



# SEEDS OF SOLIDARITY

*Cultivating Hope, Educating for Change*

## OUTREACH AND INREACH

People arrive in droves for Solidarity Saturday visiting days. Calls for group tours increase. Our workshops, visiting days, and tours constitute outreach, but maybe inreach a better word. Visiting women literacy educators from Afghanistan told us that solidarity translates as “to have heart” in their language. Perhaps inreach is a better descriptor than outreach to describe what happens among those who visit, that which transcends information and words. We come together diverse in life experience and world-view. When hearts are touched, new ideas and positive change sparked, we embody our mission.



Educators from Afghanistan taste new ideas.

High school students from California and Hong Kong feel the power.

Local teachers take note for school greenhouse design.

Solidarity Saturday visitors circle for a tour.



**Seeds of Solidarity Education Center provides people of all ages with the inspiration and practical tools to use renewable energy and grow food in their communities.**



## CULTIVATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Partnerships with schools have sprung five school gardens and greenhouses, with a sixth in progress. Each season brings excitement and growth. This year, fifth and eighth graders

pored over plans, tightened bolts, and sealed glazing before raising their greenhouses once winter snows melted. To celebrate spring, our staff donned “Tired

Transported Tanya” and “Lively Local Louise” garb,

visiting 800 students in 40 health classes to promote local food from local farms. In June, over a thousand tomato, cucumber, strawberry and pepper seedlings went home with families and community members to inspire home gardens. Two schools served as sites for a summer gardening program we sponsor. Children staked peas, made zucchini and basil topped pizza,

and decorated canvas bags for trips to the local farmer’s market. An August back-to-school workshop attracted 30 educators, harvesting ideas to link gardens to their curriculum.



*If we didn't do this at school, I never would have done it...It was a lot more fun than I thought it would be building the greenhouse and growing things.*

*Eating what we grew is very cool. Patience. It took a lot of patience to get the whole group to work together and to wait for food to ripen.*

**Eighth Grader**



WELLNESSES

## HOW TO GROW A SALAD GARDEN

- Start with a bed of fertile soil or compost, or
- Make a mini-bed. Poke holes in the bottom of a plastic fish flat from a restaurant, or make one 20" by 10" by 3" deep of wood (not pressure treated, with slats on the bottom for drainage) then fill with fertile soil.
- Sprinkle seeds like lettuces, Asian greens, spinach, kale and mustards in rows.
- If a mini bed, put in a sunny window or greenhouse. Keep soil moist
- In 2-3 weeks, cut your baby greens with a scissors and enjoy a salad.
- Do not pull them out. Keep moist. They will grow again.
- Cut and enjoy 2-3 times, then pull plants out, add more soil and sow more seeds.



Our efforts to cultivate healthy schools and communities bridge hands-on experience with policy as we educate and organize around new federal wellness mandates.

Seeds of Solidarity is convening school-based teams, community agencies and farmers to incorporate school gardens and cafeteria purchases of farm-fresh food into the development and implementation of local wellness policies. In 2006, courses for teachers, a cooking program at summer food sites for low income children and their families, and distribution of our new kit with resources for teaching about local food and energy round out our efforts to promote locally grown food, community health and connection to the sources of our sustenance.



# FOOD FOR THE SOL

Did you know that basil is the symbol of love in Italy? That one cup of cooked chard contains over 300% of the daily recommendation of Vitamin K which increases bone strength or that 500 years ago tomatoes were considered poisonous? North Quabbin area senior citizens who participate in Senior FarmShare are among our favorite visitors to Seeds of Solidarity. They arrive to pick up a bag of farm fresh produce along with recipes that include these fun facts and food for thought. Senior FarmShare is funded by grants through CISA and provides income-eligible seniors with a share from a participating farm for 10 weeks. Seeds of Solidarity Farm and SOL Garden distribute over 1,000 pounds of produce to 40 seniors. The weekly recipes help participants enjoy their overflowing bags of kale, collard greens, multi-colored tomatoes, and sunny patty pan squash.

