

EARTH ALMANAC



Earth Education



School Sisters of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD THROUGH EDUCATION

center for
Earth Spirituality
& Rural Ministry

Our Lady of Good Counsel Campus
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WELCOME

BY LAURA PETERSON
CESRM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CESRM BOARD UPDATE

BY JIM VONDERHARR
CESRM ADVISORY BOARD PRESIDENT



Dear CESRM Community,

It is with much gratitude that I write my first official Newsletter Welcome as the Executive Director for Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry. I am filled with appreciation for the incredible amount of support, guidance and patience this community has afforded me as I adapt into this new role. I am most grateful for the honor of nurturing the legacy that has been left to me.

I took this position because I believe that CESRM is important, not only to the local Mankato area community and our greater Earth community, but also to our future. As I watch my two and half year old daughter in awe of the natural world around her and feel my second little one kicking inside of me, I am struck by the awesome responsibility that we have to blaze trails, build resilient communities, and invest in sustainable solutions not just for our own benefit but also for the generations to come. In addition to providing solutions to these issues, CESRM also serves as a sacred space- a home for people to connect on a deeper level with each other, Earth, and the Great Mystery. I am honored to use my skills and experience to help cultivate the seeds that so many before me have planted.

I look forward to connecting with you over ripe tomatoes, canned goods, baked bread, gardening tips, solstice celebrations, sustainability workshops, and a deep sense of hope in common ideas that inspire us to be better individuals, neighbors and members of our local and greater Earth community. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to cultivate these connections and grow along with you and the Center. I am honored, awed, and so very grateful.

If you have any questions, observations or suggestions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.



Greetings from the newly established CESRM Board of Directors. CESRM is ready to move into its next growing phase, becoming an independent 501c3 nonprofit corporation.

The logic for this change is that as a separate 501c3 organization we will have more flexibility and leverage in applying for and receiving grant money. It will also more effectively allow us to grow and diversify within the guidelines set by our mission goals. The Community Gardens, Solstice Celebrations and annual Earth Conference will continue to be central activities as we move forward. The SSND community supports this change and CESRM will continue to be one of their "sponsored ministries".

By now, you have been introduced to Laura Peterson, our new Executive Director. I am continually impressed by her passion and commitment to the CESRM mission. In just a few short months, she has connected with the "movers and shakers" in the Mankato nonprofit community, relationships that will be invaluable as we move forward.

Where are we now? CESRM is registered as a corporation under Minnesota State laws and we have a Federal Tax Identification Number. We have filed with the federal government to receive 501c3 nonprofit tax status though it is very uncertain how long it will take to get approved. Until we are certified, we will continue to operate under the SSND nonprofit umbrella and all contributions and donations will continue to be tax deductible.

A preliminary strategic planning session was held in late July. We expect it will take several months to fully flesh out a long term plan. As our vision develops and becomes more focused, we'll certainly be communicating the details to you. There is much optimism and enthusiasm for our "new" CESRM. We'll be asking for your help in the coming months. Your support in the past has been admirable. Help us become a force for sustainability in Southern Minnesota!



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Laura Peterson

INTERN
Amy Hunt

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jim Vonderharr, President
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Becky Bates, Treasurer
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Sandra Woods

As I prepared to write this article, I was reminded of a scene in Sue Monk Kidd's novel, *Invention of Wings*. Sarah Grimke, whose family owns multiple slaves in the early 1800s, has been given her very own "waiting maid" slave girl on her 11th birthday. Ten years of age, Hetty would be at Sarah's beck and call night and day. Sarah hates slavery. She had witnessed the brutal beating of a slave woman on the plantation. "I do not need a waiting maid," Sarah says defiantly.

But her mother prevails. Sarah vows to do what she can, becomes a friend, and one day asks, "Hetty, shall I teach you to read?" She takes the risk knowing full well that it is unlawful to teach slaves to read. The secret sessions begin. "I'll never forget the moment," recalls Sarah, "when Hetty made the magical connection in her mind and the letters and sounds passed from nonsense into meaning."

This is one way we become an advocate. We open our eyes, live in the moment, recognize our brother or sister, including our brothers and sisters in all of creation, and find a way within our power to befriend, respect, listen and develop a relationship.

Another way to become advocate is when we are moved by what we have learned about our brother or sister and with sensitivity take some kind of action. Like Sarah, we may find a way for the person to learn English as a second language. Or we may

find that a trip by car to a doctor or to the grocery store is what is needed.

Perhaps a recent news story moves me to find out more about what can be done about the amount of food being wasted at my child's school, or why our local lake is so filled with algae that people cannot swim in it. We begin to see better why we need to take recycling more seriously or need to be more frugal with water.

