



SOUTH HERO LAND TRUST



“Community Service Means Helping the Community Become a Better Place”

What is community service? It’s “getting your hands dirty and doing things to help other people,” “helping people who don’t have as much as you or helping fix things that are broken,” and “helping the environment.” It is a “chance to give back to your community.” These are just a few of the responses that students at Folsom Education & Community Center gave after their fall Day of Service.

Busy classroom schedules make it difficult for kids to spend time out in the world, whether exploring nature or working in their community. The middle school teachers at Folsom School are committed to changing that in South Hero. They are using community service to help students gain skills in problem solving and collaboration, while being stewards of their environment, and building deeper connections to the land and their community.

50 students, in grades 5-8, wrapped up a celebration of the new school year with an afternoon of projects that will help make their community a better place for all. From building a new bridge at Round Pond Natural Area, to gleaning watermelon and other vegetables at Pomykala Farm, the students were living examples of Folsom’s three expectations: take care of yourself, take care of others, and take care of your community.

Their teachers were awed by the students’ accomplishments. As Julie Pidgeon wrote, “it was amazing to see so many of them take ownership of their jobs.... the kids came away feeling like they had contributed in a meaningful way.”

Feeding the Hungry with the Help of Pomykala Farm

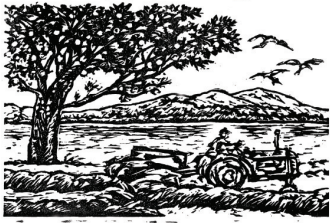
Several of the students headed up to Pomykala Farm to glean with the Healthy Roots Collaborative. They harvested over 1,000 lbs of watermelon, lettuce, and parsley that was not up to market quality, but was perfectly fresh and healthy to eat. The produce was donated to the Champlain Islands Food Shelf, the CIDER senior meals program, and three charitable food sites in Franklin County (*continued on page 23*).



Top: Students carry lumber to work site in Round Pond Natural Area.

Bottom: Students spread fresh compost in the garden at Folsom School.

SOUTH HERO



LAND TRUST

a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the farmland, woodland, natural and recreational areas, and open spaces which give South Hero its distinctive quality of life

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*Community Service means
"getting your hands dirty
and doing things to help
other people"*



There isn't much I'd rather do than spend our time outside with our community. This year I have been amazed with the volunteers who've been working on projects to make South Hero a better place to live.

To the 120 community members who volunteered on Green Up Day to clean up our streets, shoreline, and trails- thank you!

To the 15 new members of Friends of Island Trails who worked to clean up the Landon Community Trail- thank you!

To the 50 middle school students from Folsom Education and Community Center who built a new bridge at Round Pond Natural Area, cleared brush on the South Hero Rec Path, weeded the Folsom Community Garden, and gleaned produce at Pomykala Farm in September- thank you!

To the 52 students and teachers from South Burlington High School who removed invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle from the trails at Round Pond Natural Area, and worked in the garden, read with students, and helped the 8th grade get ready for their Pasta Dinner at Folsom in October- thank you!

And to all of the other folks who help with events, donate food, gleaned on local farms, and gave their time in other ways- thank you! What an wonderful community we have here in South Hero- it is an honor and privilege to be a part of this town.

Emily Alger



Jane Pomykala, who farms at Pomykala Farm with her husband Bob and son Ben, says that, “gleaning is an ideal way for us to give back, because it helps people who are going hungry get some food, and it doesn’t hurt our business. It can even help a little. We love seeing the kids getting to work with their hands and connecting with the dirt... we love having kids come out and experience what it’s like to work with their hands, know where their food comes from, and provide food for their community.”

Trail Building Helps Our Whole Community Get Outside

Two groups of students spent the afternoon on the trail. At Round Pond Natural Area students replaced a foot bridge that had begun to rot. As community volunteer Peter Zamore said, “it’s great to see Folsom students working together outside of the classroom, and learning hand-on basics about carpentry skills, trail maintenance, and maintaining the natural surroundings.”

