



CommunityVoices

Issue 38 • June 2011

Cultivating Biodynamics in Camphill California's Land Program



Sara, coworker and garden apprentice, checks on the first young zucchini plants of the season. Sara takes great pride in her seedlings and even greater pride when they mature.

As daylight awakens from its slumber, so do the friends at Camphill California, eager to tend the land that gives them back so much bounty.

Friends and coworkers at Camphill California have been practicing biodynamic and organic gardening and farming since the community was formed over 12 years ago. The vibrant healthy fruits, vegetables and herbs that sustain this community daily are a true testimony to the success of this sustainable ecosystem.

But what on earth is biodynamic gardening? It's really nothing new. Biodynamic gardening and farming has been around since the mid 1920s as a response to industrialization's destructive effect on the earth and subsequent crop failures.

Austrian scientist Dr. Rudolf Steiner introduced biodynamic farming to German farmers in 1924. The farmers were concerned with the decline of the soil and sought the advice of Steiner who had spent all his life researching and investigating the forces that regulate life and growth. An associate of Steiner's, Dr. Ehrenfried Pfeiffer brought biodynamic farming to the U.S. in the 1930s.

"Biodynamic farming is an ecological and sustainable system," says Steve Zipperlen, land manager at Camphill California. "It combines common-sense agriculture such as crop rotation, cover crops and organic composting with homeopathic preparations." Steve adds

that the process embraces the living ecology of the soil with the interaction of cosmic forces on the plant community. Biodynamics combines organic practices that heal and enhance the earth and make the soil rich and sustainable year after year.

"Biodynamic gardening creates a viable world to adults with developmental disabilities," explains Steve. "My focus is the social aspect of the process: This is just as important, if not more so than the methodology. To me it's spiritually important to engage the community in all these processes."

Biodynamic gardening creates a viable world to adults with developmental disabilities

It All Begins with Organic Composting

"The organic compost has all types of green waste including branches, plants, leaves, roots, etc. and is mixed with kitchen scraps, dirt, organic horse manure and organic lime, which balances the pH," says Steve. "It takes between three and six months for the compost to be ready to spread."

continued next page



One of Jonathan's favorite jobs is to gently water the young seedlings as they're planted.

Homeopathic Preparations

Biodynamic methods incorporate homeopathic preparations, some of which go into the organic compost and others that are sprayed directly onto the soil and plants, according to Steve. These preparations include yarrow, chamomile, stinging nettle, valerian, dandelion and oak bark and reintroduce humus and microbial activity to the soil.

Another preparation is a ground-up mixture of quartz silica that stimulates the fruiting process. These preparations combined with fresh organic cow or horse manure complete the process.

The Stirring

In early spring and late summer, Camphill coworkers and residents take part in the “stirring” of organic preparations. The mixture is stirred continuously for one hour, stirring one way and then the other to create a vortex. “This aerates the mixture which has a positive effect on the rooting and leafing process,” explains Steve. The preparation is then distributed amongst the members of the community to splash onto the earth and plants.

Lee, resident of Camphill California, has been working alongside Steve on the land for over 10 years. “He mainly works the wheel barrow,” says Steve. “Lee loves picking up the weeds. He also loves picking chamomile and is very good at harvesting and sorting, especially fava beans and peas.”

The Spring Planting Begins

The planting begins as soon as the weather is consistent and dry enough to plant, according to Sara Oakley, coworker and garden apprentice. In the meantime the land crew has been growing winter vegetables in raised beds throughout the year. “Sara has been an amazing asset to the land and the land crew,” says Steve. “She loves what she does and is extremely good at it.”

Steve explains that each winter the seedlings happily germinate in our neighbor’s (Rob Kilpatrick and Birgit Weskamp) greenhouse until they are ready to plant. In March, if the land is dry enough, the team plants tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, peppers and melons.

Camphill California uses only open-pollinated methods of fertilization. “Seeds need to be fertilized naturally—that’s how nature intended it!” says Steve. The sources for Camphill’s organic and biodynamic seeds have come from various places in the US over the years. As of last year, Camphill California began ordering its biodynamic vegetable and fruit seeds from Camphill Copake in New York. “This is great because it employs the friends at a Camphill community,” says Steve. “It keeps everything in-house.”

When meals are served at Camphill California and the friends know they have had a hand and a heart in the sustaining of this wonderful community: it feels right; it feels good; it is a feeling of taking care of each other.

Steve says that biodynamic gardening has become very fashionable in recent years. “But in the process of becoming fashionable,” he laughs, “people have discovered that it really works.”



Above Left: Lee shells fava beans with the help of Steve. The seeds will be dried and planted as next winter’s cover crop.

Left: Coleman clears weeds and grass from the compost area. Steve looks on.

