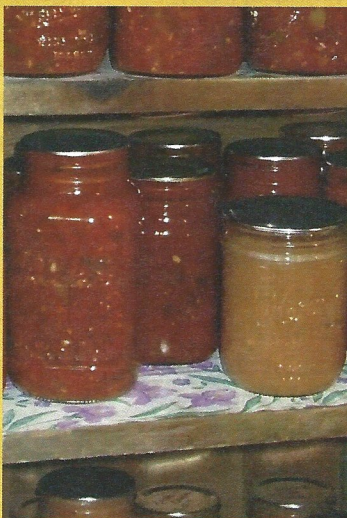
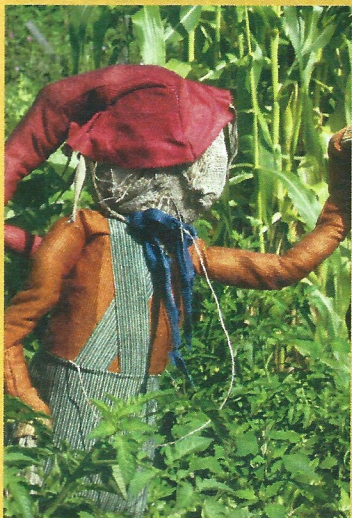


EARTH ALMANAC



Earth Education



a ministry of

School Sisters of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

center for
Earth Spirituality
& Rural Ministry

Our Lady of Good Counsel Campus
170 Good Counsel Drive, Mankato, MN 56001
507-389-4272
lcoons@ssndmankato.org



Sitting in the warm autumn sunshine, I am surrounded by the leaves being relinquished by the many trees in the area. They fall around me in my chair, clinging to my sweater, lodging in my hair, blowing across the ground. Some are spectacularly colorful; others are dried crispy even before they begin their descent to the ground. As I turn my face skyward to watch these trees letting go their leaves, I am reminded of a quote, "Sometimes courage is a small voice at the end of the day saying, 'I will try again tomorrow.'" This is the feeling I get from some of the growing things this fall - the hardy perennials, old and young trees alike, certainly the annuals that gave out long ago without constant

and attentive watering. I've spent some time observing the growing things this year, as is my habit. This intensely hot, dry summer most of the green things were challenged deeply. Plants were wilted much of the summer and even the trees were wilted. At this point in the season, all seem ready to let go and try again another day.

And, you know, it is that - that trying again another day that gives me strength and courage as I witness the changes in the seasons. I've long borrowed from the strength of the trees. I spent countless hours in the trees as a child, breathing deeply of the tree-ness that supported me. While I'm not likely to be found in the trees much these days, I still love and borrow from the example that is the tree. And the lesson for me this year is the one of courage to try again another day - and another day, and another day - until we get it right.

This fall, 125 folks gathered together from urban and rural communities alike for our 7th Annual Earth Conference. We've covered a wide range of topics in previous years - food, water, earth spirituality, and the

commons, to name a few. This year our theme was the Transition Movement. Arid in these deeply challenging times of resource depletion, climate change and a shaky economic system, we posed the question, "How will we equip ourselves to address the coming changes to our society?"

One answer, we learned, may be the Transition Movement. It is an effort of global proportions that succeeds only with a local focus. It is about community and community resilience and has something to offer any community of any size. The Transition Movement is hopeful, inspiring and a grand social experiment. We know what is not working, and if we wait for someone else from somewhere else to solve our problems, help may come too little or too late or both. We need courage and tenacity these days just like the trees. Our communities can begin the work of Transition by trying again tomorrow - every day if that is what is needed.

Organically yours,
LISA
lcoons@ssndmankato.org

THANK YOU! **THANK YOU!** THANK YOU!

Thank you! Thank you! To the following people and organizations who have contributed time, talent or resources toward our work in the past few months. We are grateful to each!