Following last year's success, the SOL Gardeners hosted a "Youth and Elders Breaking Bread" dinner. Jeremy harvested tomatoes, beans, and cucumbers from SOL Garden and delivered them to the church where he and other SOL gardeners prepared a delectable meal featuring food from their garden and other local farms. Rob and Ashton made the corn bread, Manda chopped beans, and Casey diced just-picked tomatoes for the pasta salad. This intergenerational harvest feast coincided with "Eat In, Act Out" week, a national event that encourages people to prepare and celebrate fresh food to encourage healthy eating and support of local agriculture. SOL gardeners and seniors alike look forward to sharing the harvest and another celebration next year.



## Youth & Elders Breaking Bread

### —MENU—

#### CHEESES

*from Chase Hill and Smith Farms*

#### SMOKED SALMON DIP

*with Seeds of Solidarity Garlic*

#### HONEY GINGER CHICKEN

*from Diemand Farm*

#### WARM CORNBREAD

*with local corn*

#### SOLIDARITY SALAD

*mixed greens*

#### PASTA SALAD

*with fresh tomatoes, beans, and basil from SOL Garden*

#### MAPLE WALNUT ICE CREAM

*from Johnson's Farm topped with Bullard Farm Blueberries*





## SOL GARDEN

We approach the 8th season of SOL Garden, our after-school and summer program that inspires leadership among teenagers as they use their hearts, minds and bodies to cultivate food and a hopeful future. Over the years more than 100 teens have wheelbarrowed tons of compost onto raised beds, constructed an abundant greenhouse and the SOL Shack meeting space, installed a solar irrigation system, given 30 conference presentations, dished up 3,000 plates of pesto pasta, SOLsa burritos and garlic grilled cheese at festivals. They've planted gardens at a shelter for homeless families, an elder care facility, and local schools. Something happens through SOL Garden that resonates with the essence of Solidarity that is the theme of this newsletter—collective action—to have heart.



How do SOL Gardeners integrate and feel the impact of SOL Garden in their lives years later? Sarah, a veterinary technician and soon to be mom promotes herbal pet care at her office. Keith says “he learned more on those summer afternoons than years in a classroom,” and is pursuing a political science degree seasoned with semesters in Spain and Central America. Kacie farmed throughout Italy; Kirby serves on Seeds of Solidarity’s board of directors. Ray is an accomplished musician and works at a local lumber yard and the YMCA. He originated the tag line “Food for the SOL” while a member of the first SOL Garden group in 1999. Says Ray:



*I entered the program somewhat of a confused adolescent. I always felt I needed to stand out and usually that meant I was getting in trouble. SOL Garden marked the first time I realized people would listen to me as a person with ideas. I had to work with everyone to make a goal happen, to see everyone putting in their thoughts and input and listening to what I had to say was a first. Finally my creative side was accepted and I found an outlet. I've adapted a bit of the SOL Garden philosophy—get out there, talk to people, don't force feed it just educate with facts and let people make up their own minds. The same thing can be said of my music, I just do my thing and let the people decide.*

# REFLECT



## SEEDS OF SOLIDARITY EDUCATION CENTER

### THE FARM

Today's fossil fuel based agriculture is sailing towards the perfect storm as the cost and depletion of oil makes fueling machinery, producing nitrogen based fertilizers and pesticides, and transporting food an average of 1,500 miles from farm to table prohibitive. Small, decentralized farms are the future. Seeds of Solidarity Farm, the for-profit complement to Seeds of Solidarity Education Center is an economically viable family farm that uses minimal fossil fuel.



The philosophy and practices at work on the farm make visible and validate what we promote in our education programs:

**Reclaim and Build Marginal Land:** Compost, manure, and straw from local farms are added to permanent raised beds, and cover crops like buckwheat grown but not tilled in with machinery. Worms thrive, producing nutrient rich castings and till the soil without machinery. Marginal land becomes fertile soil, a practice that can be replicated on lots, schoolyards, and homes and fields stripped of topsoil.

**More Small Farms:** We promote a highly productive, handcrafted vs. machinery approach that attracts apprentices and prospective small farmers.