Above: Delicious, robust carrots are one of the staple root vegetables grown at Camphill California.

Exciting Events & News at Camphill California



From left to right at table: Frans, Jessica, Coleman, Sarah, Lynn, Alex, Aaron, Malcolm and Sasha take a break after writing in their journals about public and private spaces.

A Workshop in Social Skills and Self-Advocacy Creating Opportunities

Lynn Haugh, house manager of Ishi House, one of Camphill California's two large residential homes decided to create a self-advocacy and social skills workshop for the younger members of the community. "I feel passionately that people should be empowered to have as many opportunities as they can in life," says Lynn. "Because the younger members of our community have the least life experience, I thought the workshop would be really beneficial to them." Assisting her in this endeavor is Malcolm Fliesler, a caregiver and volunteer in Camphill California's day program. Together Lynn and Malcolm use skits, role playing, flip charts and notes to demonstrate what to do or how to act in public and private situations. Everyone in the workshop keeps a journal where they write notes, draw pictures or collect magazine clippings that relate to the topics they discuss.

"Learning about Ourselves"

Lynn explains that the goals of the workshop are to give everyone the skills to go into public situations and behave appropriately with others and expect others to behave appropriately with them. Everyone in the class learns how to respond when they are not treated with dignity or respect, what to do in a potentially difficult or uncomfortable situation, and how to approach a trusted person with their concerns.

For Malcolm, helping to facilitate the workshop is a rewarding experience. "I wanted to help contribute something to the community that the friends would benefit from. It's been really fun for everyone involved and I'm happy to be able to teach something useful while at the same time creating a fun environment." For Sasha, who participates in the class, the best part is "I like it because we participate together and learn about ourselves."

A Community Exchange

David Keane, who lives at Camphill Triform in New York recently spent two weeks at Camphill California as part of a work exchange organized between the two communities. While David was in California, Camphill Communities California member Frans was in Triform, New York. The men swapped bedrooms and workplaces during their visits and seemed to thoroughly enjoy the change of pace. David said he especially loved working in the gardens and spending time with friends. Frans commented, "my favorite things were working on the estate and art program – we did candle making, clay modeling, and site-seeing (in Hudson). Other favorite things were shooting pool in the game room at the Phoenix Center, exercising on the treadmill and watching movies."

Camphill California Lends a Helping Hand

While many residents of Central California experienced a deluge of rain during March, residents of Pacific Cove Mobile Home Park in the town of Capitola experienced catastrophic loss when a drainpipe burst and water flooded their homes. In an effort to aid the flood victims, Gayle Ortiz, of Gayle's Bakery and Rotisserie, and Kim Hogan of Santa Cruz County Business Exchange, organized a network of local churches and businesses to help feed the 26 displaced residents. David Schwartz, Camphill California senior coworker spear-headed an organizational effort on behalf of Camphill California to provide homemade dinners for the residents as part of our local outreach. Our sincere thanks to Cory Ray and Craig Rowell for financially supporting this effort.



From left to right: David, Coleman, Allie, Sasha, Claudia, and Bryan serve a homemade dinner to the flood victims at the Capitola Inn where they were housed until they could return home.

Creating A Home at Camphill California

A New Home

When Daniel LeCover arrived at Camphill Communities California on March 23, 2000 at the age of 24, it was the culmination of a process that his parents Deborah and Stephen had begun nearly five years earlier. “You do the best you can when caring for your child and this opportunity (Camphill California) became a possibility that we had never imagined,” said Deborah.

Their journey to Camphill California began through their participation in the Fragile X Association of Southern California. As dedicated parents of a child with Fragile X, Deborah and Stephen were very active participants in the Association: Deborah served as president and Stephen as a board member. Stephen also served on the board of the National Fragile X Foundation and co-chaired the 10th International Fragile X Conference in 2000. It was during their service to these Fragile X organizations that they learned about a fledgling Camphill community near Santa Cruz.

First Connections

During Daniel’s first visits to Camphill California, Deborah and Stephen noticed his immediate interest and desire to connect with the community. For both of them, this was significant. The fact that Daniel chose to be attentive during his



Daniel enjoys a day at the horse ranch.

Camphill visits and to participate in conversations was also important to his parents. Deborah explains that Daniel always showed great empathy for others and Camphill provided a perfect fit for their family.

On Daniel’s first visit to Camphill California, Stephen asked Daniel if he could imagine himself living in the community. Daniel’s answer was a definitive “yes.” After these visits to

**Daniel is a smart and sentient person
with a joyful sense of humor!**

Camphill California Daniel learned that he would not be able to have a TV as he had been accustomed to. When Daniel returned home he went to his stereo that he had been given 11 years earlier (and never used) and adapted to this new way of enjoying opera on his own.

