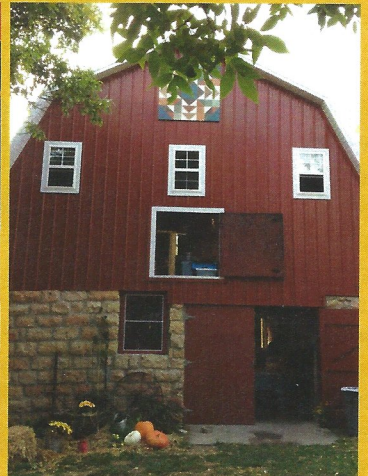
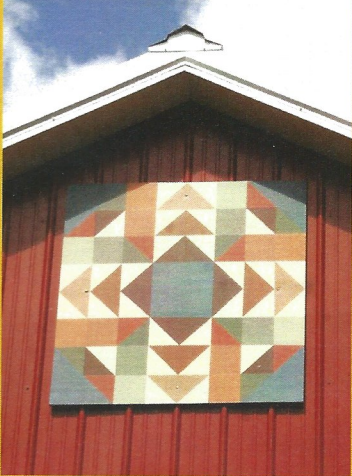


center for
Earth Spirituality
& Rural Ministry

FALL 2014

EARTH ALMANAC



Earth Education



School Sisters of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

center for
Earth Spirituality
& Rural Ministry

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STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS, CREATING HOPE

The food of love roots deep in us – the food we were given as acts of love by others sticks with us, gradually releasing nutrients that feed us deep inside for years, decades afterwards.”

- Sharon Astyk

When I reflect on where we are today with climate change, peak production and depletion of resources, and a precarious economy based on endless growth, I find hope and comfort in food. This isn't the kind of comfort brought on by say, a pint of Ben and Jerry's, though. It's a different kind of comfort and rather than the despair that might prompt the eating of the aforementioned ice cream, it comes with a good size serving of hope – something you might be feeling a shortage of these days.

Food is important to the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry. With a mission to connect people to the sacredness of the Earth community, we find food an amazing tool for accomplishing this. Our Community Garden at Good Counsel was organic when growing food without poisons and synthetic fertilizers was still controversial. After 18 seasons, it is still organic and bursting at the seams! The gardens are a vast place by community garden standards (250 individual

plots over 2 acres) where people find a sense of accomplishment and dignity as they grow food for themselves and to feed others whether those "others" are family members or folks they'll never meet at the Food Shelf. Children in the gardens learn deeply the lessons, rhythms and tastes of growing things and those lessons I believe will stick with them "releasing nutrients that feed them deep inside for years, decades after."

Our belief in the power of food extends beyond the Community Garden. When we host and share food at events like our Earth Conference or Earth Holiday Celebrations, it is often a simple meal prepared with local ingredients. And at our recent Local Foods Dinner Party and Barn Celebration, our five-course meal was carefully crafted and nearly every part of the meal came from small, sustainable southern Minnesota farmers and producers. Additionally, we grow, harvest and serve our own herbal teas at meetings and events, as well as fair trade, organic coffee. We are working to "re-skill" community members in the work of food preservation so that they can eat better and the planet might feel better.

Our "Rural Ministry" also includes a commitment beyond Good Counsel Hill and our community, too. Our advocacy efforts focus on assuring sustainable farmers have a place in agriculture. Our barn has been a



pickup site for Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm members for the past 7 years. The newly restored barn, itself, is a visual testament to our commitment to sustainable ag and its future in Minnesota.

Clearly, food matters to us. As it nourishes bodies, minds and hearts with essential sustenance to do the ordinary and profound work of changing our lives and the culture around us, it is also transformative of those systems that attempt to convince us we are powerless in the "way things are." We invite you to join us in a way that works for you – join our Advocacy Network, volunteer, or make a financial contribution to the Center. Tell others about the work of CESRM. Bring them to events like our Earth Conference. Working together, we will "release the nutrients that feed us deep inside for years..."

Organically yours-
Lisa
lcoons@ssndcp.org

STAFF

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

Center Advisory Committee:

Jim Ackil
Katie Boone
Erica Idso-Weisz
Kirsten Markiewicz
Melissa Martensen
Paul Prew
Lynn Rozen
Jim Vonderharr
Jeanne Wingenter, SSND

UPCOMING EVENTS

9th Annual Earth Conference – Nov. 15, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
"Care for Earth: Many Paths, One Journey." A day of learning from struggles and successes and inspiration to continue the journey!

Winter Solstice Celebration – Dec. 21, 3-6 p.m. A snowshoe hike on Good Counsel Hill offers participants food, festivities and reflection. Free will donations gratefully accepted.

