April 25, 2010

Connecting Food, Farm & Community

The Poughkeepsie Farm Project is a non-profit organization that works toward a just and sustainable food system in the Mid-Hudson Valley by operating a member-supported farm, providing education about food and farming, and improving access to healthy locally-grown food.

In this issue . . .

Find Your Volunteer Niche
Overcoming Barriers
Grower’s Row
Discussion Series: Politics of Food and Farming
PFP’s Open House and Plant Sale
Meet the Interns
Got Seeds?
Fall Kill Partnership Gardens Announces Plots
CSA Shares Available
Bowl-A-Thon

Help us Make Harvest Line Better…

We always welcome feedback! Tell us what you think about the new Web site and the new look for the newsletter.
pfp growing girls@gmail.com

Find Your Volunteer Niche at the PFP

By Kim Notin, Board Chair

The enthusiasm and generosity of PFP volunteers is truly unparalleled. This realization often occurs to me on the rare occasion that many of them are all in the same room, which happens each winter during our annual board and volunteer retreat. This past February, over 30 individuals poured into the Children’s Media Project workspace. Ranging in ages and occupations, the thread that bound us was our commitment to a just and sustainable food system. Such volunteer support helped our wonderful staff achieve a long list of accomplishments in 2009, including: 15 tons of food made available to our low-income neighbors, an amazing new website, a strong educational and outreach program, seeds saved and distributed to the community, the 10th Anniversary Community Picnic, and the second annual Soup-a-Bowl. And, these volunteers are also helping us leap into 2010 and beyond.

In order to help move the PFP from season to season and year to year planning, we restructured several committees and charged each of them to think long-term. Each of these committees is off to a great start, and each needs plenty more help and support. If you are like the rest of us and want to give to the PFP as much as the PFP gives to you (both in food and in inspiration!), please consider becoming a PFP volunteer!

Overcoming Barriers to Healthy Food Access

By Susan Grove

In the City of Poughkeepsie, many families don’t have opportunities to access healthy food. A March 2009 Community Health Survey of Dutchess County reported that 26% of respondents in the City of Poughkeepsie found it difficult to buy healthy foods, such as fresh fruits, vegetables and low-fat milk, in their community, compared with other groups that fell between 9-11%. Residents who said they did not have access said either that it was too expensive [61%], not available where they shop [35%] or too far to get to [24%]. Income level is a barrier, especially for those whose circumstances mean that they need to rely on social services (which are not regularly able to provide the choice to consume fresh, high quality produce that can contribute to improved health outcomes), but also for the high percentage of low-income families. Location is a barrier, when the retail outlets that are easiest to use benefit programs in or to get to (especially for the high percentage of residents that don’t own a vehicle) have a very limited supply of produce that may not be fresh or appealing. Experience is another

Continued on page 3
Volunteer Opportunities Continued from page 1

We are especially looking for volunteers who can support an exciting series of EVENTS in 2010. Whether your interest is in fundraising or community education, we welcome you to join a solid core of individuals who are committed to planning, publicizing and executing events, including participatory workshops (like our highly successful Spring SkillShare on How Do Our Gardens Grow held on April 10th), tabling opportunities, potlucks, Soup-a-Bowl and A Seat at the Table. To get involved, contact ChiWei Ranck: EventsChair@farmproject.org.

EVENTS AND OUTREACH
Chair: ChiWei Ranck, EventsChair@farmproject.org
A Seat at the Table: Amy Sherman (sheepmom23@aol.com) or Amy Pelletier Clark (apelletier5@gmail.com), Co-Chairs
Soup-a-Bowl: Rebecca Wisniewski, Chair, rwisnski@verizon.net

FINANCE
Chair: David English, Treasurer@farmproject.org

FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES
Co-Chairs: Nicole Baker and Amy Pelletier Clark, FundChair@farmproject.org

PROGRAM STEERING COMMITTEE
Chair: Kim Notin, ProgramChair@farmproject.org

WANT TO GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY?
If you want to get your hands dirty, we have times each week to volunteer on the farm or in the herb or seed garden this spring. Anyone is welcome to drop by during volunteer times to help seed and pot up in the greenhouse, weed perennials, get tools ready for the season or transplant in the fields. April 27 focused on plant classification and the biology behind seed saving. If you plan to attend RSVP at 240-3734 or info@farmproject.org.

SEED PROJECT VOLUNTEERING
On Tuesdays from 4 to 6 pm, Seed garden volunteers are welcome to come for part or all of the time any week from now through October. We will be digging beds, planting, weeding, trellis, harvesting seeds, cleaning seeds, and packaging seeds over the course of the season. If it’s raining, best to call 240-3734 to make sure we have inside work.