Jim Ackil
Deborah Bauer
Katie Boone
Kyle Cold
Eleanor Coons-Ruskey
Dee Czech
Maggie Freeman
Lalande Hennen, SSND
Esther Hoffmann
Scott Kudelka
Les Laidlaw
Micah Lehner

Sarah Lehner
Melissa Martensen
Dorothy Olinger, SSND
Jackie Rademacher
Patti Ruskey
Mary Tacheny, SSND
Barb Traxler
Jeanne Wingenter, SSND
Terry Wolf

Drummer's Garden Center,
Mankato, MN

Sue Musser and Joyce Schmidt
of Musser Produce,
Fairmont, MN
Shelly's Greenhouse, Madelia, MN

The MSU Social Work
Department and our
summer interns:
Autumn Carlson
Ashley Chambers
Haley Forsythe
Brooke Wills

AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE...WHAT A GIFT

BY KATHLEEN MARY KIEMEN, SSND,
CENTER CO-DIRECTOR

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME you landed in the hospital? I did last November via the emergency room. How fortunate that I had access to good care for an overnight stay. However, what a shock to see the bill for just one overnight stay, several tests, and doctor visits. Fortunately, again my health expenses were covered. What a gift. What a relief.

Such a gift seems a right for all citizens, so we at CESRM are in support of the Affordable Care Act passed in 2010 by Congress and President Obama, and this June, found constitutional by the Supreme Court

Why would CESRM be interested in health care? One reason is that access to affordable health care is a serious problem in rural Minnesota for people like farmers and their families, students, and small business owners. We care about our rural communities, we care about farmers, and we care about any persons needing affordable health care. If health care costs drive people away from rural communities and any kind of sustainable farming enterprise, we consider that our loss. We need people who farm sustainably good food for us, and we need rural communities that support them.



We have joined Land Stewardship Project (LSP) in educating about the concern of affordable health care and taking action for it. With them we are supporting a Health Benefit Exchange. This exchange, which will take effect in January 2014, will be a new way to improve and purchase health insurance. Exchanges are tools to make health insurance better, more affordable and easier to understand. The challenge is that Insurance companies could dominate such an exchange program and work for their own benefits. With such groups as Take Action MN, Land Stewardship Project is promoting a consumer friendly exchange program, which would include key factors, such as:

- A governing board that puts the interest of consumer first and therefore should be composed of

a majority of consumer representatives.

- A Health Exchange that sets high standards for health and health care in MN.
- A Navigator program that helps to remove barriers to coverage.
- Offering affordable coverage for lower-income residents.

What can we do to promote this vision? CESRM will stay in contact with LSP as it monitors this health concern in the coming legislative session. We can follow through on LSP's suggested actions. To get this information, join CESRM's Action Alert by contacting Kathleen Mary Kiemen at kkiemenssnd@yahoo.com. We can also continue educating ourselves about this important concern by contacting Take Action at elizabeth@takeactionminnesota.org and Land Stewardship Project at landstewardshipproject.org, or directly to LSP staff member, Paul Sobocinski at sobopaul@redred.com.

Affordable health care brings relief. Affordable health care is a gift everyone deserves.

Contact: Kathleen Mary Kiemen at kkiemenssnd@yahoo.com

• UPCOMING EVENTS • UPCOMING EVENTS • UPCOMING EVENTS • UPCOMING EVENTS •

Transition: Co-Creating a Resilient Mankato Area

Thursday, November 15, 2012,
6 p.m., Center for Earth Spirituality
and Rural Ministry.

Continuing the discussion begun at the Earth Conference earlier in the month, we will gather to explore further the possibility of working on a Transition Town Initiative for our area. Please visit www.transitionus.org to help you participate in the discussion.

Winter Solstice Celebration! Thursday, December 20, 2012

In the midst of the hectic holiday season, plan in some simplicity! A light supper, seasonal reflection, and the ancient tradition of a community bonfire to celebrate the sun's return.

