

Maplehill School and Community Farm Winter Newsletter 2013-2014



Maplehill staff enjoying the nice cold weather at our holiday party

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Exciting Winter / Holiday Party Review

By Jake, Outreach and Marketing Intern

The students and staff at the Maplehill Small Group Program had a holiday party on the Friday before vacation. In the morning, some of the students helped decorate cookies, some of which they ate at the end of the day, and some of which went to the food drop for senior citizens. The students who didn't decorate cookies watched Rudolph. In the afternoon everyone headed outside for sledding. Students and staff had

fun sledding on sleds, lunch trays and a surfboard. While they were sledding, a couple of students and staff made a small bonfire so they could warm up. Before heading in, a couple staff had a short and funny snowball fight. At the end of the day the students and staff did a "secret santa" gift exchange and guessed who had given them their gift. Overall, everyone had a great winter celebration before holiday break.



*"I like going to school at Maplehill because it's a great experience and it makes me feel like part of something."
- Maplehill's newest student*



2013 Maplehill Community Farm Harvest Report Back

Dragonfly made with twigs and maple seedlings, by Maplehill Student.



By Vivian Stein, Maplehill Community Farmer

Seeds for 2014 have been ordered! These past few weeks have been filled with much reflection and number crunching. Over 2,000 pounds of food were grown at Maplehill Community Farm last growing season. As part of our Elder Outreach Project we were able to support the Twin Valley Senior Center and senior housing in Plainfield with about 100 pounds of produce. I would have to say that my first season up on the hill was overall pretty successful. Last spring brought us 40 days and 40 nights of rain but I felt like we were able to pull ourselves out from the muddy depths. With the help of various staff, community members and students we at Maplehill grew crops ranging from cutting greens, roots galore, beans, squash and



Vivian, our farmer

beyond. We are currently still making our way through frozen goodies and storage crops like winter squash and cabbage.

Last season began with a group of Maplehill staff and students collecting rocks from the fields so Farmer Tony could till. Once the field was opened we gathered the community for a potluck-planting day. Then the rain hit and we had a few hit or miss moments that took their toll on a few of our crops. When it comes to farming I try to always maintain composure when Mother Nature decides to throw me challenges. As I look into this upcoming season my thoughts are drawn back to trying to do things a little better than the prior year. I am still learning the quirks of growing on the hill and plan to continue working my hardest to grow more produce. We have an ever-growing group of mouths to feed at the Maplehill School and Community Farm, as well as a desire to continue with community outreach. May this upcoming season bring lots of good food to our bellies!

Ask a Maplehill Student...

What's going on in your vocational class?

"I chose culinary arts for my vocational class next quarter. I'm excited because I want to be a chef when I get older."

"In the Buildings & Grounds vocational class, we have been cleaning up the farm- fixing it up, and turning one of the older rooms into a classroom. I'm having a lot of fun with it."

MAPLEHILL'S MODEL OF LAND-BASED EDUCATION:

- ❖ Maplehill School programs are located on a 142 acre working farm.
- ❖ Students take part in the running of the farm through vocational training classes in organic gardening, animal husbandry, forestry, carpentry, culinary arts, small engine repair, and farm outreach and marketing.
- ❖ Students work with staff to plan project-based learning activities that are based on the land.
- ❖ Students have space to unwind, relax and recharge.
- ❖ Our Farm to Table Program provides much of our school's food year-round.
- ❖ We teach our students responsible land stewardship and environmental sustainability.

Student Expert Writes About His Graveyard Project

A Maplehill School Small Group Program student has been researching and doing a survey on local graveyards in the Plainfield area. Here, he shares his research and findings with the Maplehill Community.

Why did you choose to survey small area graveyards? What is interesting about them to you?

I find graveyards relaxing and tranquil; there is a lot of history in them. Many of the larger graveyards are not as interesting. The smaller family plots are most commonly in much more interesting locations. In small family plots, the majority of ground would be just one family. In a large more public plot, many different families are together.

What did you look for at each graveyard as a researcher?

When we were in the cemeteries, we looked for the oldest and the newest grave names, for combined family names, and the number of graves in each cemetery.

How do the graveyards you have been studying relate to the granite trade?

Most headstones in the Northeast are made of granite, where most headstones in the Midwest are made of marble. Hope Cemetery in Barre, Vermont has mostly headstones made of granite because there is a lot of granite carving around Barre.



SUPPORT OUR ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN!

This coming year we are continuing to build on our successes of last year and will work to increase the capacity of Maplehill Community Farm to produce more food (particularly fruit), expand educational opportunities to our students, and allow us to serve as a regional resource for food and land-based learning. But we need your help to make this happen.

Please support our Community Farm with a tax deductible donation.

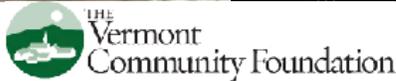
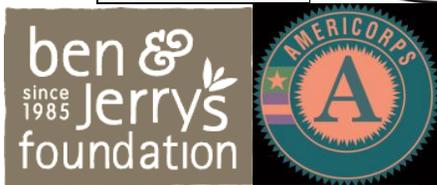
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Supported by:



In this issue read about our recent holiday party for students and staff, our 2013 harvest from our farmer, a student project about local graveyards, and vocational opportunities for our students.



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