

center for
Earth Spirituality
& Rural Ministry

SUMMER 2012

EARTH ALMANAC



Mary Kay Ash, SSND

Earth Education

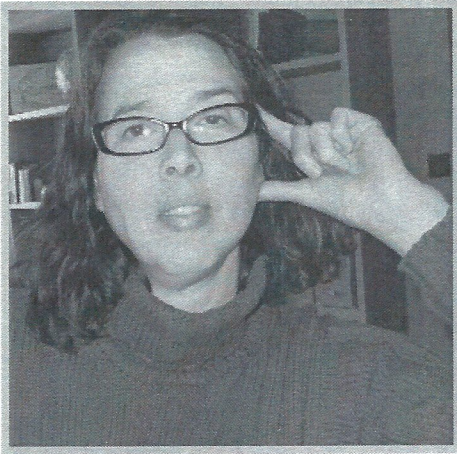


a ministry of
School Sisters of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

center for
Earth Spirituality
& Rural Ministry

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STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS, CREATING HOPE



There's nothing quite like the relief felt when the rains come after a long stretch of hot, dry weather - except perhaps, the "aaaaahhhh" feeling of the sun's warmth after many days of cool, cloudy days. And when a new day comes after a day that has been less than stellar, even painful in the challenges it has presented to us, we know we are going to be okay. The balance of the seasons, the balance of night and day - Earth seems to wrap us up in predictable rhythms.

Except, of course, when it doesn't.

During these times it seems the rhythms and seasons, weather and climate that we've been able to depend on are shifting, changing, perhaps are morphing as we try to adapt to the new. During these times I find solace and backbone in various places. I am moved by the words of Sharon Astyk and others writing about adapting in the places we call home. I find comfort in seeing more community gardens popping up and agriculture becoming integrated into urban areas in response to people's growing awareness of an industrial food system that could be summed up as a health hazard. I am buoyed by families with young children, elders and everyone in between working in small ways to make things better. And I am heartened by those who - most amazingly and against logic - refuse to give up hope in the face of daunting challenges. Some days, however, as we are blasted with another round of sad, bad news - well, these days are a challenge, indeed.

I recently ran across some words by Clarrissa Pinkola Estes that might strengthen us for those times when our resolve might feel a little shaken, a little shaky. It resonated for me and I hope it might for you.

We were made for these times... Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. Any small, calm thing that one soul can do to help another soul, to assist some portion of this poor suffering world, will help immensely. It is not given to us to know which acts or by whom, will cause the critical mass to tip toward an enduring good. What is needed for dramatic change is an accumulation of acts, adding, adding to, adding more, continuing.

"An accumulation of acts..." We can contribute to that!

"...adding, adding to, adding more..." Indeed, it may be all we can do.

"...continuing."

Organically yours,
LISA
lcoons@ssndmankato.org

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

We have many people to thank for their generous donations of time, talents and resources toward our work. We are grateful for how the following people and organizations have expanded and enriched our work over the past several months. Your gifts make a difference!

Jim Ackil
Brian Baker
Eileen Bashel
Kim and Kurt Bauer
Jen Baxa
Steve Baxa
Katie Boone
Jack Brielmaier
Amy Jo Bur
Scott Bur
Joe Domeier
Aaron Hiniker
Kari Jansen

Scott Kudelka
Micah Lehner
Sarah Lehner
Stefanie Lewison
Patricia Linehan
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Trenton Marks
Melissa Martensen
Karla Marz
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Andrew Sweere
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Dawn Ulrich
Travis Volk
Mary Woodward
Olivia Zwaschka

Drummer's Garden Center,
Mankato, MN
East Henderson Farm and CSA

ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

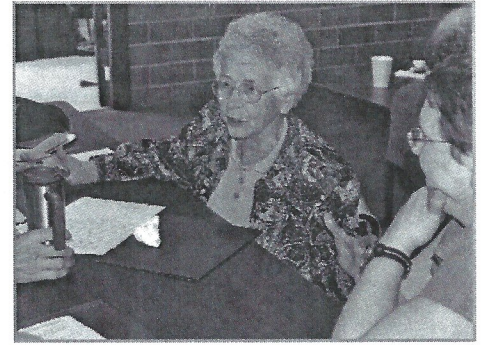
BY KATHLEEN MARY KIEMEN, SSND, CENTER CO-DIRECTOR

LOCAL DEMOCRACY is protected in Minnesota due to strong grass root opposition from citizens, township officers, county commissioners and city officials, all delivering this message, "Minnesotans value local control and do not want corporate rights to trump community rights." Bills to weaken local control passed through committees of both the House of Representative (HF 389) and the Senate (SF 270), but were defeated. CESRM Action Alert members were among the citizens contacting legislators to oppose these bills. Thanks to all who participated.