HERB GARDEN TENDING
Every Wednesday from 4 to 6 pm, the herb garden will be maintained from now until the end of October, as long as it’s not raining too hard. We will be digging beds, planting, weeding, labeling plants, harvesting herbs, and making herbal products over the course of the season. Volunteers are invited to come any of those weeks and for any part of that time. In addition to the meditation garden tending time, there are a couple other ways that folks can help out:
1. We are seeking volunteers interested in participating in an adopt-a-bed system this year. If you would like to take responsibility for tending to just one 3 x 12 bed (say of sage, or basil, or chives) and keeping it weeded during the late spring and summer during times that work well for you, please contact us.
2. We are in need of herb dryers - large or small - for loan or for donation to the PFP. Or if anyone is handy and interested in finding plans and making one that would be great.
3. We would like to put wooden poles or boards around more of the beds as bed borders and are seeking donations of untreated wood that might be used for this purpose.
Overcoming Barriers

It is not enough to receive fresh food. Anyone who consumes fresh food relies on past positive experiences identifying, cooking and eating it, and only then is able to make healthy eating choices. The overarching barrier is an urban food system that is not yet organized to provide convenient access for all – regardless of where one lives or what one’s income level is – to fresh, affordable and healthy food.

We believe the choice for fresh and nutritious food should be widely available in our community and supported by opportunities to gain positive healthy food experiences. We are committed to improving access to healthy, locally-grown food for our low-income neighbors by offering a three-pronged, immediate response: managing the downtown farmers’ market as a non-emergency source of produce that leverages public assistance that low-income individuals receive; providing subsidized season-long CSA shares of farm produce to qualifying families who desire to eat healthy, connect to the source of their food and be part of a community supporting local agriculture; and donating produce through partners who serve our neediest neighbors and who help us ensure that high quality fresh food is part of the diet of those who are accessing emergency services. One collective result of these efforts is that 25% of the 60 tons of the freshly-harvested produce of the Poughkeepsie Farm Project is made available to low-income families.

As important as they may be, we are not content with these immediate responses alone. We have initiated a Community Food Assessment process to engage stakeholders to identify community food resources toward overcoming barriers to healthy food access for all. We are reaching out to ensure that those with limited resources have opportunities to gain positive fresh food experiences. With your support, we are committed to making investments today that will build the future that we envision – a just and sustainable urban food system.

10% of the funding for Food Share comes from individual donations.
THANK YOU to all who have donated - we have reached 32% of our goal for 2010! Consider a making a tax-deductible gift to help us reach 100% of our 7,200 goal by May 31st...

We believe the choice for fresh and nutritious food should be widely available in our community...

Do you Facebook and/or Twitter?

We are seeking a volunteer to help with social marketing the PFP,
Contact: Susan@farmproject.org or 845-473-1415 for more information.
Politics of Food and Farming Discussion Series

On Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8 pm, we will host small group discussions where we will consider opportunities for and challenges to building “a just and sustainable food system,” which is central to the mission of the PFP. In thematic modules, we will critically explore key food and farming issues, as well as alternatives for transforming the food system. We are asking participants who sign up for a given module and to commit to completing short weekly readings and attending all four sessions. (We hope to repeat these modules on an ongoing basis, so we encourage you to wait to participate in a given module if you know in advance that you will miss more than one session.)

Please register in advance by sending an email to foodpolitics@farmproject.org. Each module will be limited to 15 people. For those that are able, we welcome a $10 suggested donation (students and low-income: $5) for each module.

These modules still have openings:

**Summer Module: Organic and Beyond**
- July 21 – An Organic History
- July 28 – Sustainable for People and Planet?
- August 4 – Putting Faces on Our Food
- August 11 – Beyond Certified Organic

**Fall Module: Rethinking Food in a Time of Crisis**
- October 6 – Hunger at Home and Abroad
- October 13 – Food Disparities
- October 20 – Food Paradigms
- October 27 – Global Solutions, Local Solutions

Grower’s Row

An early string of hot days like we recently had always makes me feel a little panicky; “Why,” I say to myself, “am I only just planting peas and spinach today? Shouldn’t I be planting tomatoes?” Fortunately, of course, the answer was “No,” since we were not ready to plant tomatoes and we’re expecting a string of frosty mornings this week. We do have a round of tomato seedlings coming along in the greenhouse and have started preparing the soil in the “tunnel” for planting them in a couple of weeks.

