



Peace Ranch News

Winter, 09

Busy, busy, busy. Everything is going on at the ranch these days. We have just had some needed foundation work done on the farmhouse and a new roof installed. It has been a whirlwind of activity, but the result looks great. Recently, we had the pleasure of hosting a group of Landscape Architecture students who came to the ranch and surveyed all of our property to be used as a basis for their course projects. The result of this visit was a number of stunning illustrations of proposed uses for the acreage. The Board are considering all the proposals and will be looking to bring one of them to life to give the ranch a fantastic face lift. The illustrations include a variety of applications for the property including a tranquility garden, a courtyard, a new riding ring and a boardwalk surrounding the pond.

Fundraising has been at the forefront recently, owing to the hope of refurbishing the old "Small House" – a structure that was built in the 70's that had a multitude of uses over the life of the ranch. Unfortunately, the rustic old building is not up to code and must be demolished, but Peace Ranch looks forward to a new, more usable building that will provide upgraded office space, an area for retail sales and also a teaching kitchen and great room. We are also hoping to be able to provide some satellite office space to some of our partner agencies.

The brilliant blue sky days have been interspersed with some rainy grey ones. There is a chill in the air on those days which reminds you that those few fluffy flakes will soon be turning into a gorgeous sparkling blanket of snow. Heidi and Jim and the gardeners have put their tools away for another year. Rosie is nestled in her winter hideaway. The winter brings a certain calm to the ranch and the first snowfall brings beauty. Everyone looks forward to the new activities that the cold season brings; skating, snowshoeing and cross country skiing, not to mention the occasional snow man building contest. As usual, we will again be hosting our winter gala - our annual Christmas party is happening on Friday, December 18 at the ranch, from 7 to 9 P.M. and we invite all our friends to attend. Peace Ranch wishes everyone a safe, happy and wonderful holiday season.

Concurrent Disorders Network

Peace Ranch has joined a group of diverse support agencies within Central West LHIN to better respond to the multiple needs of those with concurrent disorders by drawing together health, social service and other community resources into a collaborative network that will work together to develop and implement more integrative and collaborative approaches to care and monitor and report on progress over time. Developed by Dr. K. Minkoff and Christie Cline, COMPASS, is a program audit tool for concurrent capability at an organizational level. CO-FIT is a parallel tool used at a systems level. Currently in evolution is an informational website and the agreement of an across-the-network screening tool to be used by front line workers. A charter of participation and action plan was ceremoniously signed by representatives from all 22 agencies.

Peace Ranch is proud to announce the arrival of the newest addition to our animal family. A beautiful female alpaca named Sylvia moved into Peace Ranch earlier this summer, expecting her first baby. She gave birth in July to a fuzzy little bundle who has become known as "Skittles".

Mom and baby doing great!



Dance, dance, dance!!

Peace Ranch welcomed the Orange Peel Morris Dancers on May 23 to perform. "Morris" dancing is an old English form of folk dancing, involving the use of bells and walking sticks and is described as "high energy and vigorous". The group entertained all our guests with their beautiful costumed routines inviting onlookers to participate.



Alternatives to Crisis Conference

Featuring Shery Mead and Chris Hanson

Peace Ranch, in collaboration with Dufferin Connects, was proud to present the Alternatives to Crisis conference May 19 – 22. Shery and Chris are vivacious and passionate workers in the mental health system who are dedicated to the ideologies of peer support. Shery, as well as being a prolific speaker, both nationally and internationally, is the past director of three New Hampshire Peer Support programs including a peer run hospital alternative. Her publications include academic articles, training manuals and a new book co-authored with Mary Ellen Copeland, " *Wellness Recovery Action Planning and Peer Support*". We were very happy to be able to make this conference available to both our agency partners and several peer support workers. Many thanks to both Shery and Chris.

MINDSTORM

Janssen, the drug company that manufactures several of the anti-psychotic medications that are used in treating schizophrenia have developed an audio/video presentation that is available on their website at http://www.janssen.com/janssen/news_mindstorm.html. This presentation, "A Virtual Hallucination: MINDSTORM", is a simulation of the auditory and hallucinatory experiences that are usually present for those suffering the symptoms of schizophrenia.

Peace Ranch Yearbook

At last year's annual planning meeting, staff elected to launch a new yearbook project. The 2008/09 Yearbook is a retrospective of the events that were noteworthy over the last year. Included in the yearbook were beautiful pictures of the gardens, the road trips and the events that Peace Ranch hosted for a variety of people and agencies. Also included are several pieces written by some of our residents and clients. What a great way to remember the year!!

What are the odds? 1%!!

Yes it is true, the odds of a goat having quadruplet babies is, in fact, 1%!!



Guess what? One of our mama goats did it! She was the final holdout of the ladies who gave birth this spring and we were anxiously awaiting the big moment. Much to our surprise, we were rewarded with this monumental occurrence. As you can see, they are all happy and healthy.



Green Spots

reaps what we sow!