TPP: NEW ACRONYM, NEW TRADE CHALLENGE

BY KATHLEEN MARY KIEMEN, SSND, CENTER CO-DIRECTOR



and Monsanto, and only recently been exposed to some publics.

What do we know about this trade agreement? The Trans-Pacific Partnership would establish a free-trade zone between the United States and 11 other countries.

How will it affect us? Natalie Pompilio in an article, in the fall 2013 Yes magazine, called it: "NAFTA on steroids." She writes that "critics feel with its passage the United States would lose more jobs and more major companies would move their operations overseas."

Land Stewardship Project, which champions local control of governing, highlights another concern about TPP. Mark Schultz of the LSP staff writes: "TPP would give countries and foreign corporations the ability to challenge the use of Country of Origin Labeling (COOL), and could prevent local units of government to stop or regulate unwanted development, like corporate-backed frac-sand mines or factory farms. "

One reason why we do not hear about TPP is a plan to pass it via fast track. This is a process that gives the

president excessive power over trade negotiations while largely excluding Congress or the public in the debate.

What can we do about this trade agreement?

- Number one, we can learn more about TPP. Some resources are Land Stewardship Project (LSP), Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) and ever reliable google. On this latter site, I found the article "Everything You need to Know about TPP" by Lydia Depillis a thorough description of it.
- Number two, we can join LSP, IATP, CESRM and many other organizations to let members of congress know we are aware of TPP and we want sufficient Congressional and public input on it. Let them know that we oppose legislation that would limit the ability of Congress to ensure trade pacts that protect our air, clean water, agriculture and climate.

Keep the TTP acronym on your radar. Trade Agreements should benefit the Earth and all its members, not just corporations. Trade Agreements should be known to the public that will be affected by them.

Probably not many of us are collectors of acronyms, but here is one that may be new and important for us to keep on our radar. It is TPP, and its stands for Trans-Pacific Free Trade Agreement or Trans-Pacific Partnership for short. Why should you care about the TPP?

With this question we invite you to be alert to this Trade Agreement. Like many, you probably have not heard about it. That is because for years it has been discussed in highly restricted and secretive sectors between international country trade dealers and corporations, like Cargill

SUPPORTING US INTO THE FUTURE

For almost 20 years, the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry (CESRM) has been blessed by so many supporters and participants in this ministry. We have witnessed this support by many who volunteer their time to teach classes, organize enrichments and resources, garden the land on the hill with much care, participate in the programs and celebrations and a hundred other ways of action on CESRM's behalf. The staff and CESRM Advisory Committee can't extend our thanks enough.

Now in our history we have a new challenge. CESRM has been almost totally financed by the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) through a fund called supported ministries. This is a commitment by the Sisters because of their desire to support ways to encourage right relationships among all creatures and collaborate with others in promoting healthy ecological and sustainable practices.

However, now as more sisters age and have less income from other ministries, resources to this fund will become less. CESRM needs to find new ways to help support its work. The CESRM Advisory Committee is exploring ways that CESRM can become more financially interdependent with SSND

One way is through donations. In this newsletter and those in the future, we will be appealing for your financial generosity. We want you to know that donations will be appreciated and can be made to the Center and will be used wisely. Thank you.

THE CHILDREN'S PEACE GARDEN PROJECT

BY LISA COONS

The Community Gardens at Good Counsel are a special place in Mankato. So much good happens here. It would be impossible to describe to you all the situations of sharing and connection, new tastes and experiences, and lasting memories made in these small plots and the community that grows around them. There is one space, however, that I want to highlight for you. While we all need to connect with each other and nature, children are perhaps most in need of this since their bodies, brains and hearts are developing. Growing numbers of researchers report that spending time in nature has a positive impact on learning. As children have fewer and fewer opportunities for experiencing nature, the Kids' Peace Garden has become an invaluable space for children.

Children play, learn and grow in the garden. Sometimes, I tell the children that they're in "Garden School" but mostly, I just let them think they're having fun. Gardening is educational and develops new skills and the kids in our garden classes learn a lot! Their weekly classes teach them responsibility, understanding and self-confidence – from achieving their goals and enjoying the food they have grown. They learn that if we don't water our plants, they die. So we water them – even when we have been doing it for weeks on end. The gardens are a place where kids move their bodies as they dig, carry water to plants, climb, run and rake (not at the same time). For some (maybe most) it may be their first time outdoors and the only physical activity of their day. Our classes are obviously



places for discovery (The bugs! The worms! The new tomatoes!) and they are also a place for learning about the science of plants, animals, weather, the environment, nutrition and simple construction. They learn about nutrition and creativity as we explore where food comes from and ways to eat and prepare the food they grow. Our games and activities are non-competitive so children learn the value of cooperation, sharing and teamwork.