Advocacy reaches another dimension when we begin to realize that some things can be improved or changed only when action is taken by a group of people. Concerned citizens come together around such things as environmental damage of any kind, support of gardening and farming that lessens soil erosion and uses fewer chemicals, protection of water from polluting sources, improving waste management procedures in the community.

Learning about an issue held by the organizing group can give us the big picture, the many sides of the issue. We join the group and through our joint effort begin to understand better how

the cause affects people, especially the more vulnerable, or the environment. There will be opposition to face. Persuading leadership to take action is not always successful or immediate. But the courage and support we give to one another as we work together to change unjust systems enables us to go on for the long haul.

A workshop to help people become

better informed about an issue or to learn how to contact public officials can lead to effective action. Meeting with city council members, county commissioners or members of other local government entities, state and national representatives and senators are important ways to hold elected or appointed officials accountable. That's when groups of adequately informed citizens can often make a greater impact on those who need to bring about change than an individual citizen working alone.

Healthy communities are made up of people who care about one another. It is a place where all people should have what is needed for a meaningful and happy life, where equity and justice are for all, where every person can reach his/her potential, where the voiceless are given a voice.

But it does not happen without hard work as the humble cricket shows us in *Song of the Builders* by Mary Oliver.

On a summer morning
I sat down
on a hillside
to think about God—

a worthy pastime.
Near me, I saw
a single cricket;
it was moving the grains of the
hillside

this way and that way.
How great was its energy,
how humble its effort.
Let us hope

it will always be like this,
each of us going on
in our own inexplicable ways
building the universe.

From the collection, *Why I Wake Early*
by Mary Oliver, Boston: Beacon Press,
2004

"Advocacy reaches
another dimension
when we begin to
realize that some
things can be
improved or
changed only when
action is taken by a
group of people."

PARTNER WITH US ON OUR GOOD WORK

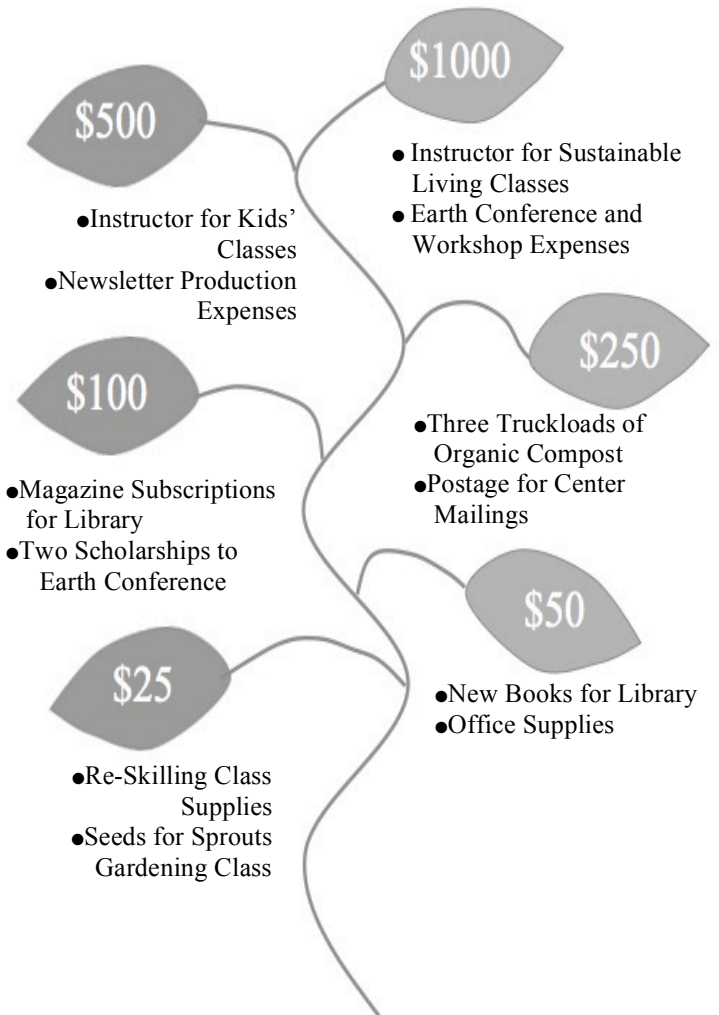
BECOME A CESRM SPONSOR!

Through outreach and educational programs the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry touches the lives of hundreds of people right here in the greater Mankato area. You can become an integral part of the work CESRM is doing in your community by becoming a CESRM sponsor. Every donation large or small will make a difference.

Our organization needs your support. We work in the local community to educate about Earth issues you care about. We re-connect people to the natural world and their desire to do better. We reach children, elders and everyone in between. We provide a perspective on Earth care, climate issues and community resilience that is unique and much-needed. We work at the grassroots for systemic change, nurturing others and inspiring their growth. We do some good. We know you do, too. We believe that together we can do better.

