



Greetings Farm School Friends! This year's newsletter comes to you after a wonderful spring and summer season with youth. We're so glad to celebrate some of the many ways we held youth at the center of our work.



PHOTO BY KRISTEN WILSON

everyone who slept in these dreamy spaces for Sessions 2 through 6 and beyond. We are excited to have a broader range of customizable sleeping options that can serve youth of various gender identities.

THE NIPMUC LAND PROJECT

The Farm School and members of the tribe have come together across the last three seasons. This past winter, in our first Nipmuc

SUMMER PROGRAM REFLECTIONS

It was a hot summer! We adjusted our program rhythm from time to time and made room for cooling down in fun and creative ways. Each session of the summer program had its highlights. During week one a beef cow gave birth to a calf, and in week two the farm welcomed new baby chicks. Every week youth prepped and made lots of amazing meals with produce that they helped harvest. In Farpentry (Farm Carpentry) each week program participants had the opportunity to learn about and use power tools. In the last summer session of the season youth got to engage in a Drum Stalk, using the senses other than sight to move toward the sound of a drum, in the woods. So grounding!

Many thanks to our summer staff! Angelica Breece Sullivan, Nacie Loh, Raven Whyles, Dinky Klein, Evelyn Reyes, Henry Prentiss, Lucas Gadway and Senja Laakso. We were so fortunate to have you all.

MORE SUMMERTIME LOCAL YOUTH PLEASE

The Farm School is for the youth of Athol, Orange and the surrounding towns as well as for those that travel many miles. To increase local youth presence on the farm for the summer we were on WTSA and WRSI radio stations with an ad and an interview, we spread the word to the local baseball teams, called the middle and high schools, talked up the summer program with the Chicken Coopers (The Farm School middle school), and put up fliers around town. We attracted 12 local youth to attend the summer program this year! It was so wonderful having them, and we hope to increase those numbers next summer. The increase in local youth was supported by a grant from DESE and United Way of North Central Massachusetts. Many thanks to United Way of North Central Massachusetts for granting us the funds to contribute to summer staffing.

NEW CABINS, NEW OPTIONS

Can you say upgrade? Our new cabins were on stylish debut and were a well received hotspot for the youth to have some hang out time on the stoop before leaping up and out onto the gamesfield! Each cabin sleeps eight, is made from locally sourced and milled lumber and uses solar lighting. The cabin bunk beds were built by our all female-identifying Session 1 youth as a gift to



PHOTO BY PATRICK CONNORS

Land Project meetings, we shelled flint corn as we spoke. Creamy warm white kernels tethered us to the material, to the promise in small things, to the rhythms and patterns held deep in the land. In May we had an AGWP (the Farm School's beloved acronym for an All Group Work Project). Together we planted thousands of kernels in the soil. Now the tended and often visited stalks are tall, the ears dry. Before you read this the tribe will have welcomed over forty people out for a weekend event of harvesting and sharing. We're looking forward to returning to our winter conversations, to shelling corn, and to the deeper knowing each returning season will bring.



PHOTO BY CRISTINA GARCIA

THE CHICKEN COOP IS ON THE MOVE

Our on-site middle school, The Chicken Coop, is off to a great start this school year and we have an important update on how we are preparing for the school's future at a new site. As the Nipmuc move to more fully hold the land and the buildings near the The Chicken Coop, the Chicken Coop is starting to think about building a new home at Sentinel Elm.

While Wendy and Miranda, our two amazing Chicken Coop teachers, will miss the little one-room schoolhouse (the school's home since its creation nearly 20 years ago), they are also very excited about all of the opportunities that this move will give the Chicken Coop students and The Farm School.

Based on the time needed to plan, design a new space, and raise the capital we need, it is very likely that we'll have to look at temporary Chicken Coop location options for the 2023-2024 school year, and potentially a school year or two after that. Please stay tuned for more updates in the months ahead about this process.

YOUTH REACTIONS TO THE STEERS

Youth at The Farm School have expressed a range of reactions from delight to fear when they see the horses and steers. A team of farmers have engaged youth in the work with these powerful animals. Brad and Dave talked about how they came to see the value of animals in land work. They both shared stories about when they were children and recalled a book called Ox-man Cart by Donald Hall being influential. It's a wonderful book that I highly recommend you read if you haven't already. And by reading it, I hope you will find a connection to New England farm life from



PHOTO BY CARMEN MOUZON

many years ago that sparks interest in you or in the young people in your life today.

RAISING FUNDS FOR YOUTH TO ATTEND THE FARM SCHOOL

Our annual event to raise funds so all youth can attend The Farm School no matter what the financial status of their family or school might be, was wonderful! The outdoor venue of Henrietta's Table patio was the perfect place to raise funds to support The Farm School's programs, gather with good company, eat delicious food, hear infectiously danceable music, and honor Chef Peter Davis- the retiring head chef of Henrietta's Table and the host of The Big Pig Gig for over 20 years! We raised \$175,000, not quite meeting our goal of \$275,000. With our annual appeal arriving in November, I hope you will consider giving a bit more than you might previously have given to help us get back on track.

PVS AND CHICKEN COOP HELP SHARE THE BOUNTY

Our food distribution program continues to thrive. Engaging our youth in the work is one reason why it's going strong. Our new wash-pack shed creates more opportunities for visiting youth to participate in all aspects of our vegetable growing operation. The building is beautifully sited beside the flat field market garden (where the vast majority of our crops grow) and includes a 18'X25' wash up space, and a 8'X14' walk-in cooler. In addition to providing more ways to involve youth in the food production, it opens up the current wash/pack space to be used more fully by the Nipmuc as part of the Nipmuc Land Project.

With a fall calendar full of overnight visits, we are beaming with joy about the return of our regular Program for Visiting Schools (PVS) sessions. One and a half years ago we had to close our doors because of the pandemic. It feels momentous that we are opening our doors to youth again and the traditional PVS! Thank you for your continued support, participation and partnering with us over the past years.

In gratitude to all of you that make it possible for us to do what we do.

—Ayla

WELCOME NEW STAFF!

Keely Curliss	Nipmuc Land Project
Elin Dahal	Nipmuc Land Project
John JD Deloatch	Garden Coordinator
Emma Dooley	Farmer Educator, garden
Grace GG Glasson	Farmer Educator, barn
Nia Holley	Nipmuc Land Project
Coco King	Farmer Educator, forestry
Piper Rosenberg	Farmer Educator, garden
Spencer Thompson	Nourishment Team Leader
Manuel Sanchez Martinez	Nourishment Team
Eva Barinas	Director, Program for Visiting Schools



PHOTOS BY HENRY PRENTISS



NEW KIDS ON THE FARM

We have news for all of you fans of Fabio the goat. Fabio and Beverly have kids! Meet Bread and Butter!