4:30 p.m. snowshoe hike; 5:30 p.m. light supper and seasonal reflection; 7:00 p.m. bonfire.

RSVP by December 18 to
507.389.4272or

lcoons@ssndmankato.org

\$5-\$10 sliding scale donation

Coming in January 2013 – Transition Works

Transition Book Club –
Transition Companion: Making Your Community More Resilient in Uncertain Times by Rob Hopkins

Transition Film – “In Transition 2.0” is an inspirational immersion into the Transition movement, gathering stories from around the world of ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

**Transition Re-skilling
Workshop –** Baking bread from local, organic grains.

An Ecological Perspective

BY JEANNE WINGENTER, SSND

On April 28 I had the privilege of attending an all-day conference led by Sister Miriam Therese MacGillis, founder and director of Genesis Farm, focusing on an ecological perspective on witnessing to unity in a divided world.

Speaking from the perspective of the “deep time” of 13.7 billion years rather than from limited human historical time, Miriam Therese reminded us that the unity was there from the beginning of creation and diversity evolving ever since, and our perspective must be deep enough and broad enough for understanding unity and diversity at a more fundamental level than just the human.

There is a history of the 13.7 billion years it took to bring the original hydrogen atoms into the thinking minds we possess today. Yet, as she reminded us, the universe has not reached its fullness. Through quantum physics we

continue to learn about the force within the atom to balance between expansion and staying as one, open enough to change and be in relationship, yet closed enough to retain identity and subjectivity. Every dynamic, every relationship over evolutionary time had to be worked out over eons. The creative capacity for re-envisioning is inherent in Earth and we must help that to continue.

Miriam Therese stated that our role in ongoing creation is to be the place the universe reflects on itself in conscious self-awareness. Our challenge is to recognize the value of differences, that they are not problems but are expressions of Earth’s differentiations. While human history’s past response (which too often continues today) was to convert or institutionalize or inculturate or enslave or kill differences, we must derive new insights from differentiation, insights

that lead to unity rather than division, to common good rather than personal gain.

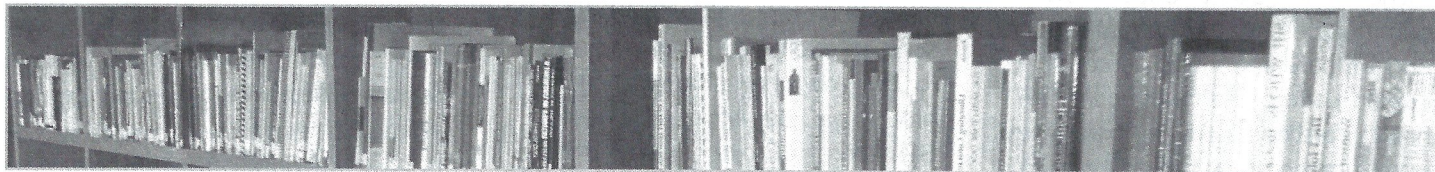
As the Preamble to the Earth Charter states, we must identify ourselves with the whole Earth Community. “To continue to move forward, we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms, we are one human family and one Earth community.” ☀

STAFF

Lisa Coons, Co-Director
Kathleen Mary Kiemen, SSND,
Co-Director

Center Advisory Committee:

Deborah Bauer, Katie Boone,
Cara Gorman, Scott Kudelka,
Paul Prew, Lynn Rozen,
Jim Vonderharr,
Jeanne Wingenter, SSND



BOOK REVIEW:

A Nation of Farmers BY SHARON ASTYK & AARON NEWTON

A Nation of Farmers: How City Farmers, Backyard Chicken Enthusiasts, Victory Gardeners, Small Family Farms, Kids in Edible Schoolyards, Cooks in their Kitchens and Passionate Eaters Everywhere can Overthrow our Destructive Industrial Agriculture, and Give us Hope for Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness in a Changing World.

