

LETTER FROM FARMER Q



Dear friends,
It's hard to believe there was snow on the ground just a few weeks ago! We're playing catch

up here at Fernbrook - the greenhouses are filled with new plants, the children's garden is getting a "face lift," peas, lettuce and carrots are in the ground. Construction on our block barn building is scheduled to begin this week, creating a new indoor space for all of our programs. We have a fantastic design for a rain garden in the barnyard which will keep the area dryer and educational. We hope to have all the work completed by the time summer camp starts. Whow! I'm exhausted just thinking about it.

SPRINGTIME SPLENDOR AT FERNBROOK

**BY CLAIRE WILDERMUTH,
PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

First of all, hello Fernbrook families! I'm so thrilled to have joined the Fernbrook staff this year as Program Coordinator in the Education Center. It has been fantastic getting to meet some of you and hopefully in the next few months I will have had a chance to meet all of you. A little about me real quickly. . . I grew up in the Poconos of Pennsylvania near Haw-



We're very happy to have Claire Wildermuth as our new full time member of the Fernbrook Education Center Staff. She has put many creative touches on our Homeschool programs and will be coordinating our "Country Wisdom" family programs. Campfires are back at Fernbrook! In addition, Claire has fired up some unique and educational experiences for our Young Stewards, older summer campers (ages 12-14) that are not available anywhere else, that I know of.

Eric has been busy expanding our "Farm to School" programs. We've had groups of high school kids from Trenton planting seeds in our greenhouse; the plants will be part of their community food garden in the city. By working with Education Works in Trenton, we've been able to keep the summer program at Washington Elementary School open in the city despite budget cuts. Each year more school trips are made to Fernbrook so kids can see first hand how a farm works. We don't just put them on a wagon

and ride them around. They get involved in small groups and make connections to what they're learning in school.

Upcoming is our third annual Plant Sale. We'll be open the first three weekends in May; heirloom tomato plants, herbs and all of our nursery stock will be available for sale. Proceeds will all be used for bringing low income children to the farm this summer; an experience that can be life changing for them!

I hope to see you all on the farm soon. I hope you will always feel free to make suggestions and introduce yourselves. We're always looking for ways to improve our programs. Think of the farm as your own. We are all stewards of the same planet.

Farmer Q

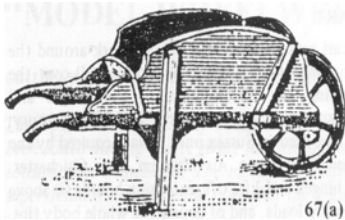


ley/Lake Wallenpaupack and majored in environmental studies at Dartmouth College. After graduating in 2008, I worked as an environmental education instructor for the YMCA in South Carolina. Before coming to Fernbrook, I spent a few months bouncing around other jobs teaching environmental education classes. Like most of our staff, and probably you, I love being outside and learning about the wonders of Mother Nature and all the amazing aspects of her life. I look forward to getting to talk to and know all of you! So, whether you're coming for Homeschool classes, camps, family programs or just a spontaneous visit to explore and say hi to the animals, please feel free to find me and introduce yourselves.

The first month of my time here at Fernbrook seems to have flown by with heavy snow

storms, sunshine, and lots of rain; ushering in what I like to call "mud season". I am certainly not complaining because it means I have an opportunity, along with the students in the winter Homeschool semester, to wear my rubber rain boots, which certainly wouldn't be acceptable at most job sites! I've heard about and started to see so many wonderful changes to the farm as spring arrives. I am very excited to experience each of the seasons for the first time at Fernbrook. We have an adorable lamb in the animal barn that was born at the end of February and the crocuses have bloomed to provide a blanket of purple around the Bed & Breakfast and nearby gardens. Visitors are always welcome at Fernbrook, so come on over and check out the farm during Springtime (but make sure you bring appropriate footwear)!