It always seems to come so quickly. One minute we're eating rhubarb and weeding carrots, the next we're taking down the sorry-looking tomato cages and tilling the soil for the winter. Here's a sneak peak into some of the things we got ourselves into this summer and fall:

Market Garden

Our 2009 crew of superstar gardeners worked hard on Fridays to get the garden planted, weeded and then harvested for the sales at our weekly market on Fridays. We were fortunate to receive a grant from the United Way of Peel to hire a capable team of consultants who put together a feasibility study for growing the Market Garden, a Social Purpose Enterprise, even bigger and better. The idea behind a Social Purpose Enterprise is to ensure a double bottom line of providing employment for people who may find it difficult to attain jobs, as well as ensuring a sound financial bottom line. We're excited to watch the business grow and mature, and hope that our many Peace Ranch supporters can become valuable customers as well. Call Heidi at the Ranch to find out about our purchasing plans for next season.

Rosie's Kitchen

Since January, Green Spaces has taken over the coordination of the healthy living program named fondly after our beloved pot-bellied pig. Each week up to 20 people – Peace Ranch residents, staff, participants from the community, and volunteers, have been getting together at the Community Centre in Caledon East to learn about nutrition, cook healthy food together, and walk along the Caledon Trailway. Believing very strongly that good eating and exercise are key components to mental health, we make connections between certain foods and elements of health. For instance, the recipes we use highlight eating for mood, heart health, diabetes, and cancer and cold and flu prevention. We have also made great friendships at "Rosie's". Throughout the growing season, the Rosie's crew has enjoyed a wide variety of veggies straight from the Peace Ranch Market Garden, making an important and healthy link.

Farm Program

We started the season with a great trip to Niagara Falls, courtesy of the Tim Horton's Foundation's Charter Bus. The trip set off a busy summer of planting the flowers and veggies, tending to the new lambs and kids (we had quadruplet goats this year – a 1 in 100 probability!), our adorable new alpacas, and the two new giant sheep brutes that we intend to teach to drive the sulky cart. In addition, though, we're growing our arts component. We've been creating all sorts of goodies in the fine arts program with Mary Lou and Lorna- hanging garden mosaics, grape vine flower baskets, clematis trellis, and lots of leather stamping. Also, once a week our great friend, the multi-talented Dickson comes to teach music lessons to anyone interested. Not to mention the Thursday fitness program, playing soccer, basket-ball and badminton at the indoor sports complex, or hiking the local trails with our hike leader, Gary. Once a month Fraser and the gang picked a quiet little fishing hole to relax and see what they could catch. To round out the summer, we spent September entering our produce and flowers in the fairs to earn well-deserved cash for all the hard work of our individual participants. We also brought the animals to two petting zoos in the area, where Jim and his staff crew taught all the enthusiastic children about our farm animals.

Peace Ranch Loves Our Volunteers

This summer we were lucky enough to have a number of new volunteers to assist our dedicated direct service volunteer team. Here is a little run down of the things volunteers have been busy with this summer and fall. Katelyn was a great help this summer getting Green Spaces programs set-up, cleaned up and running smoothly. Nigel started volunteering in the summer and is continuing to come out on Tuesdays. He was a super star in the vegetable gardens and hydroponics. I think our worms in the vermiculture bin are his new friends! Dan D. was always up for any job we asked him to do and that is why we had such a great bean trellis this summer. Dan is currently studying to become a police officer. Leslie F. graciously took over for Patricia as the volunteer driver for July, August, and September and stayed for the day to work in the gardens. Our Mr. Fix-its Doug, Bob, and Dan M. have been busy doing odd jobs and getting the workshop all organized and beautiful. Wanda has been a great help getting my volunteer administration paper work organized. Dickson has been teaching the residents how to play the guitar and during the summer had Justine, a UWO music student, to help keep the music flowing. Nicki, Lauren and Margie helped Edith this summer with the horses. Margie also is a great help at Rosie's kitchen (not just because she gets to eat yummy food.) Lorna returned this summer to teach us leather working skills and Marylou has inspired us to create more intricate mosaics. Charlene and Mary are always ready to help in the gardens and inspire creativity on Thursdays. Toni is a great friend to others especially one particular person. Gary keeps us active and to appreciate the great natural environment we live in. Our special events volunteers deserve hardy thanks for helping out during the Open House/ Country Fair Day. A small crew from Mars Foods in Bolton did a great job during our summer dumpster day to clean out the upstairs barn area. We now have room for winter hay. I almost forgot Sally from the Region of Peel that came for the United Way Days of Caring. She helped put the veggie and flower gardens to bed for their winter rest.



The work crew from Mars Foods.

I would like to say thank you to all our direct service volunteers and those on the Board that have contributed their time to Peace Ranch activities.

Submitted by Susan Morling, Volunteer Manager.

Breaking News: Peace Ranch has just taken delivery of a wonderful donation of a Blade server from IBM. This state of the art IT staple will allow us to improve service delivery to our clients. Grateful thanks to IBM for this generous gift.

NOTES FROM THE E.D.:

At Peace Ranch we support the journey of recovery with the understanding that recovery is not the same thing as a cure.

We build on strengths, and support people living with mental health problems to lead meaningful lives, despite limitations inflicted through a condition of mental illness.

This is accomplished by embracing the principles of hope, empowerment, choice and responsibility.

This holiday season, I wish you a balance of mind, body and spirit.

I wish you a safe and happy holiday and encourage you to consider that the hope of recovery is available to all.

Eric