

# MAPLEHILL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY FARM QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Winter 2018



Elmhill Inc., dba Maplehill School and Community Farm  
P.O. Box 248 Plainfield, VT 05667  
(802) 454-7747 ~ [www.maplehillsschoolandfarm.org](http://www.maplehillsschoolandfarm.org)

## Community Service Update

By: *Sadie Laing, '17-'18 AmeriCorps Community Service Member*

This winter, Maplehill School students are finding all sorts of ways to help serve their community. In December, students and staff visited the Twin Valley Senior Center to decorate holiday cookies and sing carols with local seniors. In February, Maplehill School had a Valentine's Community Service Party, where we made candy and cards for the senior center, Good Samaritan Haven in Barre, and Bethany Warming Shelter in Montpelier. We also have our ongoing Elder Outreach program, where students and staff support local elders every week by visiting the Twin Valley Senior Center, making monthly food donations to area elders, and responding to individual requests from elders for help around their homes.

My favorite part about doing community service with our students is how open-minded they are about using their time and talents to help others. Our students baked and cooked, made arts and crafts projects (like a Gratitude Paper Chain with each link saying what we're grateful for, Rudolph the Reindeer Hot Cocoa Bags, paper snowflakes, tissue paper pumpkins filled with Maplehill granola, and greeting cards), grocery shopped, and completed cleaning chores for elders in their community. When asked why community service is important, one student responded that community service benefits everyone, both those receiving the service and those giving it. He also said that doing community service has helped him build up his communication skills and makes him feel "warm and fuzzy on the inside!"

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One Maplehill School student has participated in the Elder Outreach program for the past three years. This student has done it all when it comes to community service: gardening, crafting, cooking, shopping, and socializing for and with local seniors. This student is the backbone of Elder Outreach this year, and has been consistently giving his best effort in class. Having developed his social and service skills through these past few years of Elder Outreach, he is now putting those skills to good use at a vocational position at Woodridge Rehabilitation and Nursing in Berlin.

When describing his Elder Outreach experience, this student shared that his favorite part of the class is going to visit seniors at the Twin Valley Senior Center. He feels that Elder Outreach has helped him build up his confidence and find new ways to help his community. This student will be graduating in June, and we are excited to see how he will use his talents to continue to positively impact his community!

## Meet Maplehill's newest community member: "Summer"

By Jamie Spector, Development / HR Coordinator & Social Worker

This spring, Maplehill School and Community Farm is expanding its Sustainable Food System Program with the addition of a dairy heifer cow. Summer will be moving to Maplehill Community Farm from our friends at Hollister Hill Farm. Summer is an 8 month old jersey cow who has lived at Hollister Hill Farm since birth. At Maplehill Community Farm she will help Maplehill School students gain valuable vocational skills in cow management and handling. In addition, Summer will support our students by providing them the opportunity to have a positive relationship with another species. We know that opportunities to caretake others help our students greatly. In addition to learning valuable lessons in responsibility and consistency, we know that young people benefit from the calming effect of the hormone Oxytocin that is produced in the brain when we take care of others (either human or non-human) in an empathic way. We are excited to expand our programming to have several cows live permanently on our farm. Through the generous support of the Harris and Frances Block Foundation and Hollister Hill Farm, we were able to purchase this calf and plan to purchase a second beef heifer this spring. These two cows will become our farm cows and will remain at Maplehill Community Farm year-round. ICP Dean of Students, Mitch Hunt, commented, "Some of our greatest memories are those of a relationship between an animal and us." Stay tuned for updates as Summer settles into her new life at Maplehill.



## Winter Recreation Program 2018

Maplehill School students engage in the Winter Recreation program through a variety of physical activities. Students swim at the Bolton Adventure Center, wall climb at the MetroRock climbing gym, jump at Get Air Vermont, and ski and snowboard at Burke Mountain. Students report having a lot of fun in all venues. Aside from the physical benefits of staying active all year, our school community is strengthened through these extended community-based outings. Students and staff often push themselves to learn new skills. Relationships are strengthened. We all benefit as we deepen the feelings of trust and safety that are gained by engaging in physical activities together. Physical Education will continue through the fourth quarter at the Plainfield Recreation Field, First & Fitness Gym, and the Montpelier Recreation Center.

*Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Annual Appeal. Thus far, we have raised \$1,175.*

If you have not contributed already, you can still donate.

Please consider a gift to Elmhill, Inc. dba Maplehill School and Community Farm today to support our important work with youth. Your contribution will help us provide innovative, community-based programming for our students, and give them access to experiences that would otherwise be unavailable to them.

Thank you for your support.