A New Lifestyle

For the past 11 years, Daniel has helped to build Camphill California into a thriving community of more than 19 adults with special needs. He is a member of the land team and has played many roles in the care, maintenance and cultivation of our organic garden, orchard and vineyard. However, his favorite job in the land program is sifting biodynamic compost. “Danny is an expert at composting,” says Steve Zipperlen, land manager. “Besides helping to make the compost, he screens it and takes out any unwanted particles. The end result is a very fine and rich soil to feed the earth.”

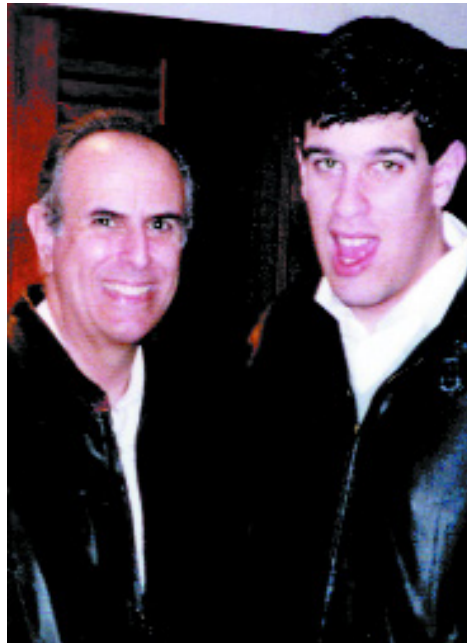
Once a week Daniel also works in the weavery on the table loom with his good friend and caregiver Matthias. Daniel hand-



Daniel’s mother Deborah and baby Danny share some quality time in the warm Southern California sun. They waited ten years for their baby boy.

weaves bookmarks and sachets that are later filled with lavender from Camphill California's organic herb garden.

Laboring in the gardens and eating fresh organic meals each day has also helped Daniel to stay fit and healthy. Tall in stature (6'3"), when Daniel first arrived at Camphill California he weighed 235 pounds. His new house and work manager, Steve, forecast a 50-pound drop in his weight after six months. Sure enough, after six months of a healthy outdoor lifestyle, Daniel's weight was down to 180. His enjoyment of all foods is well known, but corn chips have remained his all-time favorite.



Daniel's father Stephen and Daniel share good times.

Daniel has lived in both the large homes at Camphill California. Currently he resides in Ishi House with five other men and women and four caregivers. His house responsibilities include filling and emptying the dishwasher, filling the breakfast glasses and getting the newspaper.

This year, Daniel, with the help of Matthias, accomplished a number of personal goals that allow him to be less dependent on others for his daily care.

A Community of Peers

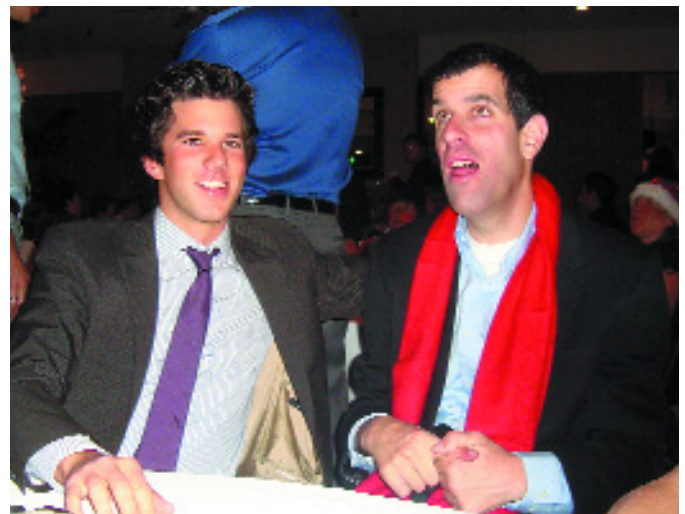
Daniel's friends are often the men and women who support him in his home and work life. His friendships with his housemates play an important role in his self-expression and motivation.

Each week Daniel joins some of his housemates to throw hoops at Jade Street Park. He joins others for meals at local restaurants and enjoys going to movies and Sunday hikes. He looks forward to Saturday trips to the downtown library where he picks out opera CDs and enjoys dressing up for community events, especially when they involve costumes and performance. His favorite activity is movie night on Sundays where he and housemate Aaron enjoy dancing and singing to movie clips.

Quietly observant, Daniel is a smart and sentient person with a joyful sense of humor. You may witness Daniel's humor when he calls you Alice Cooper or Muhammad Ali. He may toss an enormous laugh your way as well as pretend that he can't read

the newspaper so that he can cheer for his favorite teams while someone else reads the NBA and MLB team stats. If you are really lucky, you'll receive an enthusiastic high-five for a job well done.

