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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Hawthorne Valley welcomes inaugural Place Corps cohort

**August 8, 2019, Ghent, NY** – Hawthorne Valley is thrilled to announce the launch of Place Corps, a collaborative initiative with The Good Work Institute. The first cohort of eight students have arrived at the homestead at Hawthorne Valley Farm, and begun their studies to know, love, and serve their places.

The program formally began at the end of June with the cohort taking part in Omega Institute's Ecological Literacy Program. The ELIP program utilizes workshops, field trips, and design processes led by multiple educators to look at the patterns and principles that underlie all living systems to address challenges in today's world. Each participant received certification in permaculture design at the completion of the four-week course.

"ELIP was a great introduction to Place Corps because it's all about shifting paradigms and how to look at things with design in mind," said Gopal Harrington. "Now we are able to come here, to the Place Corps homestead, and implement for ourselves how to put design into practice."

Place Corps is a gap year program with the mission to help students to know, love, and serve their places. The curriculum is a mixture of practical, hands-on courses like carpentry, sewing, and fermentation, workshops and seminars on a variety of topics related to regenerative living, and independent study in an area of each student's interest. The students also have the opportunity to develop the program's homestead as they live and work together.

As the first trimester takes shape, one activity the students are engaging in is looking closely at the land that makes up their campus.

"ELIP was a great overview of site planning and gave us ways to see and understand the place," says Martha Snow, Place Corps' Experiential Learning Fellow. "We'll be spending time looking at what's here, both the vegetation and the people who were here before us and how they used the land so we can begin making both quick and long-term planning decisions."

The process of the site plan, as well as other areas of study they will take up, will involve continually keeping in mind the three pillars of the program: to know, love, and serve. As student Jordan Williams puts it, "What is there to know about the organisms here, and what does it require of us to know this space and have it to know us, to love this space and have it love us, and to serve this place and have it serve us?"

The Place Corps program seeks to have students learn in an organoleptic manner, that is, utilize all their five senses. Through practical work, creative practice, and academic study, the students will explore concepts and practices such as regenerative agriculture, mindfulness, zero waste, communications, and whole systems living. The cohort says they are looking forward to putting intention behind what sometimes can just feel like catchphrases as they take up efforts to make and preserve their own foods, rethink the concept of “trash,” learn practical skills, and more.

“Place Corps recognizes and honors the innate creativity seeded in each individual and works with participants to develop their vocation in service of their place,” says Dawn Breeze, Place Corps Director. “We believe that what the world needs now are not more people succeeding in ways measured by capitalist values, but people working and living in reciprocal relationship with what they love where they are. We call this radical living, and we use that word radical as it originated, meaning to have roots.

“As the designer and director of this program, I was honored to help actualize a dream that both Martin Ping of Hawthorne Valley and Matthew Stinchcomb of Good Work Institute have held for many years: a Gap Year program that prioritizes relationships rooted to place through knowing, loving, and serving.”

To learn more about Place Corps, visit [placecorps.org](http://placecorps.org).

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## **About Place Corps**

Place Corps is a year-long, experiential learning program designed for 18-25 year olds. Participants develop the skills and wisdom needed to live and work in ways that make their lives, their communities, and the Earth truly thrive. They also become certified in permaculture design, learn to grow their own food, build green, create regenerative place-based projects, plus more.

Situated on a 900-acre Biodynamic ® farm in the Hudson Valley, participants explore the urban and rural region as a living classroom. Over the course of the year, they self-design college accredited study plans, engaging with accomplished practitioners, and organizations working at the forefront of social, ecological, and economic regeneration. They develop a professional work portfolio aligned with their unique interests and future goals.

The program is a collaborative effort between Hawthorne Valley and The Good Work Institute ([goodworkinstitute.org](http://goodworkinstitute.org)). Learn more at [placecorps.org](http://placecorps.org).

## **About Hawthorne Valley**

Hawthorne Valley is a place to rediscover one’s connection to nature, to how the food that we eat every day is produced, and to ourselves as participants in a dynamic social and natural ecosystem. Through the active production of food, educational programs for children and adults, ongoing social and scientific research, and the cultivation of a vibrant artistic community, we pursue a modern way of living embedded deeply in the natural world and emphasizing the social, ecological, and economic importance of agriculture in our daily lives.

Our integrated learning campus sits in a 900-acre Demeter-certified Biodynamic® farm in Ghent, NY, in the Hudson Valley's scenic Columbia County. Organized since 1972 as a 501(c)3 nonprofit, our initiatives include: an early childhood through grade 12 Waldorf school; on-farm education programs; a full-line organic/natural foods and grocery store; a Biodynamic creamery, organic bakery, and fermentation cellar; a 300-plus member Biodynamic CSA; social, ecological, and cultural research groups; teacher education programs; arts initiatives and more.

Our work is based on genuine human relationships, wonder and love of nature, and continued commitment to self-development and lifelong learning in a social context.

For additional information, please visit <https://hawthornevalley.org>.