A little more immediately, we have gotten in a round of the most frost hardy early veggies already. In addition to the peas and spinach, we have planted lettuce, chard, beets, broccoli, cabbage, turnips and carrots with scallions, radicchio, escarole, kale, collards, arugula and radishes soon to follow (all while doing second and third plantings of the first things) and potatoes and onions are not too far off.

With all of that planting, (and greenhouse work and coop organizing and blueberry pruning and strawberry de-mulching and…) it’s a good thing we have another dynamite farm crew this season. Sarah Pappas returns for a second season, as Assistant Farm Manager. Hannah Ramer, Irene Shen and Angela DeFelice all join us as full season interns. I really hope you get to know them as the season moves along.

Yours in the field,
Asher Burkhart-Spiegel

Support the PFP this Earth Day!

As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of Earth Day in 2010 with a new season of growing good food: educating our youth; and feeding our local community, please consider a gift to support PFP’s programs. Your support will give the next generation a foundation for making healthy choices, and improve our local community’s access to healthier food. Donations can be made online at http://farmproject.org/content/donations.

Two Free Plants!

PFP Member Cardsare in the mail!
Watch for it!

Not a member?
Consider a membership contribution at the suggested ($50) level or above, and receive two free plants at the Open House and Plant Sale in May!

Twice as Nice – The PFP’s Open House and Plant Sale

The Poughkeepsie Farm Project’s (PFP) highly anticipated annual Open House & Plant Sale is kicking off the growing season with events on two consecutive Saturdays: May 15th and 22nd.

From 9 am to 3 pm on May 15 and 22nd, rain or shine, all are welcome to tour the farm’s beautiful greenhouse, gardens and fields, situated on Vassar College Farm and Ecological Preserve at the junction of Raymond and Hooker Avenues in Poughkeepsie. While there, visitors are invited to learn more about the farm’s food justice and education programs and purchase PFP-grown potted herb, flower and vegetable plants. Potted plants grown from PFP-grown seeds will be featured this year, alongside PFP’s own heirloom seeds. Seeds for sale will include: arugula; beets; bush beans; dry beans; edamame; lettuces; peppers; and several varieties of tomatoes.

“Every year there is increased interest from the public, who enjoy seeing first-hand how a working urban farm operates, while picking up an array of plants, flowers and herbs to grow at their own homes,” says PFP Executive Director Susan Grove. “We receive many requests to get involved in our project. We invite anyone interested in volunteering to come to the open house to find out how to get plugged into herb gardening and herbal product making; seed gardening, saving and distribution or community and educational event planning.”

For more information about the Open House & Plant Sale, please call (845) 473-1415 or visit www.farmproject.org.
Meet the Interns

Hannah...

Originally from St. Paul, Minnesota, Hannah came to the East Coast for college at Brandeis University where she majored in Environmental Studies. Aside from farming, she enjoys cooking, practicing her Spanish, taking photos, and yoga. Her three favorite vegetables are tomatoes, cucumbers, and the under appreciated parsnip.

Angela...

Since graduating from Ithaca College in 2003, Angela has dedicated herself to a variety of fields from social work to event planning, and non-profit management. After living and working in Nicaragua for a few years, she returned to the U.S. on a clear path toward agriculture. In 2009, she completed a Certificate program in Ecological Horticulture, which solidified her desire to produce healthy food for her community. “The farm is much larger than what I have seen in other urban settings, allowing us to produce a significant amount of food and engage the community in ways that rural farms often find challenging. It is an exciting model and I am interested in learning from, and contributing to it.”

Irene...

Irene Shen spent the first half her life in a town outside of Boston, MA, where she got to spend a lot of time outdoors catching frogs, riding her bike and running around with her dog. She spent the second half her life in New York City where she went to college, taught high school science, organized communities around environmental justice issues and did sustainable urban agriculture. Having grown up in a Chinese immigrant family, Irene believes that food and community-building go hand-in-hand and loves food of all kinds, from growing it, to cooking it, to eating it. She's interested in learning about alternative community food systems that deal with access and equity issues and how to grow for organic veggie CSAs.

Got Seeds?

It’s seed ordering time! We have seeds for sale and also for donation to school gardens, food pantries, and other interested community groups. We have several types of beans, tomatoes, peppers and lettuce as well as a beet and arugula. Purchase seeds here:

- PFPs Open House and Plant Sale on May 15 and May 22
- At the PFP by appointment
- By mail order for orders of 10 packets or more

For varieties and descriptions please see our catalog, which can be found on the PFP website at: farmproject.org/sites/default/files/2010PFPSeedCatalog.pdf

All seeds were grown at the Poughkeepsie Farm Project by youth and interns involved in City Seeds, a collaborative project between PFP and the Green Teen Community Gardening Program. The seeds are grown without artificial pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers and are open pollinated varieties (so you can save them yourself).

