

# MAPLEHILL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY FARM QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Elmhill Inc., dba Maplehill School and Community Farm  
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## Community Service is Key

By Nicole Batkis, AmeriCorps Member 16-17

One of the strongest assets Maplehill School and Community Farm has is its community. Alongside the growing friendships and bonds that students build among each other and with our staff, the relationships between Maplehill School and Community Farm and our community are just as important. Encouraging students to engage in community teaches them the power of action, leadership, and empathy.

Maplehill School students are offered community service opportunities both on and off campus. As an AmeriCorps member, my aim has been to help students complete their 10-hour per year community service requirement. Opportunities can range from shoveling driveways for community elders to

## Building Sustainable Local Food Systems, One Cow at a Time

By Jamie Spector, Development/HR Coordinator & Social Worker

In an October 2016 article, *Made Local Magazine* Editor, Leilani Clark, wrote “Public and private institutions spend billions of dollars each year on food. Schools, universities, hospitals, prisons, corporate cafeterias and senior care facilities share one thing in common — they prepare, cook and serve thousands of meals every day. Now, a rising national movement wants to persuade these institutions to source a higher

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organizing emergency supplies on campus

Students have stepped up with enthusiasm to lend their strength and energy to help their community any way they can. This year, Maplehill School students have participated in the Elder Outreach Project by visiting, organizing a holiday party, and making seasonal decorations for the Twin Valley Senior Center.

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percentage of food from regional producers — with an emphasis on farms, fishermen and ranches that follow ecologically sound, socially just and humane practices. “

Here at Maplehill School and Community Farm, we are doing our part to strengthen the local food system. Our Farm to School program aims to source at least 60% of the food we serve students and staff from our farm and other local farms. In 2016 we grazed three beef cows at Maplehill

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## Field Trip to “Cirque Mother Africa”

By Maplehill School Student

On January 3, 2017, we went to see Cirque Mother Africa at the Flynn Theater in Burlington. We learned that the performers use “cirque.” Cirque is a style taken from different parts of the world, especially different parts of Africa (e.g., trapeze, stunts, contortionism, etc.).

I thought that the show was brilliant work. It made me want to visit Africa. It made me really want to know where my ancestors came from. I’ve been to similar shows like Circus Smirkus and Cirque du Soleil. I liked that everything looked so



*A scene from “Cirque Mother Africa”*

challenging. It was like a concert. I’ve never seen anything like that and the dancing was awesome.

## Feeling Grateful

By Joe Astick, Program Director

As I move into the New Year, I am struck by my immense feeling of gratitude for all the people who support our work with youth. From our staff, to community partners, to funders, individual donors, and families of our students, we are truly creating a web of support to hold and lift up the youth with whom we work. One element that makes Maplehill School and Community Farm such a unique and special place for supporting kids is the group of dedicated, caring staff who choose to work here. We have a very low staff turnover rate, which speaks to the deep dedication of our staff.

*“One element that makes Maplehill School and Community Farm such a unique and special place for supporting kids is the group of dedicated, caring staff who choose to work here.”*

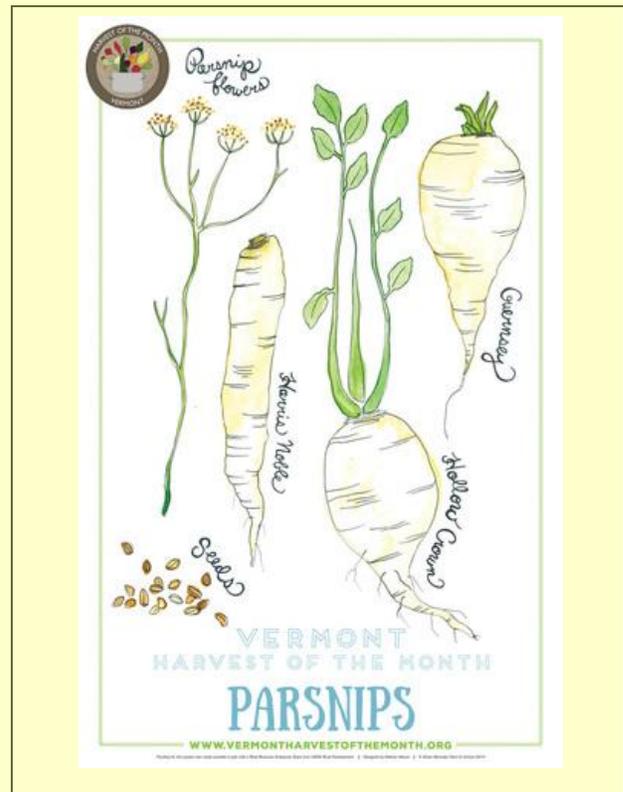
Bringing positive energy, patience, compassion and creativity to their work every day, our staff enrich the lives of our students. I am also grateful that we can work with excellent community partners such as Positive Pie Plainfield, Plainfield Coop, Twin Valley Senior Center, the Central Vermont Humane Society, ReSource, VYDC AmeriCorps and the Central Vermont Food Bank, all of whom provide opportunities for learning and growth for our students. Finally, our students’ families and caregivers work collaboratively with our staff to plan and implement services for our students. Without this collaboration and support, our work would be very difficult. Supportive staff, supportive community and supportive families/caregivers, all working together to benefit a brighter future for our youth. Thank you!