We invite you to help sponsor our work and make a donation today! Choose your level and know what ever the amount, large or small, you will be aiding CESRM and making a difference in our community.

Donations made through the Sponsorship Program will go to CESRM's general budget fund. We are deeply rooted and sustained by your support. Thank you!



CUT ALONG LINE

DONATION PLEDGE CARD – RETURN TODAY!

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO CESRM

RETURN IN ENVELOPE PROVIDED

YES, I WANT TO BE A CESRM SPONSOR!

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 |



Name _____

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REFLECTIONS ON LISA

BY MELISSA MARTENSEN



Lisa's bright and infectious smile, shared here with her wife Patti at their wedding celebration in August 2013.

Every time I would attempt to write this tribute I found myself struggling – where do I find words important enough, meaningful enough, *beautiful* enough to talk about Lisa and what she meant to CESRM, it's community of people, and myself?

The 10 years that Lisa spent at CESRM were full of growth and change, with the focus always on sustainability and care for Earth. What made Lisa's time at CESRM so special wasn't the impressive laundry list of activities and accomplishments, it was her ability to connect with people – all people – every single person she met – and make them feel that they mattered, that they were special, and a part of something bigger.

Her gentle unassuming nature coupled with a seemingly unending energy had a way of affecting everyone she met. When you talked with Lisa you felt like you were valued and important and that you could accomplish anything.

Since Lisa's death, coming up to the Hill, seeing the big red barn, walking through the gardens, or down to the CESRM office has felt strange. Knowing I won't round a

corner and meet Lisa's smiling face, hear her joyful greeting, or be embraced by one of her larger than life hugs makes me sad. Some days it makes it hard to want to continue coming up to the Hill.

But it is important that we keep showing up and doing the work – whether in the gardens or planning the next Earth Conference or Solstice Celebration - moving forward with intention, grace, and love just as Lisa would have done. Regardless if she is physically with us, Lisa's influence, presence, and love will continue to be felt on the Hill for a very long time.

Her reverence for Earth and dedication to its stewardship will continue to be an inspiration to everyone who knew her. If we move forward with intention and love then even the tiniest steps will make a difference.

That's what made Lisa so powerful – her belief that everyone mattered meant that everyone really **did** matter. Every step, every choice, no matter how small, is important and valuable.

That's when I realized I didn't need big important words to talk about Lisa. That wasn't her style. I can hear her laughing right now, telling me she of all people didn't need fancy words.

The best way to remember and honor our beloved Lisa is to try and live as she lived, simply but with great intention - to love and protect Earth, to continue CESRM's work of creating community and fostering sustainability. If we continue to do this, even in the smallest of ways, we will be a living tribute to our beautiful friend Lisa, who meant so much to all of us.



Lisa in 2011, teaching the Sprouts class in the Community Gardens

Photo by Ruth Jackson

THANK YOU

For more than 20 years our many supporters, nurturers and cultivators have blessed CESRM. Aside from your generous financial donations, you have given so much of your time and energy to the organization. In this period of transition your support continues to be important. It allows us the ability to remain active, doing good work in our local and greater Earth communities.

As we continue to grow and evolve, our long-term sustainability is dependent on volunteer, financial and in-kind support. Thank you to all who have given their time, talents and financial support this fiscal year!

GARDENER SPOTLIGHT

BY EVA ADAMSON

What made you decide to join the Good Counsel Community Gardens?

We both wanted to garden but didn't have a place to do so. It was important for us to find a community garden that believed in sustainable gardening without chemicals. We both started looking online to find out how to become a member. We were able to get a hold of Jim through email and we were invited to come and see the plots available and we picked them out.

What have you enjoyed the most about being at Good Counsel?

I've got a food allergy so growing food this way was an important part of our decision. It's been fun getting to know the people around the garden such as Jim, Laura, Bruno

and the many other that we have ran into. We have gotten so much positive information from those around us and it's been fun to implement those ideas.

What is your favorite thing to grow and why?

We would have to say our tomatoes and the versatility of the ideas. We have stewed 30 quarts of tomatoes so far as well as salsa and pickles. I've incorporated the tomatoes into casseroles, spaghetti and chili so far and its been a big hit with the kids. I love cooking and trying new recipes.

Anything else about your experience you wish to share?

It's been a very positive journey for our relationship and us. We are

already thinking about next year's garden and what we are going to plant. It's sad seeing the end of the growing season come. It's been a Blast!



New gardeners, Eva Adamson and Jay Hupp, with salsa, pickles, and produce from their garden.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fall Monarch Tagging Event Saturday, September 30, 2017 11:00 AM- 1:00 PM

Join Scott Kudelka, Naturalist at Minneopa State Park, to learn more about monarchs and help catch, tag, and release this important member of our ecosystem.