Free Community Screening and Discussion of Food, Inc.

The free screening event of Food, Inc. will be held at 7 pm on Wednesday, May 19 at Children’s Media Project (CMP) at 20 Academy Street, Poughkeepsie, NY and will be followed by a discussion led by the Poughkeepsie Farm Project.

Food, Inc., nominated for Best Documentary Feature of 2010 by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, reveals surprising — and often shocking truths — about what we eat, how it's produced, who we have become as a nation and where we are going from here.

Filmmaker Robert Kenner lifts the veil on our nation's food industry, exposing the highly mechanized underbelly that's been hidden from the American consumer with the consent of our government's regulatory agencies, USDA and FDA. Our nation's food supply is now controlled by a handful of corporations that often put profit ahead of consumer health, the livelihood of the American farmer, the safety of workers and our own environment. We have bigger-breasted chickens, the perfect pork chop, insecticide-resistant soybean seeds, even tomatoes that won't go bad, but we also have new strains of E. coli — the harmful bacteria that causes illness for an estimated 73,000 Americans annually. We are riddled with widespread obesity, particularly among children, and an epidemic level of diabetes among adults.

The film features interviews with such experts as Eric Schlosser (Fast Food Nation), Michael Pollan (The Omnivore's Dilemma) along with forward thinking social entrepreneurs like Stonyfield Farms' Gary Hirschberg and Polyface Farms' Joel Salatin. Following the screening, representatives of the Poughkeepsie Farm Project will facilitate a discussion about how the issues addressed in the film manifest locally, and suggest possible ways of we can respond to them. For more information on the screening, visit: www.farmproject.org or www.childrensmediaproject.org.

This event is a collaborate effort with the award-winning documentary series P.O.V. (www.pbs.org/pov). P.O.V (a cinema term for “point of view”) is television's longest-running showcase for independent non-fiction films. P.O.V films are known for their intimacy, their unforgettable storytelling and their timeliness, putting a human face on contemporary social issues.
Fall Kill Partnership Gardens Announces Plots

A group of community members are working to organize a new community garden behind the Family Partnership Center at 29 N. Hamilton Street. They are still working on securing final approval to use the space, but hope to have garden plots available for city residents by the end of May.

If you are a City of Poughkeepsie resident and would like to garden at the Fall Kill Partnership Gardens, please contact Helen at 845-337-3122 or Amy at 845-505-2303 to reserve your plot! Garden space will be limited. Call today to reserve your plot!

CSA Shares Available

Do you know someone in the Poughkeepsie area who would like to join a CSA?

Due to the high demand for Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) and the PFP’s commitment to working towards increasing access to fresh, healthy food in the local community, it is expanding its partnership with Veritas Farms, a diversified, sustainable farm in Esopus, NY, to bring more CSA shares into Poughkeepsie. Veritas Farms will offer 50 limited availability CSA shares in 2010, distributed from the PFP’s site on Monday nights, and will be on-hand during both open houses. To learn more about Veritas Farms, call 845-384-6888 or visit www.veritasfarm.org/CSA.html.

Common Ground Farm in Beacon also has shares available. They can be contacted at www.commongroundfarm.org or 231-2424.

Healthy Harvest CSA at Johnson Farm in East Fishkill is a new CSA starting in 2010 with shares available. They can be contacted at healthyharvestcsa.org, gobluem82@optonline.net, geeksplace@juno.com or healthyharvestcsa@gmail.com.

The PFP CSA is full for 2010. Anyone interested in joining the PFP CSA can contact us at info@farmproject.org or 240-3734 to join the waiting list. For people joining the list now, we will most likely have a spot open in 2011.

Bowl-A-Thon

The third annual Soup-A-Bowl is coming up...and we need your help! Learn ceramics while contributing to this wonderful community event. 5-Week Discounted Pottery Classes on Tuesdays are being held from 5:30 to 8 pm. The next session will start: May 4 - June 1. The final session will be held: June 29 - July 27. All classes are held at Barrett Clay Works, 485 Main St., Poughkeepsie. The cost is $145.00 for 4 Participants or less; $135.00 for 5-7 Participants; $125.00 for 8+ Participants. Tuition includes free clay and instructor.

Save the Date

July 17 - A Seat at the Table
Spetember 11 - Soup-A-Bowl