**Use Renewable Energy:** Solar electricity powers pumps for irrigation. Biodiesel fuels the truck used to make twice weekly deliveries to restaurants and co-ops; restaurants like Sienna give us used grease. A solar hot water system provides bottom heat to seedlings and solar hoop-houses extend the growing season from March to December.

*We celebrate the quality and spirit of relationship that our restaurant has with farmers- we care about each other and support one another in our goals. We help keep each other on the bigger path—the path of nurturance and respect for food, the earth, and all of the players in that.*

Deborah Snow, Chef and Co-Owner  
The Blue Heron Restaurant  
(Seeds of Solidarity customer and supporter since 1997)





# NORTH QUABBIN GARLIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL

Mark your calendars:  
8th Annual  
"Festival that Stinks"  
Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Bruce cut new trails at one end of the festival field this year, one for walking, the other for the horse drawn hayrides. As folks "take the local path" they follow signs that serve as trail markers. Renewable Energy is Homeland Security. Eating is a Moral Act. Art is to the Soul as Garlic is to the Palate. Families pass each other on the trail with savory fare from food booths and chef demos, headed toward the solar powered music stage or to join in the garlic and egg toss. The words and interactions on the "local path" epitomize the values that drive the festival. Organized by neighbors ages 6-86, the event is a celebration of the richness to be found in our communities. It brings people of all walks of life together to experience wares crafted and grown by hand, build a regional economy, learn something new, have a blast. 2005 marked the first weekend long festival: an amazing success enjoyed by 8,000 attendees, 140 volunteers and 80 vendors. All those folks and fun, and








only two bags of trash while 28 filled with compostable plates and cornstarch based utensils turn to fertile soil. The line for garlic ice cream stretched long, past photos depicting the old milkhouse, barn and fields that Dory posted to tell the story of the historic Forster family farm, site of the festival.




Among the festivities, Katherine [Grandma Gigi] Forster, matriarch of the farm shared a laugh and received a bouquet from Senator Stephen Brewer in honor of her 98th birthday. We celebrate the life of Katherine, who died peacefully and with family by her side just one month later on October 17th.

# CELEBRATE

## YOU CAN HELP SPREAD SEEDS OF SOLIDARITY

-  Come for a Solidarity Saturday and network with others
-  Contact us about a tour for a group
-  Purchase our curriculum resources for a local school or library
-  Volunteer at the Garlic and Arts Festival
-  Join our mailing list (on our website); add a friend's name too

 Make a tax-deductible contribution that will...

- Provide a SOL Patrol presentation
- Grow a school garden or greenhouse
- Engage a teenager in SOL Garden
- Support a Food for the SOL community meal

 **WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.**



## SEEDS OF SOLIDARITY EDUCATION CENTER

*Cultivating Hope, Educating for Change*

### FROM OUR TABLE

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Newsletter designed by  
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A visiting news reporter recently asked if using renewable energy is a sacrifice. As a verb, to sacrifice is to give up something important or valued in exchange for somebody or something else that is considered more important or valuable.

What do we value at Seeds of Solidarity? Children nourished by fresh, healthy food that they have helped to grow. Energy produced from renewable sources that don't leave toxic emissions, environmental havoc, or lives destroyed by war in their wake. There are challenges to this lifestyle, this work, but what do we give up? Over consumption, corporate control and disconnect from our sources of food and energy. Working together in our lives, communities, and institutions to make change means we may need to let go of some material things so others have their basic needs met locally and globally. Might more of us end up morally and spiritually richer in the process? Is that a sacrifice? Is increased consciousness and compassion a sacrifice?

Collective action is embedded in the definition of Solidarity. The vision that drives our work is one of individuals and communities empowered to grow food and use renewable energy. We hope each person who visits is inspired to integrate a piece of what they experience here into their own lives. We ask that they think of one person to tell something new learned, that they spread 'seeds of solidarity.' Collective action nourishes a vision that is alive with creativity, hope, and the desire to come together and do our best to create beauty and strengthen our communities.



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