

MEANINGFUL FITNESS

By Marge Pitts

Common sense suggests that children who pursue outdoor activities enjoy better health. Children who engage in gardening are likely to appreciate vegetables, improving their nutrition and increasing their physical fitness at the same time. Children who form an active bond with nature—learning what this earth is made of as well as inventing ways to play in it—will grow stronger mentally, emotionally and spiritually. It makes sense, but as yet there has been no scientific research measuring exactly how this works.

CGW's Education Director Nathan Larson has coined the phrase "Meaningful Fitness" to describe an important component of what we do at Troy Gardens. Meaningful fitness is not an exercise program or a sport. Nathan describes it simply as "engaging in physical fitness to grow food." Meaningful fitness at Troy Gardens leads to a personal relationship with nature, and we believe that relationship is profoundly meaningful.

This summer at the Troy Kids' Garden, Meaningful Fitness manifests itself in a new research study called Garden Fit. The study emerged from conversation among Nathan Larson; Sam Dennis, Professor of Landscape Architecture at UW-Madison and member of the Board of Directors of CGW; and Sam's colleague, Dr. Alex Adams, an MD in Family Practice with a PhD in Nutrition, who specializes in Pediatric Fitness.

Dr. Adams has worked extensively with Native American communities in Wisconsin and South Dakota.

Sam has worked with the same Native American communities, designing outdoor spaces for children. Instead of "fixed play equipment" like swings and monkey bars, Sam believes kids benefit more from open, natural space to move around in—space to devise their own games

and endeavors, natural materials from which to create forts and bridges, paths and long grass for exploring. "Instead of fixed play equipment," Sam says, "you get sand and dirt and running water . . ."

Hard science is wired into the Garden Fit study. Before and after the eight-week summer program a complex series of measurements is taken of each child:

- Body composition (% fat)
- Resting metabolic rate (calories burned at rest)
- Blood analysis for: carotenoids, fasting insulin, fasting glucose, interleukin 6, and cross reactive protein
- Fitness testing
- Dietary analysis using Food Frequency Questionnaires
- Total energy expenditure

A precise before-and-after picture of the children's fitness will be revealed by these measurements. Studies show children at risk for obesity are likely to *gain* weight over the summer, because they are actually less active then. Even if the children in this study maintain the same weight by the end of the study, that too will be a hugely important finding.

The Garden Fit study is a pilot; the size of this particular group is too small to be statistically important.

But if the data produced is promising, the Garden Fit team hopes to expand this work by seeking substantial support from the National Institutes of Health; in particular, by creating similar studies in Native American communities in Wisconsin, where the risk of childhood obesity and the panorama of illness that goes with it are especially dire.



(More on page 2)

GARDEN FIT FUN

Seven kids from Blackhawk Middle School are participating in Garden Fit. Study Coordinator Sarah Jacquart, a doctoral student in the Department of Nutritional Sciences at UW-Madison, Troy Kids' Garden staff member Hannah Lavold, and Dr. Adams' teen-age son Duncan lead the children five days a week. Each child is paid a small weekly stipend. Funding for Garden Fit came from many sources, including the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and several entities within the UW-Madison.

The Garden Fit group plays games like water balloon baseball; they harvest mulberries; they take hikes; they spread wood chips; they garden. Each child has his or her own row in a section of Troy Kids' Garden. Two days a week they make and eat a meal mostly from what they can harvest—such delectable fare as pesto with toasted bread and mulberry cobbler freshly baked in a sun oven.

“The participants are definitely experiencing new things at the garden,” Sarah says. “Several of them have commented that they never tried or *would have* tried mulberries before starting in the program—now mulberry cobbler is a favorite food for them to prepare out here. I have been particularly happy with their enthusiasm for big projects, like wood-chipping or working on paths in the woods and for their great interaction with the younger kids that come to the Kids' Garden.”

Garden Fit Mulberry Cobbler

Recipe adapted from sunoven.com

Collect mulberries (and raspberries and rhubarb if you like) on bottom of cooking pan.

Mix 1 cup oats, 1 cup brown sugar, and ½ cup butter in a bowl. Add a big pinch of flour to hold everything together.



Spread or crumble the oats mixture over the mulberries. Bake, watch, and taste-test. Our sun oven heats up to between 250 and 350 degrees on sunny days.

Hannah Lavold, center, serves up mulberry cobbler after a satisfying lunch of hand-ground pesto and toasted baguettes.



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MICHAEL POLLAN BOOK DISCUSSION & POTLUCK ON SEPT. 23

As part of *Go Big Read*, the UW-Madison's new community-wide common book program, Community GroundWorks and Lakeview Branch Library will host a potluck and discussion of Michael Pollan's latest book *In Defense of Food* on Wednesday, September 23 from 6-7pm at Troy Gardens.