CESRM joins many to continually guard the important right of local governments. With local control, communities can enact moratoriums, which allow their local government to quickly put a temporary freeze on major developments. This power is essential when the community is caught off guard by unanticipated and potentially harmful proposals. It can be said that most citizens support development and the employment it can create in their communities, but only if it benefits the community. For example, is mining silica sand in the Winona area a benefit to that community? In early January, because of local control laws now in effect, Winona, Wabasha



Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry members Lisa Coons, Kathleen Mary Kiemen, SSND and Mary Tacheny, SSND, at a Health Exchange meeting hosted by the Land Stewardship Project in Lonsdale, Minnesota last spring.



and Goodhue counties could adopt a moratorium on the mining of silica sand in that area. This then prompted the Winona County Board of Commissioners to pass a three-month moratorium to study how this mining would affect issues like road use and damage, land reclamation and potential environmental impacts of this mining.

Another effort CESRM members have supported in the last months is a people-friendly Minnesota Health Benefit Exchange. This Exchange has the potential to set a high standard for insurance policies, simplify the process of choosing and enrolling in health coverage and connecting thousands of uninsured Minnesotans with affordable health care. CESRM members participated in several gatherings to become informed of key features that would

support such a people-friendly Exchange, and with this information and commitment have begun to encourage legislators to support these key features in an Exchange. We will keep our members informed of this issue. Meanwhile, check this website for more information: Take Action Minnesota at www.takeactionminnesota.org; Minnesota's Health Benefits Exchange, http://www.takeactionminnesota.org/assets/document/What_is_An_Exchange.pdf

CESRM members can't do everything, but we can participate and give power in important areas of our lives. Join us.

Contact: Kathleen Mary Kiemen at kkiemenssnd@yahoo.com

Our 7th Annual Earth Conference is scheduled for November 3, 2012. The theme for this year's conference is the "Transition Movement." Wondering what that is, are you? Taken from the Transition US website (www.transitionus.org), the movement is described as "vibrant, grassroots community initiatives that seek to build community resilience in the face of such challenges as peak oil, climate change and the economic crisis."

SAVE THE DATE!

This conference will explore what "transition" is all about and will feature a prominent speaker trained in Transition. The day is designed to encourage, inspire and activate us to begin this work in our own home communities no matter the size. Urban or rural and all of us somewhere in between have a role to play in adapting to new realities and new challenges. So, spread the word...this year's conference is NOT one to miss!

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
Jeanne Wingenter, SSND

Hungry for Change BY BECKY ROSSOW

Hungry for change? I was.

Personally, over the past few years food has become an increasingly important aspect of my and my family's life – beyond just thinking about the quality of what we are putting in our mouths, but also considering where it comes from, who produces it, and more. So, when I saw the CESRM offering for the course “Hungry for Change,” I knew I wanted to be a part of the discussion to share our experiences and to be challenged to step up to the plate (pun intended) and make some of the harder choices we knew were necessary.

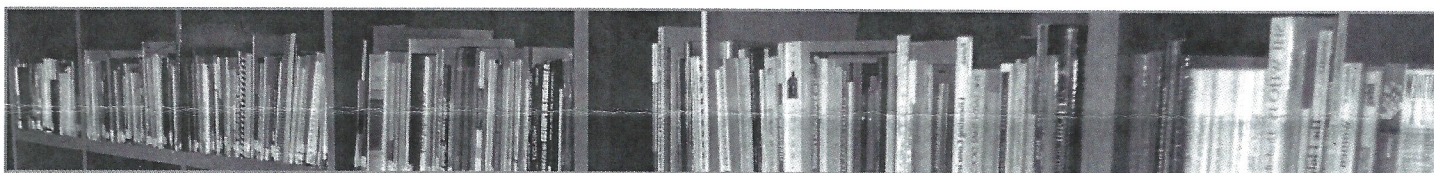
The discussions far surpassed any of my expectations and I looked

forward to meeting with the diverse group that gathered each week as we shared and learned, made commitments and offered support. The wide range of topics from the politics of a front yard garden to child slave labor in chocolate production, from the ethics of eating meat to concerns about physical health and the environment kept us all hungry for more.