This year a particularly strong friendship between Daniel and his caregiver Matthias has developed resulting in a collaborative project of humor and fun. Learning that Daniel's favorite genres of entertainment are live-action (wrestling), adventure (*The A-Team*), and opera (he prefers operas with sword fights), Matthias is helping Danny to create a series of action-adventure video clips featuring Danny as some of his favorite heroes. The project will fulfill Matthias' first-year project that all first-year coworkers (caregivers) are required to complete. In addition, it will result in a great collection of video clips that Danny can enjoy for years to come.



Matthias and Daniel enjoy themselves at the Imagine holiday party in December 2010.

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Marian Clayden

An Artist in Her Own Right

If you follow the fashion world, work with textiles or admire the great artistry of textile design, you are familiar with the work of Marian Clayden. Marian's professional artistic work spans more than four decades and began in textile dyeing.

Born in England and largely self-taught, Marian and her husband Roger moved to California in the late 1960s and Marian became known for her uniquely dyed fabrics and off-loom weaving. In the early 1980s she shifted her artistic focus to fashion. She opened her own garment business in Los Gatos and employed as many as 25 people including dyers, patternmakers, seamstresses, sales personnel and others.

Marian's initial connection to Camphill occurred many decades ago when her 12-year-old cousin Elizabeth joined Camphill Botton Village, a large community for individuals with developmental disabilities located in the English Yorkshire Dales. Marian and her husband Roger recall Elizabeth learning many artistic and domestic skills while at Camphill including etching wine glasses, cooking and home decoration.

Resilient Strength

Marian has also experienced disability in a very personal way. In 1994 a stroke caused by a brain hemorrhage left her partially



Marian Clayden sits in her living room with her lap blanket handwoven at Camphill Communities California. In the background is an example of Marian's early work (about 1978): a striking hanging measuring 10 feet by 8 feet and made from 1 inch cotton roving (used for padding upholstery beads in chair arms and backs). The roving was hand-dyed irregularly and then knitted by hand (no giant needles used!).

paralyzed. After a long and strenuous period of rehabilitation, her recovery was almost 100%. In the late 1990s after she fully resumed her artistic work, her company enjoyed its greatest success. During this time she produced four clothing collections for each calendar year. This meant new garment designs for spring, summer, fall and winter, or over 100 new designs each year!!

Marian's Legacy

Marian's work is part of the permanent collections at many important institutions including the Smithsonian in Washington D.C., the Victoria and Albert in London, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the de Young in San Francisco, and the Oakland Museum of California. Marian continued to be a prolific and renowned designer until 2005. Around this time, she suffered a brain tumor from which she continues to recover.

Marian was reintroduced to Camphill through her long-time friend and former Camphill California weaving manager, Anne Lamborn. After Marian gave Camphill several boxes of sewing materials, the Camphill California weavers designed a special gift for her as a thank you. Marian now enjoys this hand-brushed and hand-woven lap blanket each day and uses it for warmth and inspiration. Camphill California is very flattered to have a world-renowned artist enjoy one of our hand-woven textiles.

Special Thanks to Zalec Familian Lilian Levinson Foundation

Our sincere thanks to the Zalec Familian Lilian Levinson Foundation for a decade of support! Annual grants from the Zalec Familian Lilian Levinson Foundation support our residential, day and supported living programs.



Each week Sarah expertly carries cut grass mulch to mulching beds along the Marimi fenceline. The land program where Sarah participates once a week is part of Camphill California's day program services, which are supported by grants from the Zalec Familian Lilian Levinson Foundation.



The mission of Camphill Communities California

is to provide a nurturing and dynamic residential community where adults with developmental disabilities live, learn and work together with professional caregivers and volunteers.

Thank You!

Camphill Communities California wishes to thank the following individuals, foundations and corporations whose donations were received between June 1, 2010 and June 1, 2011.

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Donor Spotlight: Rosemary Hewlett

has contributed more than \$120,000 in support of Camphill California's services and programs during the past fifteen years.

Mrs. Hewlett passed away in October of 2010.

Her charitable legacy remains an inspiration to all.



Community Voices

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**A Newsletter for Friends of Camphill
Communities California**

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**Camphill Communities
California**

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2011 Calendar of Events

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| July 1-4 | Marimi House Outing to Mt. Shasta,
California |
| July 15-24 | Summer Vacation for Camphill California
Friends |
| September 14 | Camphill Communities California Board
Retreat |
| September 24 | Camphill California's Fall Open House
Event
Camphill Communities California |
| October 14-15 | Annual General Meeting of the
Antroposophical Society
Portland, Oregon |

Camphill Communities Worldwide

are dedicated to social renewal through
community building with children,
youth and adults who have developmental
disabilities. The international Camphill
movement includes over 100
communities in 21 countries across the
world, and 10 are in North America.

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