Discussion co-leaders will be Katie Scharf, neighborhood librarian, and Claire Strader, farmer for Troy Community Farm, who brings her personal perspective as an urban organic farmer.

Copies of *In Defense of Food* may be reserved by contacting any Madison Public Library, or stop in at Lakeview Library in the Northside Town Center and tell them you are a part of the Troy Gardens' discussion group. Frugal Muse bookstore will also stock copies.

Join us at beautiful Troy Gardens with a dish to pass, a place setting and your opinions of the book. In case of rain, we will meet at the Lakeview Library. Call Katie at the Library, 246-4547, with any questions.

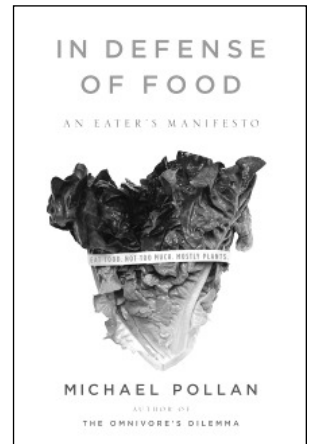


photo by John Beck

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THE LEARNING COMMUNITY AT TROY FARM



It takes many hands to raise organic vegetables for 115 CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) member families, plus supplying our Thursday Farm Stand at Troy Gardens, Sunday Northside Farmers' Market at the Northside Town Center, and various retail markets that sell our produce. The need provides a remarkable opportunity for many people to learn organic urban agriculture—by working at Troy Farm.

We take advantage of this learning opportunity in many ways. Our relationship with UW-Madison provides leadership in the field by supplying us with dedicated interns. An advanced course called Agroecology 699 provides matriculated students (those formally enrolled at UW-Madison) who work as crew leaders at Troy Farm.

This year nine students from this class, several of them returning from previous years interning here, begin the week at Troy Farm walking the fields with Farm Managers Claire Strader and Jake Hoeksema. They discuss what they see happening in the rows, and what strategies and tasks to pursue that week. Throughout the week these interns will accomplish the goals they have identified as they lead crews of worker shares, volunteers, and undergraduate and high school interns on the farm.

Worker shares are individuals who pay for their

weekly share in the CSA by working one morning a week at the farm. We have 10 worker shares this year—and during the time they spend helping to grow their food, as Claire Strader puts it, “Learning occurs.” In some cases, people who begin as worker shares later apply for internships at Troy Farm, and former interns often become worker shares the following year.

Friday mornings are open volunteer times for anyone who wants to pick up some skills and help out on the farm. Show up at 8am and the team will put you to work. Some of our regular volunteers are people who applied for internships at Troy Farm but were unable to secure a place. It's a very good sign that we get many more applications than we can accept every year, sometimes from locations that are far away from Madison.

A group of Malcolm Shabazz High School students participated as interns in the spring. In addition, two individual students have received grants through SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) to pursue special projects at Troy Farm. Both of these students worked as interns or volunteers at Troy Farm last year.

We measure our success in many ways. The production of vegetables is foremost, obviously. Troy Farm has increased its capacity each year since it began in 2001. We also pay close attention to the end-of-season evaluations we receive from students, making changes to our procedures in light of this feedback. We pay attention to the enthusiasm and performance of our workers, knowing that providing the right conditions to workers and students will ensure their best effort.

And we pay attention to how many people want to come back to work at Troy Farm every year. Worker shares become interns; interns become worker shares; first-year interns come back for more responsibility the following year. We consider the ultimate success to be Troy Farm workers who go on to start their own urban

**Community GroundWorks thanks
MADISON GAS & ELECTRIC**
for printing the Troy Gardens Gazette.

Local partners like MG&E help us

**Grow Local at
Troy Gardens.**

We are very grateful!



MADISON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SUPPORTS OUR YOUTH GROW LOCAL INITIATIVE

Community GroundWorks at Troy Gardens recently received support from the Madison Community Foundation to launch our Madison Youth Grow Local Initiative. Youth Grow Local supports youth gardening efforts in Madison through research, curriculum development, teacher training and support of gardens at schools and other public places.

“Youth gardens help build healthy communities by exposing children to meaningful nutrition and exercise,” explains Nathan Larson, Education Director. “We’ve run award-winning youth programs at Troy Gardens since 2001. With support for Youth Grow Local, we’ll be able to share our expertise with youth garden programs across Madison.”

This summer, staff and volunteers from Community GroundWorks are providing area youth gardens with technical and educational assistance. In July, Larson taught a Garden Educator course at Troy Gardens, in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin, where schoolteachers learned about school garden maintenance, strategies for engaging kids in gardens, and how to incorporate youth gardens into their classrooms.