As more families come to Fernbrook, we are anxious to plan more programs and create more opportunities for all ages to enjoy and share the farm. We hope the whole family can join us for spring and summer family programs which we are excitedly planning. You won't want to miss the *Country Wisdom Series* that will allow you and your family to learn some wonderful country living skills from spinning wool to candle making. Programs are geared toward ages 5 to 114. We hope to see all generations participating together to develop useful skills and make some products to take home. Finally, we can't forget the evening explorations coupled with campfires, always a hit! This season, the campfire nights will include an owl prowl, astronomy night and exploring for nocturnal animals. Dates and times for all of these fantastic family opportunities are on our website, so mark www.fernbrookeducation.org and remember to check back often for all the Fernbrook updates!



PLANT SALE

Heirloom, Herb and Native Plant Sale

Specializing in native and flowering plants, Rhododendrons and unusual Conifers.

Organic Heirloom Tomatoes and Herbs.
ENTIRE NURSERY OPEN TO PUBLIC

When: First 3 weekends in May
Time: Saturdays 8:00am - 1:00pm
 Sundays 8:00am - 1:00pm

All proceeds to benefit Fernbrook Farms Education Center

Dedicated to teaching children about food, agriculture and the environment.

Spring is in the air...

...and summer soon will be here!

By Brian Kuser, Camp Director

A walk on the trails of Fernbrook these days will lead you through a forest floor filled with colors of the budding flowers and ferns that return year after year. There are the usual Jack-in-the-Pulpits, violets, and may apples as well as all the mysterious species that bring new excitement and anticipation to the walk each spring. One can't help but to be amazed at all the life that exists in the forest this time of year.



Seeing the newborn growth also gets me excited for the upcoming summer months at Fernbrook when campers return to campus. Similar to the budding forest floor, there are the usual enthusiastic campers that come back year after year who bring their knowledge and expertise to Fernbrook. In addition to the returning campers, there are the new campers that arrive each summer who bring a renewed sense of joy and wonder to all that Fernbrook has to offer.

During the winter and spring, I often find myself thinking about the beautiful summer months when Fernbrook truly comes to life. With summer enrollment filling up, the thoughts of all campers, new and old, getting the opportunity to share in feeding the animals, hiking the trails, playing games on the great lawn, making projects in the Arts and Crafts room and creating memories for life only brings joy to my heart.

Not only am I getting excited about the upcoming summer but, so too are the Barn Swallows. They arrived just the other day and they're scouting out their nesting spots for the summer!

Summer 2010 at Fernbrook promises to be another exciting year and I can't wait for it to get started. Have a great spring and see you soon.

Mr. Brian

Urban Youth Scholarships

We, at Fernbrook, are committed to providing urban youth with an opportunity to learn about agriculture, nutrition and our environment. We take pride as the only education center that offers an educational summer camp experience to urban, at-risk youth from inner-city Trenton and the surrounding area ~ at no cost to the children or their families. Camp is an exciting time in a young person's life. We believe that every child should be exposed to experiential outdoor learning and that it is important to share our mission. With all of the turmoil these children live with on a daily basis, the opportunities to "just be a kid" are few and far between. Here, they get to enjoy such a simple pleasures as soil under their nails and fresh picked fruit in their bellies. We appreciate our past supporters and thank you for your consideration of contributing to our **Urban Camp Scholarship Fund**.

Follow us on Twitter at "Fernbrook Farms" and become our "Fan" on Facebook at Fernbrook Farms Education Center

Greetings from the Barnyard!

By Eric Tadlock,
Education Director

I'd like to start off by first saying "thank you." Thank you to all of you who have ever contributed to Fernbrook Farms, whether it be as a summer camp parent, a family program participant, a teacher who has brought your class for an authentic farm education program, a financial contributor, a volunteer working to beautify the farm, a shareholder, a wedding guest or bride and groom. It's you who make Fernbrook the special place that it is and help us to continue our growth and prosperity and our ability to provide folks with a unique perspective on food, agriculture and the environment and the experiences to learn and therefore make more educated daily choices for healthier lifestyles.