Students measured, cut, drilled, and assembled a new foot bridge near where the trail ends on the shore of Lake Champlain.

“We love having kids come out and experience what it’s like to work with their hands, know where their food comes from, and provide food for their community.”

~Jane Pomykala
farmer, Pomykala Farm



The rest of the trail building students headed to the Water Wiggles Trail behind Folsom School, and cleared a overgrown sections of the boardwalk and nature trail, opening it up for students and families to use this year.

Putting the Garden to Bed Before Winter

The final group of students worked in the Folsom Community Garden. They weeded, topped off beds with compost donated by Canamak Farms, and planted a few fall crops: carrots, kale, radishes, and turnips. South Hero Land Trust Director Emily Alger reported great teamwork. “I was so impressed to see students who garden at home helping teach the others how to shake soil off of the roots of plants being weeded and how to cover strawberries with straw to protect from winter chills. Everyone worked hard to get the garden ready for fall.”

The students walked away with a clear sense of civic participation and pride, knowing that they can help create the community that they want to live in. South Hero Land Trust can’t wait to work with them on more projects in the future!

“It’s great to see Folsom students working together outside of the classroom, and learning hand-on basics about carpentry skills.”

~Peter Zamore,
board member
& volunteer

Many thanks to Rob Swanson for taking these and many other great photographs of the students during the community service day this fall.



Building a new foot bridge at Round Pond Natural Area



Clearing brush on the Recreation Path behind Folsom School



Let's Go for a Walk in the Woods

by Emily Alger

As the maple trees turned golden and the earth began to smell of pine needles and fallen leaves, I went for a walk in the woods. I chose one of my favorite spots in South Hero, Tracy Woods. And I invited Anne Tracy, one of the landowners, to come along with me. Meandering along the trails, it's clear that this forest is a magical place for children and grown-ups alike. Anne and her older brother Charles (who passed away in 1989) had the run of the place while growing up. Anne says, "my grandfather was up in the woods every day. We would go up to find him, or just run around- the woods were my playground... where my imagination grew, where I learned to explore and love the natural world."

Anne's grandfather was an avid woodsman who invited hundreds of boy scouts from the Islands and farther afield to camp in the woods over the years, while her grandmother loved gardens. She describes walking in the woods with her grandparents, learning about the trees from her grandfather and wildflowers from her grandmother. She tagged along with her brother, who encouraged her to feel brave and independent outdoors.

"The woods were my playground, where my imagination grew, where I learned to explore and be independent."

~Anne Tracy



Anne and Charles go for a walk on an autumn day, 1971

A Magical Place to Be a Child

She explored the world of her imagination, playing in an area they called the Enchanted Forest, where small trees grew in an old gravel pit. "I would play Alice in Wonderland- and pretend to eat the cake that makes you big. And then walk out into it and all the trees are dwarfed, so suddenly I was towering over them. And then I would pretend to drink the potion that makes you small and go back into the rest of the woods."

Outdoor spaces, from the edge of a stream to a wooded hillside, are important places for children. There are plenty of fallen branches, pine cones, leaves, and other materials to collect. There are hidden worlds to discover as they get a little older. Anne remembers building fairy houses in a mossy grove, just feet away from her grandfather, but feeling independent and brave. Those same branches become building materials later, and the tadpoles in the stream become science projects. There is no better way to encourage children to grow up to be naturalists and scientists (whether it's a profession or a passion) than to let them explore and learn about the natural world in their own backyard. And time spent with a mentor- like Anne's grandparents were for her- can be equally valuable.



Anne Tracy in the "Grandmother Tree," a place she'd go as a child in the woods

to be a child and explore. And that's what I want other children to be able to do. To have these woods as a place to come with their parents and go on walks, or come with their school group. To get up into the woods and explore. To learn to love, appreciate, and protect the natural world." And for adults? She says that to be someplace where we can set aside the worries of the world, "and just be still and breathe and listen," is something that helps bring a sense of peace and well-being back to our everyday lives.