Location: Good Counsel Big Red Barn
Cost: \$5.00-\$10 sliding scale donation
Registration: Pre-registration is appreciated.
Online registration is available at:
<https://cesrmonarchtagging.eventbrite.com>
or please email CESRM@ssndcp.org

Medicinal Plant Workshop Thursday, October 26, 6:30- 9:00 PM

People have been using plants for medicinal purposes for thousands of years. Naturalist Scott Kuldelka will talk about the more common uses of local plants.

Location: SSND Good Counsel Campus
Cost: \$5.00-\$10.00 sliding scale donation
Registration: Pre-registration is appreciated.
Online registration is available at:
<https://cesrmmedicinalplant.eventbrite.com>
or please email CESRM@ssndcp.org

Community Movie Night: Just Eat It: A Food Waste Story Thursday, November 2, 2017 6:30-8:30 PM

Join us for an evening filled with good film, good conversation, and good popcorn! This year we look at the problem of food waste from production to consumption.

Location: SSND Conference Center
Cost: Free
Donations are gratefully accepted.

12th Annual Earth Conference: Food: Our Greatest Resource Saturday, November 4, 2017 8:30am-4:00 PM

In this year's conference we will look at the disconnect that has developed between humans and their food. We will search for ways to become active participants in our food choices and reconnect to the sacred act of nourishing our bodies.

Location: SSND Conference Center
Cost: Before October 20: \$45/Students \$15
After October 20: \$55/Students: \$15
At the Door: \$60/Students \$15
Registration: Will begin mid-September; keep an eye out for conference mailings and Facebook updates.

Summer Chunky Fruit Soup

Serves about 10

This late summer dish is great for a dessert, breakfast or a snack. The good news- you can substitute any fruit that is in season (or that you have around) and make to taste. Always a family favorite.

3 cups hulled strawberries	6 tablespoons of honey or sugar (to taste)
3 medium nectarines	½ teaspoon of cinnamon
4 medium plums	¼ teaspoon of nutmeg
3 cups blueberries	2/3 cup raspberries
2 cups of fresh orange juice	1 cup blackberries
1 ¼ cups of plain nonfat yogurt	

1. Hull and cut strawberries in quarters and set aside ½ cup in a separate bowl. Place the remainder in a large stock pot.
2. Pit one nectarine and slice place into bowl. Pit and cut the remaining nectarines and place into stockpot.
3. Pit and cut plums and add all to the stockpot.
4. Place one cup of blueberries in the same bowl as the strawberries and place the rest in the stockpot.
5. Add orange juice, cinnamon, nutmeg, sugar or honey and 2.5 cups of water to the stockpot.
6. Bring to a boil over high heat and reduce heat to simmer until fruit is broken down and the mixture is soupy (about 15 minutes)
7. Remove from heat and puree in a food processor
8. While hot, stir in remaining fruit.
9. Serve hot or cold with a dollop of yogurt

WATCH YOUR INBOX: UPCOMING SURVEY

We want to hear from you!

In the coming months, CESRM will be sending out an electronic survey to gather updated contact information from our gardeners, volunteers, partners and collaborators.

We are seeking your input! What you think CESRM represents now and how you would like to see the organization grow.

We will be sending out the survey via email. If you do not use email but wish to be included, please call Laura Peterson at 507-389-4272 to have a paper copy mailed to you.

If you do have access to email but do not receive the survey from us, please email CESRM@ssndcp.org with your updated email so we can be sure to update our records. Your thoughts and vision matters and we are grateful for your contribution and support.

MOVIE REVIEW: SALT OF THE EARTH

BY LAURA PETERSON

Photographer Sebastiao Salgado embarks on a life long journey to document humanity and our impact on our planet and each other as part of a huge photographic project, which is a tribute to the Earth's beauty.

Watching how Salgado documents the horrifying, heart breaking and wondrously beautiful aspects of life on this planet is a powerful experience.

Without frills, Salgado lets the black and white images he takes speak for themselves. Heart wrenching at times, this film provides a much-needed sense a hope amidst the stark reality of Earth's current condition.

ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEE

"SUPER, NO MATTER HOW MUCH OR HOW LITTLE YOU KNOW ABOUT THE CELEBRATED PHOTOGRAPHER SEBASTIAO SALGADO, THIS FILM WILL BE A REVELATION."



THE SALT OF THE EARTH



A FILM DIRECTED BY WIM WENDERS AND JOLUARD RIBEIRO SALGADO

SUMMER IN THE GARDENS



COMMUNITY GARDEN CLEAN UP DAY APRIL 29TH