Elementary and middle school students learn about food, nature and nutrition through fun, hands-on activities at Troy Kids’ Garden. In addition, Community GroundWorks has launched a groundbreaking organic farm program, East High Community Farm, in collaboration with Madison East High School and the Goodman Community Center. Under the direction of Program Manager Megan Cain, fifteen East High students are growing organic vegetables on a plot of land off of Milwaukee St. The food pantry at the Goodman Community Center, where demand has doubled in the past year, gratefully receives most of the harvest.

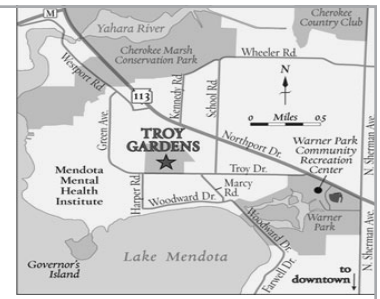
Finally, to further the youth-gardening movement Community GroundWorks is supporting Garden Fit, a research project by the University of Wisconsin that studies the impact of youth gardens on childhood obesity (see page 1).

The Madison Community Foundation encourages, facilitates and manages long-term philanthropy. Individuals and organizations interested in establishing an endowment with Madison Community Foundation or donating money to its general fund may get more details online at www.madisoncommunityfoundation.org.



Teacher Kitty King and students Max and Ellen plant brussels sprouts at East High Community Farm.

Troy Gardens is located on the 500 block of Troy Drive on Madison's Northside.



Northside

Farmers Market

The Sunday Morning Meeting Spot

Northside Town Center

Across from Warner Park

TROY GARDENS NEIGHBORS

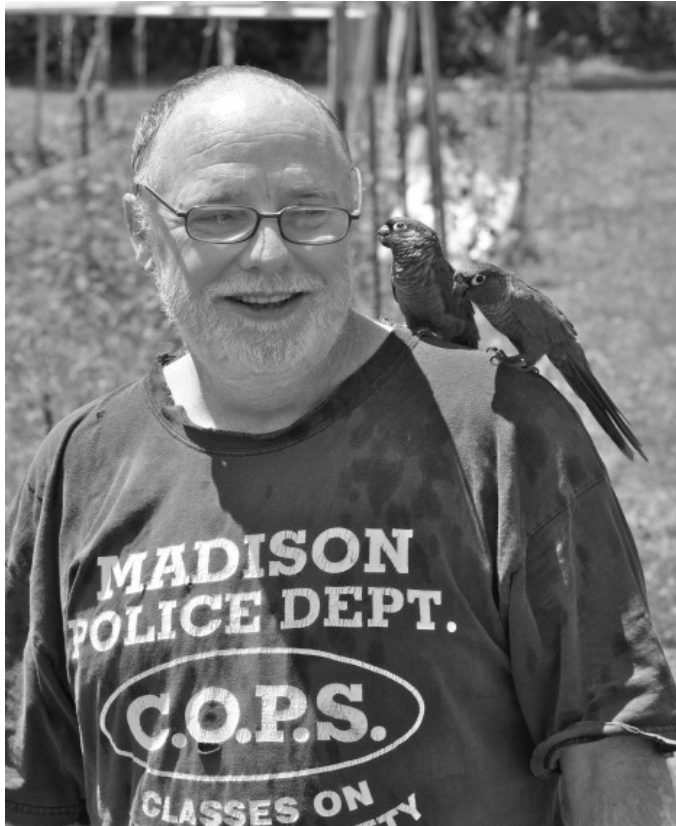


photo by John Beck

Troy Community Gardener Kevin Emery occasionally brings his pet conures along to his garden plot. The birds' wings are clipped, but they're not inclined to fly away anyhow. They enjoy riding on Kevin's shirt and chewing tiny holes in it as he works. They especially relish a second-hand shower when Kevin waters his vegetables.

Kevin keeps a birdcage hanging in his plot for time-outs. He actually has three conures, but one of them took the liberty of riding on the photographer's shoulder when he took this picture.

REAPING GOOD NEWS

Since being challenged with a matching grant on March 10, we have raised enough money to build our passive solar greenhouse project! The matching grant came from an anonymous donor through the Madison Community Foundation.

The Blooming Prairie Foundation also generously supported our greenhouse construction and associated programming. Many individuals and businesses contributed as well. Thank you to everyone who donated! We anticipate breaking ground on the greenhouse later this summer.

Community Groundworks at Troy Gardens has been selected as the 2009 Morgridge Center for Public Service Outstanding Community Partner Award. This award is given annually to an outstanding community partner who has demonstrated excellence in collaborating with the UW-Madison to provide opportunities for students to engage in and learn from the community.