As you can see when you visit the farm, Fernbrook continues to strive and expand despite financially difficult times. In conversations with many of my colleagues working in similar environments, I am reminded of how fortunate we are to be continually growing, to be developing new programs, refurbishing buildings and outdoor spaces and hiring more staff. Upon reflection, I have easily deduced that people out there, people like you, just plain "get it." Our community members understand the importance of farm-based and environmental education. Even in their efforts to downsize and lead simpler lives, they choose to leave it on the list of things in their lives not to sacrifice or omit. In fact, most people tell me a Fernbrook experience is a reminder to get back to the basics, to simplify and remember what is important in their lives and reconnect to the agrarian roots and heritage that all of us share. We all share the past "culture" of agriculture (read more Wendell Berry to explore this concept further).

I'm not trying to mislead anyone, however. Fernbrook, though successfully developing, is still a bare-bones operation which still requires creativity and ingenu-

ity to maintain. We tighten our belts just like the rest of the country and focus on the needs of the program when making decisions. We rely heavily on the farm to provide us with the educational resources we need to deliver top-notch educational programming and we rely on you, our community for help.

This is where my pitch comes in.

Now, I really don't like asking for money (and I'm not about to ask you here in this letter, so don't put the Moosletter down just yet!) which in this line of work can be detrimental. I've gotten much better at it, even to the point where I ask all my relatives and friends twice a year to make a financial donation (Thank you to all who made donations this year). I do not, however, have a hard time telling people that they can contribute to Fernbrook in so many other ways.

"Getting Involved" will be a new page on our website and it will outline a few options for folks who would like to contribute in ways other than writing a check. First, we'll be having a "Volunteer Work Day" on May 8th from 8:00 AM to 4 PM. We'll have jobs for everyone, big and small, to help us spruce up the place for spring programs, field trips and homeschoolers. Also, to help get the barnyard and trails in good shape for summer camp. This, by the way is a great excuse to fire up that old chainsaw that doesn't get that much use.

Another option outlined in the "Get Involved" page, is a request for volunteers to help coordinate and maintain our Children's Garden. We've worked very hard to develop a unique educational garden and need multiple sets of hands to maintain it throughout the summer. The rewards of working in the garden are endless and fruitful (figuratively and metaphorically speaking).

We're also offering an opportunity for high school students to do some volunteer work with our summer camp kids. The right candidate is someone who enjoys children and has an interest in gaining experience in a work place that provides a safe, structured environment for children to learn and play. Volunteers will be closely supervised and guided by our seasoned summer camp staff.

Also new to the website will be options for folks to make contributions through a wish list for Gifts In-Kind, Planned Giving and other donation options.

Lastly, I give you one more alternative way to give back to Fernbrook. As most of you know, Fernbrook doesn't delve too far into the political arena, though we do sit at the table with The New Jersey Department of Agriculture at many meetings. With that said, I do ask you all to take a few minutes to explore these two issues.

I'm going to assume that most of you reading this article will agree with me on two basic points. The *first* is that children deserve to have the option of eating fresh, healthy food at school and the *second* is that children need to spend more time outdoors. If you agree with me on this, then I encourage you to explore the following websites.

The first Act, which has just been introduced by Rush Holt, our congressman from the 12th District, is the [Farm to School Act](#). This bill would allow and require school food service providers to contract local growers to supply more fresh food to school cafeterias, as well as supplement nutrition education in public schools. Find more information at www.farmtoschool.org/policies.php.

The second is the [No Child Left Inside Act](#), www.nochildleftinside.org. This act is currently going through congress and needs public support to pass. Briefly, it asks congress for more financial resources for Environmental Education programs, like Fernbrook's, to facilitate hands-on learning experiences for public and private school children outside of the classroom to instill greater stewardship and environmental understanding at an early age. Please visit the website, learn more about the act and write to your congressman or congresswoman in support.