The course reinvigorated my and my family's commitment to continue travelling down this path, now with some wonderful new travel companions. ✨



May 2, 2012 - The “Hungry for Change” class moved to the safety of the tunnel during a tornado warning, interrupting their potluck final session.



BOOK REVIEW:

The Lorax BY DR. SEUSS

Reviewed by Scott Kudelka, Advisory Committee Member

What I love about this book - *The Lorax* - is how anyone can read it no matter their age or where they live. I have special memories like any other child of reading this book as a young boy growing up on the former tall grass prairie of southeastern North Dakota. Who doesn't harken back to a far simpler time when the only thing you had to do on a hot summer day is to sit under an old Bur Oak reading about a shortish, oldish, brownish, mossy sort of man speaking for the trees.

Memories of this book written by one of the most fantastic authors with the cool name of Dr. Seuss to boot also comes from my time as a park ranger for the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department. Every summer no matter the park

I worked at we felt the overwhelming desire to show the 1972 TV version at the outdoor amphitheater as trees of all sizes and types provided a canopy and framed the wide open blue sky of the Peace Garden State.

The Lorax is a timeless book telling us how as a community of people living on this Earth we need to think beyond ourselves. In the crazy and chaotic world when we find ourselves stressed out and overwhelmed it can be tough to see the wisdom of why it is so important to see how our actions have an impact beyond our tiny spot on this blue and green planet revolving around the sun. No matter how bad it may seem let's not forget the word “unless” and what that means for our desire to treasure and protect

the natural environment around us.

A new buzz generated over *The Lorax* with the release of a movie this spring starring Danny DeVito as the Lorax. There has been some criticism of the movie over the number of placement ads - somewhere in the number of 120 and mixed reviews. I haven't seen the movie yet but will go some day to experience that wonderment and amazement of when I first read the book. You can never go wrong with a story where the main character speaks for the trees! ✨



SPOTLIGHT ON OUR GARDENERS

BY LYNN ROZEN, ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER

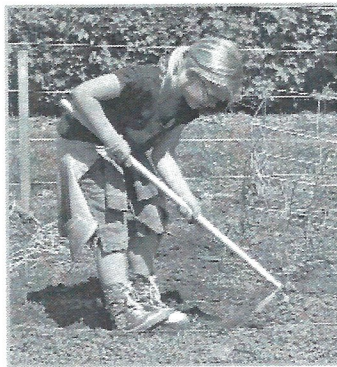
Becca and Todd Shanafelt

share the joys and challenges of gardening with their four children, Caruso (9), Callisto (7), Audrey (5), and Sidney (4). Becca says, "Gardening with kids is the biggest challenge and the biggest joy of being in the community gardens."

Becca was 8 months pregnant with Audrey when she started gardening 6 years ago. "I was just so excited to get a garden." Audrey was born June 4. She spent the month of May in the garden working on her hands and knees.

Gardening is family bonding time for the Shanafelts. "For better or worse," adds Becca, "the kids are exposed to nature: butterflies and birds; plants and soil. It's fun and peaceful. The kids love to dig for worms."

The kids get to experience the process of growing from seed to harvest. It's a lesson in seeing the outcome of hard work. When the family sits down at the table in mid-



The Shanafelt children hoe, rake, dig and water their family plot in the community garden.



winter, we can say, "Remember when we grew this is our garden?"

"I've watched my kids' palates open up." The kids eat a variety of vegetables because they grow them themselves. "I love to see my youngest standing there in the garden eating fistfuls of greens. Put it on a plate, and he may or may not eat it."

Becca loves the garden community. "It's multicultural AND multigenerational. I talk to people. See what

they're growing. Get tips. The common ground of the garden wipes out the barriers to communication."