Neighborhood children already play in these woods, building forts and fairy houses, visiting the giant hemlock trees, and looking for frogs and birds' nests. Adults walk here, seeking peace and renewal. So when Anne, along with her father Hobart Tracy and his wife Naomi King, came to South Hero Land Trust, wanting to explore the path of land conservation, I was eager to protect this special place. For the family, this is a way to protect a place they love. As Hobart told me, "this has always been our family homestead, and it's important to keep it that way. Conserving the land makes that possible." It has become clear that our community feels a connection to this land too, and I am so grateful to the many community members who gave gifts to make this project possible.

We completed our fundraising campaign (with our partners at the Lake Champlain Land Trust) this fall. Thank you for being part of this special project. When the Woods are conserved and the new trails open, the whole community will be able to enjoy this beautiful place. I hope you'll join me next summer, for a walk in the woods.

The Call of the Woods- Finding Peace and Renewal

Adults need wild places too. We all face challenges, worries, and fears in our lives. The woods can help us find a sense of calm. I know that when things seem to be

"Just be still and breathe and listen."

~Anne Tracy

moving too fast in my own life, a wander through the woods help me slow down. And while the trees don't actually speak to me, I often find solutions to my worries while walking or running along a wooded path.

As Anne grew up, her relationship with the woods changed. Her place of exploration and imagination became a peaceful refuge. For Anne, the woods is a healing place, and she says "as soon as I step into the woods, no matter what is going on in my life, I feel like I remember how to breathe, I become re-centered. I'm so grateful for that. All I have to do is come home."

It's these feelings the Tracy family wants to share with the South Hero community, today and into the future. Anne says the Woods were a "magical place to grow up,



A father and daughter investigate a wildflower found in the woods in South Hero. Spending time outdoors with a parent or mentor is an important way to learn about and begin to love the natural world.

Everyday Heroes Helping Out in our Community



Above:

A brother and sister team work together to remove a fallen tree from the Landon Community Trail. Using saws, rakes, loppers, and clippers, volunteers with Friends of Island Trails cleared a mile of trail in September. Volunteers with this newly formed trail stewardship group found that they could get a lot done by working together to make a difference in their community, and it could be a lot of fun too!

If you'd like to get involved with Friends of Island Trails, email guy@shlt.org or visit our website at www.shlt.org to sign up for e-news.

Right:

Local community members helped glean over 2,000 lbs of fruits and vegetables from Grand Isle county farms this summer, feeding their neighbors through the local food shelf, Food for Thought, and CIDER. The Gleaning Program run by the Healthy Roots Collaborative mobilizes volunteers and coordinates food donations by local farms. School groups, corporate teams, and individuals gave their time all season, to make sure this healthy food got to neighbors in need. Thank you for looking after our community!



Backscratchers on the Open Range

Wondering what this funny contraption is in the fields at Health Hero Farm? Turns out they are cattle scratchers- even cows have a few hard to reach spots to itch!

Over the last year farmers Bob Fireovid and Joan Falcao have been working with A Greener World (AGW) to improve animal welfare practices with their herd- something they are as committed to as they are to protecting the soil and water quality of their farm.

They recently achieved “Animal Welfare Approved” and “Certified Grassfed” certification. Certified Grassfed by AGW is the first—and only—food label in the U.S. and Canada that guarantees food products come from animals fed a 100 percent grass and forage diet, raised entirely outdoors on pasture or range, and managed according to the Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW leading welfare and environmental standards.

Robert and Joan believe that the benefits of these production methods benefit not only their livestock, but also their land and the people in their community who consume their products. “We think it’s the right thing to do, and we want to connect with beef consumers who agree.”



KEEPING IT LOCAL THROUGH WIND & SNOW AT THE CHAMPLAIN ISLANDS FARMERS' MARKET

NOVEMBER 4 & 18

DECEMBER 2 & 16

10:00 AM TO 2:00 PM

SOUTH HERO CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

FALL 2017 NEWSLETTER



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photo by Rob Swanson