## A Winter Update on all Things Farm to School

By Allie Heckerd, AmeriCorps Member 16-17

As snow surrounds us here on the farm, most of our farm to school activities have migrated inside. Winter farm tasks include shelling the many dry beans from the fall harvest, sorting the produce in the root cellar to ensure it stays cool and dry, and keeping the chickens warm and happy! The winter greens that have been planted in the greenhouse are patiently waiting for warmer days to come.

In connecting the 3 C's (Cafeteria, Classroom, Community) of farm to school, we have our weekly farm vocational class. As well, one of the weekly culinary classes is dedicated to finding fun and creative ways to use the harvest of the month. The results are then shared with the rest of the Maplehill community to enjoy and feel connected to the farm. January's harvest of the month was parsnips. Here are a few dishes that we were excited to try out for the first time: Roast Parmesan Parsnips, Parsnip Hashbrowns, Parsnip and Maple Syrup Cake, Spiced Parsnip and Cauliflower Soup. To learn more about the Vermont Harvest of the Month go to: <http://vermontharvestofthemoth.org/>



*Vermont Harvest of the Month for January was Parsnips*

### Roast Parmesan Parsnips

(<http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/1789644/roast-parmesan-parsnips>)

#### **Ingredients:**

6 Tbs Polenta  
100 g grated parmesan  
Pinch of nutmeg  
4 lbs parsnips (quartered)  
6 Tbs olive oil

#### **Methods:**

Preheat oven to 425°  
Mix together polenta, parmesan, nutmeg and set aside  
Bring salted water to a boil  
Boil parsnips for 6 minutes, then drain  
Toss with parmesan mixture while still hot to coat  
Put oil in roasting pan and heat  
Add coated parsnips to oiled and heated pan  
Put in oven for 15 minutes, turn over, and bake for another 15 minutes or until golden brown



*Local Food Systems* from page 1

Community Farm, which yielded 1,235 pounds of grass-fed beef. Of this, 835 pounds of beef are being used in school meals at Maplehill School. We donated 200 pounds of beef to Twinfield Union School and 200 pounds to the Twin Valley Senior Center. Maplehill Community Farm also produced over 8,000 pounds of fresh produce. Most of this produce was distributed into the Maplehill School Food Program, and approximately 1,000 pounds was donated to Twinfield Union School, the Twin Valley Senior Center and the School Street Apartments in Plainfield.

In 2017, we hope to increase our beef and produce donations to Twin Valley Senior Center and are exploring the possibility of selling beef to local institutions in Plainfield with the support of the Harris and Frances Block Foundation. This will bring more local food into local institutions and serve to help build greater long-term financial sustainability of the Maplehill Community Farm. We look forward to working with everyone in the community to strengthen our local food system.

Please contact Jamie Spector at [jamie@maplehillschoolandfarm.org](mailto:jamie@maplehillschoolandfarm.org) if you have any questions or an idea for collaboration.

*We donated 200 pounds of beef to Twinfield Union School and 200 pounds to the Twin Valley Senior Center.*



*Three beef cows happily grazing on grass pasture at Maplehill Community Farm in the summer of 2016*



*Twinfield Union School Food Service Director, Lee Collier, receiving beef donations from Maplehill Community Farm*

*We hope you like the new look of our Newsletter!  
Let us know what you think by emailing:  
[Jamie@maplehillschoolandfarm.org](mailto:Jamie@maplehillschoolandfarm.org)*

*Community Service* from page 1

Students have also gone above and beyond and helped an elder in the community transport and stack wood for the winter months. Seeing students help their community and build relationships with elders along the way has been a powerful thing to witness. In addition to the Elder Outreach Project, students have put together food donations, counted inventory of Maplehill Community Farm beef and produce, and helped with fix-it tasks to keep our school in great shape. I look forward to working with these amazing students on more community service opportunities in the area in this New Year! If you have an idea for a community service project in the Plainfield or Marshfield area, please contact me to discuss it at [nicole@maplehillschoolandfarm.org](mailto:nicole@maplehillschoolandfarm.org).



*Nicole and a Maplehill School student stack wood for an elder in Cabot*



*A Maplehill School student relaxes in a swing he made at Blacksmithing class.*

### Some updates from Maplehill School...

- Small Group Program (SGP) English classes are learning about Alaska as an integrated English/Social Studies theme, ancient Greek mythology through Book 4 of the Percy Jackson series that brings the ancient stories to the modern day, and reading the book 1984 and exploring the possibilities of a society completely controlled by Big Brother.
- SGP science classes are focusing on air pressure, wind and weather which will lead groups to building a wind tunnel.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter is Winter Rec! All Maplehill School students are out all day, every Friday skiing, indoor rock climbing or swimming.
- Integration/Life Skills classes are focusing on the themes of respect and friendship.
- A new elective dance class is getting students moving in lots of new ways...including swing dance.
- A student in the Individual Care Program (ICP) is gaining important math and life skills by opening a bank account, budgeting personal expenses, and grocery shopping within budget
- ICP students continue to explore the world through geography, completing maps of countries in the continents of North America and Africa. Others are linking math with Social Studies through the creation of travel plans-for instance, exploring a mock travel itinerary to Australia. Other students are looking into US history, learning, for example, about the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Great Depression.

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Where relationships inspire  
learning

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Thank you to everyone who donated to our Winter Appeal to  
improve our library!  
If you haven't already, please consider making a donation to  
Maplehill School. You can mail donations to the address to the  
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