For Becca gardening is work that fulfills her. She likes the challenge of growing all organically. "When I'm sitting working at the computer, no matter how much I get done, I leave feeling frustrated. I feel fulfilled at the garden. I really don't mind weeding, because it's an excuse to be outside." ☀

10 Students + 5 Interns = Renewal and Freshness

There is a great burst of youthful energy that is infusing our 2-acre organic community garden with a sense of renewal and freshness this season! In addition to a multitude of routine tasks completed, such as cleaning the barn and preparing the Food Shelf garden areas to be planted, ideas that were on the "Some Day Perhaps List" were dusted off and accomplished in a matter of weeks with the enthusiastic help of 10 juniors and seniors from Loyola High School. It has been simply astounding to see the Kids' Peace Garden area transformed to include new beds for growing a salsa and pizza garden, herbs to make tea, defined paths for small

feet to make their way around the area and a gathering area in the shady part of the garden. What a fun place for the kids to connect with their food, each other and the natural world!

Our five summer interns from Minnesota State University will build on the work that was laid by our 10 high school service learners to research, plan, and plant an area near the historic red barn in fruit-bearing bushes that will be accessible to the community of gardeners who find themselves in our Good Counsel gardens. We are teaming up new gardeners with enthusiastic interns who will assist those who are planting their first garden and all of our kids garden classes will benefit from additional ideas, energy and assistance!

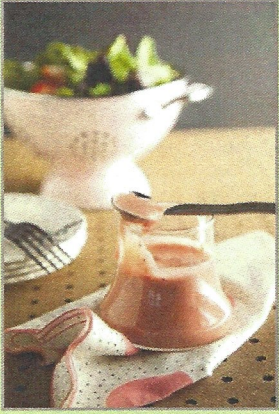
All these young folks working together, working for others they'll never even meet and working to make a difference in their community...wow! I'll leave it for you to decide what this might say about youth in America. ☀

Wish list...new or used!

- Garden rakes
- Trowels
- Wheel barrels or garden carts

We will receive your donations with gratitude.

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



STRAWBERRY-RHUBARB SALAD DRESSING

1/4 c. honey or maple syrup
1/2 c. water
2 c. chopped rhubarb
2 c. chopped strawberries
2 shallots
1/3 c. red wine vinegar
3/4 c. olive oil
1/2 tsp. Dijon mustard

Bring sweetener and water to a boil and add rhubarb, strawberries and shallots. Boil 5 minutes, stirring often. Reduce heat and add vinegar. Simmer 10 minutes or until reduced by half. Remove from heat and allow to cool slightly. Blend in olive oil along with mustard until smooth. Serve warm or cold on your favorite spring salad greens.

(Recipe compliments of Barb Traxler)

With the official start of "Berry Season" upon us, this recipe is equally fitting for a weekend morning, a meatless Monday meal or for dessert. I had something very similar in Bayfield, Wisconsin at a local diner that was made with some of the best berries in the region! Use strawberries, blueberries, currants, june berries, cherries, whatever's handy and in season at the moment! Adjust sweetness accordingly.

BERRY-STUFFED FRENCH TOAST SANDWICHES

For the batter, beat together 4 eggs, 1/2 c. milk, 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

Filling:

8 oz. cream cheese, softened
1/8 - 1/4 c. sugar (or less, if desired)
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
1 pinch ground cinnamon
1 c. fresh berries, sliced if needed
1-2 T. maple syrup (or orange liqueur)
8 bread slices
1-2 T. butter

Heavy whipping cream, whipped (optional)

Mix batter ingredients in large bowl. Cover and refrigerate.

For the filling, mix the cream cheese, sugar, vanilla and cinnamon until smooth. Gently fold in strawberries and maple syrup or orange liqueur.

Spread filling generously on four slices of the bread. Top each slice with another one, place sandwiches on large plate or tray, cover with plastic wrap, and chill until filling is firm, one hour or up to overnight.



Heat griddle, or a large, heavy skillet (preferably cast iron) over medium-low flame, until hot. Add butter and swirl to coat the cooking surface. Dip French toast sandwiches in the batter to cover both sides then place them on the hot griddle. Cook slowly until golden brown on one side, then flip sandwiches and cook until the other side is golden brown and the filling is warm and creamy throughout.

Serve with whipped cream, if desired.



SUMMER SOLSTICE COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

Wednesday, June 20 6 p.m.

Good Counsel Hill, 170 Good Counsel Drive, Mankato

Celebrate the day of maximum daylight and minimum darkness with a traditional first-harvest tea, ritual and reflection, music, poetry and more! Please bring a summer snack to share.