a great friend to have, and we look forward to seeing her again!

In reflecting on my time at Heartbeet in Vermont, I have learned a lot for my life, like caring for other people, cooking for large groups, cleaning, crafting, gardening, working in the barn, and holding many things in my consciousness. It is fun to learn by doing. You are never alone at Heartbeet, you always have someone to share your feelings and thoughts with.

All the people at the farm, and almost everyone else that I met in Vermont, are full of alternative and sustainable ideas. This made me feel very comfortable. I have to close with how much I enjoyed the wonderful, Jimmy organic food that we had the opportunity to cook and eat at Heartbeet.

Heartbeet Lifesharing
218 Town Farm Rd
Hanover, VT 05643

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 world. We 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 vocational and needs program and a permanent residential program for developmentally disabled individuals that focus not on a person’s disabilities but rather on his or her capacities. With a holistic approach, our goal is to diversify the total wellness activities that improve personal and social abilities. It is essential to our program that 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 education program. Children’s school groups of all ages are invited to experience a land oriented program led by individuals with special abilities (with assistance).

Donations

Heartbeet Lifesharing is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation and for Primary purpose is serving individuals with development disabilities. We are a joint partnership with an accountable partnership, so your support is greatly appreciated and can be directed to the following areas of need: General Operations, Building Improvements, Equipment Fund, or the Campaign for restoration of White Pine (the old farmhouse).

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Dear Friends,

Summer is a time for outdoor work at Heartbeet. We are held captive by the magic of the garden growth, busy with weeding, hoeing, smelting, and harvesting. Our agricultural endeavors have grown as a result of your generosity—so we recently expanded the garden and moved it into the field beyond the creek. And most fields are being held to meet the demands of the ever-growing animal population on the farm. We are also already preparing for colder days, harvesting the firewood for this coming winter. Heartbeet is a bed of activity: lawn mowers running, hay-baling being brought in, people in the garden, cows mowing, and the children of slitting down on the winter warm breeze.

We are also working hard this summer to upgrade the farm house, a much needed home within the community. It is crucially important that White Pine, our first beloved house, receive the attention and care that it deserves for its age. Built over one hundred years ago, it is enchanting but also presents all the challenges of an old building. We have gone ahead and put on a new roof and installed all new windows. Next, we look forward to re-sideding the outside walls and finishing the basement to include a laundry room and root room storage. We have spent $32,000, and must now turn to friends to help us raise the $45,000 needed to finish the project of upgrading this cherished old building, home to Rachel, Ann, Parker, and Sarah.

Heartbeet continues to deepen its capacities to offer a rich and holistic life with meaningful therapeutic work for all our residents. Everyone here is infinitely grateful to all of our community’s supporters. Your financial contributions (and company matching grant when offered) are deeply appreciated and so important for strengthening our ability to fulfill our mission into the future. We continue to extend a warm welcome to you for come and experience firsthand the vibrant community life at Heartbeet.

Sincerely,

Hannah G. Schwartz
Executive Director
The Voices of the Young People Who Have Experienced the Heart of Heartbeet

The adventure of my life...
By Alexander Sommer
Volunteer 2006-2007

The adventure of my life started last year in September. I packed my bags, jumped on the plane, and flew all the way across the ocean to the United States of America to get to one of the most beautiful places in the world… Heartbeet Lifesharing!

It is really true that this place is just as awesome and simply affecting. Even if you have to experience hardship it is still worth it because each individual within the Community gives a special gift to you and these gifts are following you forever. Waking up in the morning and being totally unhappy? Not at Heartbeet… here you wake up and the first thing that appears to you in the morning is a smiling face, a funny gesture or just an enormous amount of love from at least one of the guys who are living in our Community. You work with the people with special needs during the day and one thing can be predicted, a laughter causing a funny gesture or just an enormous amount of love from at least one of the guys who are living in our Community.

Work becomes life, which makes it very pleasant and enjoyable instead of bringing up the mood of hoping to get to the end of the day. It’s just the other way around. You’re hoping that the moment or the moments last forever, that you can hold this feeling of fulfillment and happiness. Heartbeet is a very loving community and I’m very glad and thankful that I got the chance to live within this organization for one year. Here it doesn’t matter who you are, you’re just being loved.

“It’s an place for everyone who can share and care, which is today nothing but rare!”

There ought to be a million Heartbeets...
By Amy Littlefield
3 Week Volunteer from Brown University

Tired of my old life, high school finished, and finally for new experiences, new people, and new culture… a new and different life, and the wish to help other people brought me to Heartbeet.

Eleven months later, I can say it was a good decision. The last 11 months flew by and it was not always easy in the beginning. To start with, it was a challenge to understand the new language and to express my feelings and opinions, but it’s always been rich, never boring, often funny… I never really knew what was coming the next day, the next hour, the next minute. We have to be very flexible and open to what life brings at Heartbeet.

For example, I will never forget how I drank milk straight from a cow, or the time when the pig food fell all over me, when the car had a flat tire and we had to wait for a long time to get help... I also remember the time when Eric and I laughed so hard, tears were streaming down our faces.

But most of all, Heartbeet has taught me to hold so much responsibility, solve problems, and make decisions for other people— it’s been a different life, and the wish to help other people brought me to Heartbeet.

I have learned to hold so much responsibility, solve problems, and make decisions for other people—it was hard, but it helped me prepare for my future and made me stronger. The people that I have offered care to filled my life with joy and gave me purpose. I was not able to stay angry or frustrated for long; it was hard, but I feel it prepared me for my future and made me stronger. The people that I have offered care to filled my life with joy and gave me purpose. I was not able to stay angry or frustrated for long; it was hard, but I feel it prepared me for my future and made me stronger. The people that I have offered care to filled my life with joy and gave me purpose. I was not able to stay angry or frustrated for long; it was hard, but I feel it prepared me for my future and made me stronger.

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Editor’s Note: Robin has been an inspiration to all of us at Heartbeet and we are infinitely grateful to him for being the Community Dinner. The young people at Heartbeet have a nickname for him: "Robin Hood"