And finally, the children learn to love nature and all that is. While that isn't something that we can test for, this may be the most valuable skill of all learned in the garden.

We are so deeply grateful for the support of so many. Our work is dependent on volunteer support, financial and in-kind gifts made by supporters. We have many people as well as local businesses to thank for their generous donations of time, talents and resources toward our work.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you!

Jim and Kay Ackil	Laurie Evans	Lila Kahmann & students	Heather Olsen
Meghan Babcock	Annette Fernholz, SSND	Daniel Marie Kukowski, SSND	Arlene & Paul Renshaw
Becky Bates	Kay Fernholz, SSND	Micah Lehner	David Rice
Greg & Mary Bloodgood	Mira Frank	Patricia Linehan	Lynn Rozen
Marissa Bolte	Diana Gabriel	Char Lusher	Patti Ruskey
Michelle Bridges	Cara Gorman	Carmelle Malerich, SSND	Lynn Russ
Drea & Tom Brown	Danielle & Nat	Kirsten Markiewicz	Danielle Stedman
Traci Buckle	Gustafson-Sundell	Brian, Melissa &	Marlene Stein-Greiner &
Jeremy Burger	Jonathon Hardwick	Lily Martensen	Jason Toupenca Family
Donna Casella	Mary Hecker, SSND	Andrea Mercier & Ian	Mary Tacheny, SSND
Marsha Conner	Eva Hendrickson	Carrol Myers-Dobler	Jan Taplin
Eleanor Coons-Ruskey	Lalande Hennen, SSND	Melinda Newton	Barb and Mark Traxler
Anika Cristwell	Joe Hogan	Jessi Padellford	Claire Voelkel-Sedlmeir
Dee Czech	Erica and Ryan Idso-Weisz	Paulette Pass, SSND	Jim and Kathryn Vonderharr
Gloria Degele, SSND	Jeff Isinger	David, Melissa &	Monica Wagner, SSND
Julie Dempster	Don & Mary Javurek	Holden Perron	Jeanne Wingenter, SSND
Jane Dow	Paulissa Jirik, SSND	Amy Tonneson Plath	Terry Wolf
Mary Dowd	Rita Jirik, SSND	Paul Prew	Katy Wortel

Contributing Businesses:

Aleamar Cheese	Freisen's Family Bakery	Mankato Brewery	ONATAH Eco Salon
Angie's Kettle Corn	Full Circle Organics	Mecca Tattoo	Pagliai's Pizza
Cactus Tattoo	Juniper Berries: Handmade	Alan Meltretter,	Pub 500
The Coffee Hag	in Mankato, Becky Rossow	Meltretter Custom	Satori Violet Belly Dance
Drummer's Garden Center	Living Land Farm,	Carpentry	St.Peter Co-Op
Evergreen Angus Grass-fed	Adam Ellefson and Lupita	Musser Produce	Sun Moon Yoga
Beef, Bruce Johnson	Marchan	NaKato Bar & Grill	Tandem Bagels
The Fillin' Station	MAFTTI – Mankato Fair	Naked Beauty Bath & Body	The Tinder Box
Flour Power Bakery and Cafe	Trade Town Initiative	Nicollet Bike Shop	

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

Our Barn Celebration featured a phenomenal local foods dinner party catered by **Flour Power Bakery and Café**. Here are two of the recipes developed by Kirsten at Flour Power especially for the event.

Kale and Roasted Roots Salad with local cheese

Beets
Parsnips
Kale, stems removed and chopped in thin strips
Carrot, julienned in thin strips or grated
Daikon Radish, julienned in thin strips or grated

Trim the leaves from the beets, leaving an inch or two of stem and wash. Toss the beets in olive or canola oil. Peel the parsnips and trim. Toss in oil and place on another tray. Do not crowd the vegetables or they will steam instead of roasting. Roast at 375 degrees turning them as they cook, until the vegetables are fork-tender. Immediately place the beets in cold water and slip the skins off. Cool the vegetables and dice, keeping the two vegetables separate.