A great book for anyone who eats! *A Nation of Farmers* is a call to action to develop a local food system that works to provide its people with better, more accessible food for better health. Timely and encouraging, Astyk and Newton

invite readers to engage with a wealth of information gathered from experts and activists in the food, energy, and environmental movements.

As tyk is herself a small farmer, and author of *Depletion and Abundance*, her book on peak oil. Partnered with co-author Aaron Newton, the pair describes how the food crisis is linked to the energy crisis, global warming, and resource depletion. Concluding that worldwide food shortages are a pressing concern, the authors propose a victory farm and garden movement, one similar to the World War II undertaking in which

Reviewed by Cara Gorman,
Advisory Committee member

Americans grew their own produce in home gardens. They discuss the many advantages of growing one's own food and of cooking nutritious, flavorful meals from scratch. A feeling of purpose and opportunity pervades the reading by offering a bounty of ideas for immediate action on an individual scale.

Accessible, humorous, and empowering, *A Nation of Farmers* is a great resource for those enthusiastic about developing food security within their community.

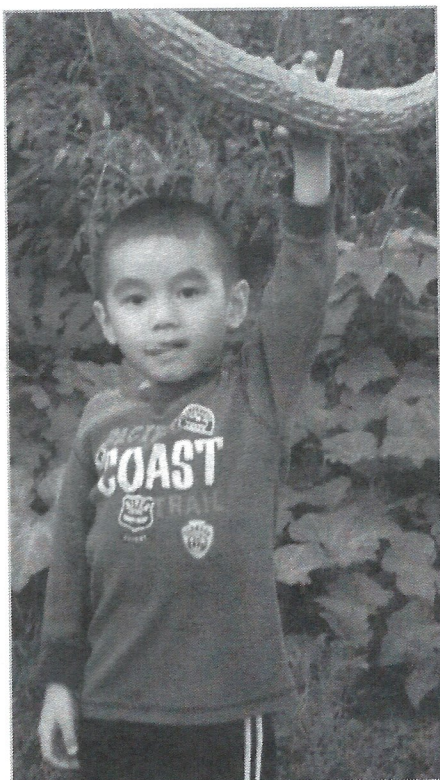
This book and many others are available to check out from the Center's lending library. ☀

CONNECTING CHILDREN WITH NATURE IN THE COMMUNITY GARDENS

BY LYNN ROZEN, ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER

Anyone who visits the Community Gardens on Wednesday mornings in the summer is likely to see the most enthusiastic crew of gardeners there is! The Little Sprouts preschoolers romp and dig, nibble and play, delighting in the bugs, birds, butterflies, and fruits of the harvest.

Each year CESRM offers a free drop in gardening class for children ages three to five. The Little Sprouts



class runs Wednesdays at 10 a.m. from June through August in the Kid's Peace Garden.

This year the children loved looking through magnifying glasses at flowers, tree bark, leaves, and bugs. One child managed to find a worm just about every time he came to class, even in this very dry year when the rest of us thought the worms were in hiding.

Our preschoolers LOVE to water their plants, but even they could not keep up with the plants' needs this year! The die hard parents who braved this summer's heat were happy for the shade of the willow tree, where the kids sang songs, painted with water colors, and ate tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, and other garden goodies. At the end of the season, we kept close watch on the popcorn to see if it was ready.

The favorite activity of the season was a hike through the North garden to find our favorite vegetables growing. On the way we



stopped to talk to neighbors about their gardens. Parents received an education in garden vegetable variety, too, peeking at the Asian vegetables: bitter melon, shiso, and Malabar spinach.

Many thanks to the MSU Social Work interns, Autumn Carlson and Haley Forsythe, who helped start the season in June and led a flower pot painting and planting activity. And a big thanks to the parents who brought their children outside this summer to deepen their love of nature. ☀

GREEN TIP TO SAVE ON WASTE, SAVE MONEY AND SAVE THE PLANET

Did you know? Americans waste 40 percent of our total food supply each year. The average American family of four dumps \$1,039 in food annually. Left to rot in landfills, food releases methane, a greenhouse gas the EPA cites as 21 times more harmful to the environment than carbon dioxide. Food waste accounts for 25 percent of fresh water use in the United States,

and 300 million barrels of oil – about four percent of the country's total oil consumption.