While Fernbrook has been forced to raise some program fees in order to improve the quality of our education programs, we are still one of the most reasonably priced in private, non-profit, farm-based education. We hope that you'll take some time to "Get Involved" and help us to continue our mission to "educate about food, agriculture and the environment" Please contact me with any questions at eric@fernbrookfarms.com. Thanks again to all of you for all your continued support in the sustainability of Fernbrook Farms Education Center.



Family Programs Spring/Summer 2010

FERNBROOK FARMS EDUCATION CENTER



CAMPFIRE SERIES – *These evening programs are designed to bring lots of family fun and nature enjoyment for all ages. The first half of each program includes educational activities that lead into campfire time engrossed in songs, skits, stories, and marshmallow roasting. All campfire programs start at 7pm. Admission: \$10/person (Children ages 4 and under are free).*

Saturday April 10th: Owl Prowl – During the evening we will investigate owl feathers, adaptations, food sources and calls. Then we will take to the woods in hopes of hearing and/or seeing Fernbrook owls large and small before warming up around a campfire with entertainment and a snack. *Rain option: Friday, April 16th*

Friday April 30th: Family Astronomy Night – Come hear magical stories of some spring constellations and marvel at the star-lit sky before circling around the campfire for songs and s'mores. Fernbrook staff will teach you how to identify constellations in the night sky and provide star charts to keep. *Rain option: Saturday, May 1st*

Saturday June 5th: Nocturnal Nature – Join the Fernbrook family for a program designed to delight the senses. The evening will include a range of activities geared towards night life, sights, sounds and smells. Come enjoy the darkness with us then finish the evening with fire, family and friends! *Rain option: Friday, June 25th*

COUNTRY WISDOM SERIES – *Join us for any or all of these classes involving country living skills! Classes are geared towards ages 5 to 114 years but youngsters 4 and under may accompany for free. Topics are priced individually due to the different supplies used. Space is limited for these unique programs so sign up soon!*

Saturday April 10th, 10-11AM: Sheep to Shawl I – This is the first of a two-part series on processing wool. Enjoy a sheep shearing demonstration while learning a little shearing and spinning history! Afterwards, try your hand at cleaning and carding the wool to untangle fibers and prepare them for spinning. **Admission: \$10/person**

Saturday April 24th, 10-11AM: Sheep to Shawl II – In this extension of the first class, you will learn to spin the carded wool using a drop spindle. Following the spinning, we will dye the newly spun wool. By the end of these two classes, proud participants will have a better understanding of the “sheep to shawl” process and take home a sample of homespun yarn. **Admission: \$10/person**

Saturday May 8th, 9:30-11AM: Garden Planting/Composting – It's May and time for planting the plants you bought at **Fernbrook fundraiser plant sales! Whether you have a black thumb or a green thumb, come join the group at Fernbrook as we get our hands dirty learning about gardening and composting. If you ever wonder where to place certain plants in your garden, what type of compost container to use or what you can/cannot compost, this class is for you! *Rain date: Sunday May 9th 12:30-2pm* **Admission: \$10/person**

Saturday June 5th, 9:30-11AM: Paper Making – Don't miss this opportunity to create your own beautiful paper! This class will dive into the artistic side of paper-making and allow you to produce high quality paper using natural materials. **Admission: \$15/person**

Saturday June 19th, 9:30-11AM: Candle Making – Candle making before electricity was a chore but now it is only fun! This class will demonstrate different ways to make candles and give you the opportunity to make your own candles for use at home or as gifts. **Admission: \$15/person**

Limited space for all programs!

Reservations and a 50% deposit (refundable until 24 hours prior to event) are required

for all programs so sign up soon!

To RSVP please call or email:

(609) 298-4028 or Cate@fernbrookfarms.com

www.fernbrookeducation.org

** Fernbrook Education Center annual plant sale fundraiser will be the first three Sat/Sun in May from 8am-1pm so plan to come get some wonderful garden and landscaping additions while supporting outdoor education!