Take a virtual walk around Troy Gardens in all for seasons—photographer John Beck features Troy Gardens in his collection of photographs on the web. Go to www.communitygroundworks.org and click on the link at the bottom of the page.

Madison FarmWorks

Food from home



It's not too late for a fall vegetable garden!

Get help with fall succession planting
Install garden beds & get a head start on next year
Garden coaching & planning assistance



troygardens.org
madisonfarmworks@troygardens.org

Dane County Timebank

Timebank members—donate some of your Timedollars to us and we will use them to pay volunteers for helping out on the land and in our office. It's easy to do online at www.danecountytimebank.org.

Open the My Account page and choose the Deduct time box under the My Hours tab. Designate Community GroundWorks as the Service Provider. It's like paying someone else to volunteer!

The Center for the Humanities at UW-Madison
in collaboration with
Community GroundWorks at Troy Gardens and *Madison Magazine*
is pleased to announce

FROM FIELD TO PLATE: a writing contest for youth

for writers entering the 3rd - 12th grade

In *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education*, author Michael Pollan writes,
"To lift a bean plant's hood of heart-shaped leaves and **discover** a clutch
of long, slender pods hanging underneath could make me **catch my breath**.
Cradling the globe of a cantaloupe **warmed in the sun**, or pulling orange spears
straight from his sandy soil—these were the **keenest of pleasures...**"

Now, tell us about **your** experience with food. Why is **food**, the places where it is
grown, or the people that grow it, **important to you?**

Enter your work into one of six categories:

Elementary School: Poetry, Short Story/Essay (100-300 words suggested)

Middle School: Poetry, Short Story Essay (300-400 words suggested)

High School: Poetry, Short Story/Essay (400-500 words suggested)

Win prizes, gift certificates, books, and more! Two authors will be chosen to read
their work for award-winning author Michael Pollan during his visit on September 24-
26, 2009. One piece will be chosen for publication in *Madison Magazine*.

All submissions are due by September 4, 2009.

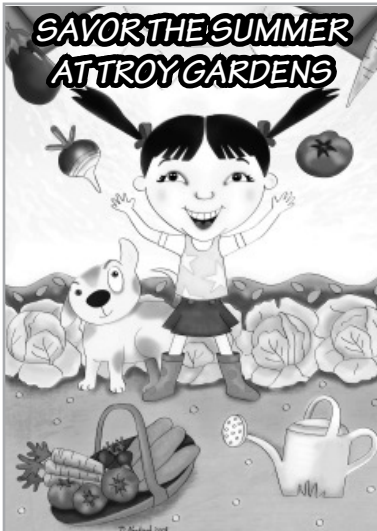


Submissions should be emailed to wih@humanities.wisc.edu or
mailed to The Center for the Humanities, 432 East Campus Mall,
Madison, WI 53706. Please contact The Center for the Humanities at
608.263.3412 or at wih@humanities.wisc.edu with any questions.



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SATURDAY, AUG 1. 3-7 PM AT TROY!

Hayrides: starting at 3pm, Troy Farm & Prairie
Horses on the land: 3-4pm, Troy Farm & Prairie
Pepper Roasting Demo: 3pm, near Kids' Garden
Kids activities: 3-7pm all over the place!
Community GroundWorks Shop: 3-7pm
Community Gardens Free Feasting: 3pm-til we run
out of food!

Entertainment on Kids' Garden Living Stage

Erin O'Brien: 3:15-3:45

Accordians: 3:50- 4:20

Black Star Drum Line: 4:30-5pm

West African Drums: 5pm-5:30

Neighborhood talent jam: 5:30-7pm

Help Us Keep Troy Gardens Healthy!

Did you know?

- *Community GroundWorks at Troy Gardens provides over 300 garden plots for almost 200 gardening families.*
- *Gardeners pay plot fees based on household size and income. More than half of Troy Gardeners are from low-income households. We cannot raise enough money to sustain Troy Gardens through sales and fees alone.*
- *Grants pay for programming, but infrastructure like water, mowing, office rent and utilities, and installation and shoveling of the sidewalk in front of Troy Gardens comes from our general revenues—AND GENERAL REVENUES COME FROM INDIVIDUALS LIKE YOU!*
- *Troy Gardens is a fun and friendly environment for people of all ages, incomes, and cultures to share the land and their gardening knowledge and ideas.*
- **TROY GARDENS EXISTS THROUGH THE SUPPORT OF OUR COMMUNITY AND FRIENDS!**



Make a contribution to support Troy Gardens.

Use the enclosed envelope or send your check to the address at the top of this page.

A donation to Troy Gardens rewards hard work, feeds people, and sustains our beautiful land!