You can send donations to:

Elmhill, Inc.  
P.O. Box 248  
Plainfield, VT 05667

## Harvest of the Month - Squash, Dairy and Cabbage

By Allie Heckerd, AmeriCorps Farm to School Member '17-'18

The Harvest of the Month culinary class continued to prepare new and delicious dishes this winter. For December's harvest of winter squash, students prepared squash muffins, roasted squash salad, spaghetti squash latkes, and pumpkin pie, all with squash from our very own root cellar. In January, the harvest was dairy, which inspired a cheese making demonstration along with a cheese tasting with donations from Vermont Creamery. Maplehill community members expanded their palates, enjoying a wide range of different types of cheese. January also brought us homemade maple creamees in the middle of winter! What a treat. February's harvest was cabbage, which brought us the opportunity to try various slaw recipes, including the fan favorite pickled ginger slaw. A new recipe for many of us, Bubble and Squeak, is one that combines left over mashed potatoes, vegetables, and meat (optional) into a new meal akin to potato pancakes. We look forward to the maple-sugaring season and the new Harvest of the Month: Maple.



Maplehill School students and staff enjoyed a cheese bar as part of January's Vermont Harvest of the Month

## Farmer's Cheese Recipe

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 gallon whole milk
- 1/4 cup white vinegar or lemon juice
- 1 tsp salt (or more to taste)

### Directions:

1. Bring milk to a slow boil. When it begins to simmer, turn off the heat.
2. Add vinegar and stir. Let sit for 15 minutes. The milk will separate into solid chunks (curds) and liquids (whey).
3. Place cheesecloth in a colander, place colander above a large bowl
4. Pour curds and whey over the cheesecloth
5. Add salt and any other spices you wish (e.g. garlic, chives, thyme, etc.)
6. Strain excess liquid by lifting the cloth, twisting, and squeezing liquid out.
7. Shape cheese within cheesecloth, place on a plate, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving.



*By: Dave Desiderio, Instructional Assistant, SGP*  
 A student in the Small Group Program has been working hard towards graduation this year. This student set out to learn about the Civil War for his last Social Studies credit. More specifically, he wanted to learn about the effects of the Civil War on Vermont and its residents. He searched local gravesites for veterans, did research at the Plainfield Historical Society, as well as a number of libraries, and watched a documentary. He learned about Newcombe Kinney of Plainfield, Perly Pickins of Marshfield, and Francis Davenport's inspirational story. When all his hard work was finished, he wrote a research paper. The student was kind enough to summarize his research for all the inquiring minds of Maplehill School and Community Farm.



*Gravestone from Kinney Cemetery in Plainfield*

### **Summary of the Civil War and its Effects on Vermont**

*By: Maplehill School Student, LF*

Vermont sacrificed a lot in the Civil War. We found Newcombe Kinney's grave in Plainfield. I knew he was a Veteran because there was an American flag on his grave. He fought in the Civil War. He sacrificed by experiencing the trauma of the war. Perly Pickens also served in the war. He was a Captain and a Quartermaster. He was born in Marshfield, Vermont. A Quartermaster gives out rations or portions of food to soldiers. He sacrificed because he didn't get to see his family in addition to experiencing trauma. George Davenport also fought in the war but gave his life. His wife, Francis Davenport, found her husband's body after it had been lost at battle. Francis buried her husband after returning him to Vermont. She helped build a Civil War monument in Brandon, VT and started the tradition of laying flowers at its base. That tradition still goes on today. The North fought for the end of slavery and the South fought to continue slavery. War is filled with traumatic events. As important as ending slavery was, the North and the South should have found a diplomatic solution instead of War.



*Perly Pickins (first man on the left)  
 Photo from "A Very Fine Appearance: The Vermont Civil War Photographs of George Houghton," Vermont Historical Society*



A Maplehill School Small Group Program student has been practicing his carpentry/woodworking skills with handmade clocks.



Two recent carpentry projects at the Individual Care Program

### Some updates from Maplehill School...

- Two students are doing vocational training at the ReSOURCE store in Barre
- One SGP student has been busy in woodworking class making clocks for the Maplehill community and the student art show.
- Many Maplehill School staff members are engaged in a book club reading *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, by Bessel Van Der Kolk.
- One Individual Care Program student is working on an on-line OSHA certification program.
- A student from the Small Group Program received his Red Cross First Aid certification through an on-line course.
- One Individual Care Program student collected ideas from all ICP students and staff to create a school flag. Check it out at the Maplehill Student Art Show this May.
- Students at the Small Group Program worked on a collaborative math & science project to explore the basic elements of sound and the building blocks of music. This led to the creation of a percussion wall.



A recent art project at the Individual Care Program

**Elmhill, Inc.**  
*dba* Maplehill School and  
Community Farm  
PO Box 248 Plainfield, VT 05667

**Phone:**  
802-454-7747

**Fax:**  
802-454-1902

**E-Mail:**  
info@maplehillsschoolandfarm.org

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