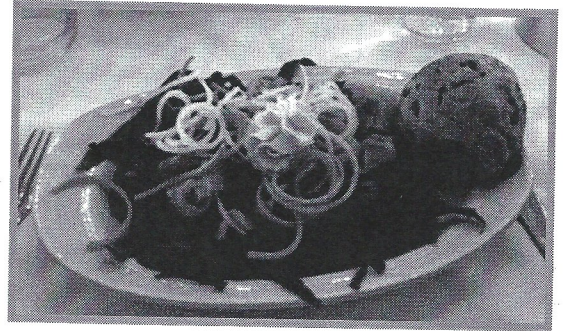
Dressing:

¼ cup Canola oil
1 T. Sherry
1 T. Red wine vinegar
1 tsp. Italian herbs (basil, oregano, thyme)
1 clove garlic, pressed
1 T. Sugar
Salt and pepper to taste

Whisk together all ingredients except the oil. Add the oil in a small, steady stream while whisking.

Toss the diced parsnips with some of the dressing to coat. This may be done a day ahead and marinated overnight.

Arrange the roasted roots on top of a bed of kale. Sprinkle with grated carrots and daikon radish. Top with a dollop of fromage blanc from Alemar cheese company or other good quality cheese.



Spiced Pumpkin Soup

1 small pie pumpkin (or other winter squash),
about 2 or 3 pounds
½ pound of carrots, diced
4 ribs of celery, diced
1 large onion, diced
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. Thyme
¼ tsp. Cardamom
1/8 tsp. White pepper
¼ c. sweet Marsala wine
Brown sugar, if needed

Cut the pumpkin in half, scrape out the seeds, and place cut side down on a cookie sheet to roast at 375 degrees until the pumpkin is very tender.

While the pumpkin is roasting, sauté the carrots, onion and celery briefly, cover with water, and add the wine, salt, and thyme and simmer until the vegetables are very tender.

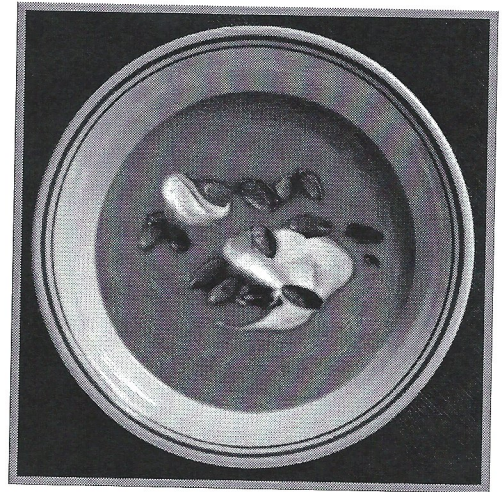
Scrape the pumpkin from the skin and puree adding all of the carrot mixture and only enough of the liquid to allow it to become free-flowing in the blender.

Place the puree, cooking liquid, and spices in a deep pot and bring to a simmer on the stove. You may need to add more water (or vegetable stock if you have it). The soup is best when the spices have had time to "bloom" in the mixture, so this soup could be made a day ahead and would be better for it.

Taste the soup when warmed and adjust the seasonings as you like ... more wine, salt, etc... when you taste the soup, you should taste several "layers" of flavor. First, pumpkin, then cardamom, then white pepper. I add a touch of brown sugar to cut any bitterness.

Note: Cardamom will take more time to come through, and can become bitter if too much is added, so be patient when adding it. White pepper can overwhelm the cardamom flavor if too much is added too soon before the cardamom has had time to come to full flavor, so make sure you have an acceptable cardamom flavor before adding the white pepper.

Garnish with garlic-chive blossoms or oven-roasted pumpkin seeds.



CESRM HOSTS FIRST ANNUAL LOCAL FOODS DINNER, SILENT AUCTION AND BARN DANCE



The evening event was held on Friday, September 19, beginning with a delicious locally sourced meal prepared by Flour Power Bakery featuring grass-fed beef donated by Evergreen Angus, seasonal vegetables from Living Land Farm, Musser Produce, and Alemar Cheese Company, and an apple tarte tatin with apples from the orchard at Henderson New Country School for dessert.



The meal was served upstairs in the Big Red Barn, which was dressed to the nines in over 1200 sparkling white lights and blue ball jars filled with wildflower bouquets from Henderickson Family Farm.



The main floor of the barn was home to the silent auction. There were 59 auction items donated by 40 local businesses, handcrafters, and bakers/canners. The wealth of generosity and talent in our community was evident by the wide array of items: from a home baked apple pie to a bike tune-up, a cubic yard of organic compost to a six-pack of homebrew!



The evening closed with a good old fashioned, foot stompin' barn dance. Bluegrass band The Tinder Box from Sioux Falls, S.D., entertained an enthusiastic crowd of persons of all ages. Children ran and danced, people listened and chatted as the sun set behind the barn. Nature stepped in with a light show of her own to close out this magical evening of food, friends, laughter, and joy.