What can YOU do? Save green and go green!

- Develop weekly meal plans. Create your shopping list to prepare these meals, and stick to it when you get to the store.
- Think of leftovers as ingredients for future meals and alter

you planning accordingly. Today's grilled chicken is tomorrow's chili, chicken salad, lunch meat, etc.

- Serve and take smaller portions and have your family ask for seconds if still hungry.

Check out Lovefoodhatewaste.com for some really great ideas on reducing food waste. ☀

THE CENTER FOR EARTH SPIRITUALITY AND RURAL MINISTRY'S **REAL FOOD FOR REAL PEOPLE**

We highlight some delicious fall recipes from one of our community gardeners and Center for Earth Spirituality collaborator, Sarah Lehner. Sarah authors a blog titled "Vital Vegan" where the recipes are beautifully illustrated with photos and quirky, fun text. You can find her writing and recipes at <http://vitalveganforthepeople.blogspot.com>.

"Nathaniel Hawthorne is amongst my top 10 favorite authors. I'm in the middle of reading his complete works and I started to wonder...what did Nathaniel Hawthorne eat, and could a vegan dish be made to match the types of food eaten in the first half of the 19th century in America?" The following is Sarah's answer to her query.

HAWTHORNE CHOWDER

- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 1 parsnip, diced
- 1 root of celery (celeriac), diced
(if you can't find celeriac use
an extra parsnip or potato)
- 2 ribs celery, diced
- 2 russet potatoes, peeled and diced
- 2 quarts vegetable broth
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. chipotle chile powder
- 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1 c. corn, fresh off the cob or frozen
- 1 c. soy milk



1) Heat the oil in a large soup pot and add the onion, celery, celery root, carrots and parsnip. Saute until soft, about 10 minutes.

2) Add the potato, broth, salt, pepper and chipotle chile powder, bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer and simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes

3) Remove the soup from the heat and puree with an immersion blender.

4) Add the corn and soy milk and bring back to a simmer to heat through.

Writes Sarah, "I feel like if you put the word chipotle (or balsamic) in the title of a recipe people will want to try it. But this isn't just a gimmick, these are good. The yams are sweet and get a little caramelized which tastes nice with the smoky spice of the sauce.

"There are no exact measurements for this recipe, just go with the amounts you like; I'll try to give some reasonable guidelines. Even if you put more or less than what I say you won't screw them up, it will just be a matter of differing intensity." Use two yams to serve 2-4 people.

ROASTED CHIPOTLE YAM FRIES WITH DIPPING SAUCE

Yam Fries:

- 2 large yams, peeled and cut into wedges
- About 1 1/2 Tbsp. olive oil
- About 1 tsp. chipotle chile powder
- 1/2 tsp. sea salt
- A couple of pinches of black pepper
- Chipotle hot sauce (I use Buffalo Chipotle Salsa Picante)

Dipping Sauce:

- 1/2 c. natural ketchup
- 1 Tbsp. chipotle hot sauce
- 1/4 tsp. chipotle chile powder
- Sea salt & black pepper to taste

1) Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F and line one or two baking trays with parchment paper. Place the peeled wedges into a large baggie and pour/sprinkle in the other ingredients. Close the baggie forcing out most of the air and massage the oil, spices and hot sauce all over the yam wedges.



2) Place the yams onto the baking trays making sure to lay them with a flat edge down and try to arrange them so that they don't touch. Bake for 15 minutes, then flip them over onto the opposing flat side and bake for an additional 15-20 minutes until soft inside and a bit caramelized on the edges.

3) As the yams bake whisk together the ingredients for the dipping sauce in a small bowl.