

HAWTHORNE VALLEY

UNCONVENTIONAL BY NATURE



2024 **ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT**
THE BIODIVERSITY EDITION



Hoar frost on lilac leaves. This special type of feathery frost occurs during specific conditions—when water vapor (such as from a nearby unfrozen pond) contacts the surfaces of plants and other objects that are already below freezing, forming ice crystals. Excerpted from Farmscape Ecology Program's 'Wonder Wander' series. Photo by Anna Duhon.

HAWTHORNE VALLEY is an ecosystem of activities that all function in relationship to each other in the context of our setting in the Hudson Valley bioregion. Conceived as a living organism and patterned on the image of the threefold human being, Hawthorne Valley integrates education, art, and agriculture as an expression of thinking, feeling, and willing. Head, heart, hands. Each needs the other if the whole is to flourish. All are interconnected.

Our interconnectedness and interdependence is manifest in biodiversity. Biodiversity is the multiplicity of life on Earth, including all living beings and how they are in relationship to each other. This principle can be observed across systems at all scales. In humans, the biodiversity of our gut biome includes an assortment of microorganisms that create a complex ecosystem where many species coexist and interact with each other. A healthy gut biome contributes to overall well-being by performing various functions like digestion and immune regulation. Diminished diversity in our microbiome can lead to myriad health problems.

There are remarkable parallels between our gut biome and soil. A thriving, biodiverse soil ecosystem is essential for nutrient cycling, water filtration, carbon storage, soil stability, and plant health. However, poor land management and intensive agriculture are depleting soil biodiversity, jeopardizing the life-sustaining functions of healthy soils. Soil is the foundation of life as we know it, and it is the farmer's vocation to nurture the soil that sustains us all. Biodiversity on a farm begins with the soil and grows from there.

Appreciating the farm as a living organism is core to biodynamic agriculture. Soil, plants, animals, people, and the surrounding environment interact in a complex web of relationships that determine the health and vitality of the farm organism. Hawthorne Valley's Farmscape Ecology Program (FEP) has spent the past 21 years studying these relationships so that we may come to understand our place in this web of life. FEP's recent book, *From the Hudson to the Taconics: An Ecological and Cultural Field Guide to the Habitats of Columbia County, NY*, is a beautifully illustrated invitation to take interest in the rich biodiversity of our place. Interest can lead to understanding, compassion, and a sense of fulfillment.

Human flourishing depends on more than the physical sustenance provided by the farm's harvest. There is a deeper spiritual longing that is nurtured by the natural world. Slowing down for a walk in field or forest, or gazing at the night sky, can be humbling and inspire a sense of wonder and awe as we experience ourselves to be an integral part of,

There is growing recognition that our physical and spiritual well-being is inseparable from the health of the natural world. Humanity's fate is intertwined with the Earth's.

rather than separate from, nature. Sustaining this mood of humility and reverence, and embodying this consciousness in our human being and human doing, is crucial to the work of our time.

There is growing recognition that our physical and spiritual well-being is inseparable from the health of the natural world. Humanity's fate is intertwined with the Earth's. The ecological and social impacts of climate change, coupled with the spiritual loss from rapid biodiversity decline, demand that we deepen our connection to one another and the more-than-human world, fostering compassion and care for all life. The polycrisis we face calls for a shift in thinking and the redesign of our social, economic, and organizational systems to align with nature.

What can we learn from healthy soil, or a vibrant forest ecosystem connected by an intricate web of mycorrhizae sharing nutrients and information for the betterment of all, regardless of species? How can the dynamic relationships of mutuality that enliven the farmscape inform our own social and economic forms? Can we imagine replacing an economy based on the growth imperative with one rooted in compassionate reciprocity that honors and upholds life?

Questions such as these are present in our daily striving at Hawthorne Valley and reflected in the pages of this year's Annual Impact Report. I hope that you enjoy reading it, and I thank you for your generous support and encouragement of our work. I pray that by honoring the patterns that biodiversity reveals, we will find ourselves in right relationship to this sacred community of life to which we all belong. I look forward to the good work ahead as we continue on our quest towards creating a more regenerative and resilient future.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Martin Ping
Executive Director



HAWTHORNE VALLEY'S MISSION IS TO RENEW SOIL, SOCIETY, AND SELF BY INTEGRATING AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION, AND ART.

OUR VISION IS TO RECONNECT PEOPLE, PLACE, AND PURPOSE.

OUR MISSION AND VISION COME TO LIFE THROUGH OUR WORK WHICH INCLUDES:

INTEGRATIVE LEARNING:

Fostering joy of learning through Waldorf-based, hands-on education geared toward developing the whole person – head, heart, and hands.

BIODYNAMIC AGRICULTURE:

Cultivating and distributing high-quality Biodynamic® food from field to fork.

COMPASSIONATE COMMERCE:

Conducting business in a way that prioritizes the welfare of the people, animals, and Earth at the heart of our work.

EXPLORATION:

Supporting wild nature and resilient agriculture, thoughtfully exploring our economic and cultural life, and fostering connection through original research and outreach.

EXPRESSIVE BEAUTY:

Nurturing artistic expression in our lives and work.

COLLABORATION:

Providing a laboratory of collaborative learning and research where we partner to address some of today's most pressing concerns such as climate change, educating creative and resilient children, supporting biodiversity, and rebuilding healthy and fair food systems.

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on the cover	Cow on pasture in autumn. Photo by Heather Gibbons.

BE PART OF OUR STORY: JOIN US IN MAKING AN IMPACT!

Your support helps us continue to grow and thrive as a community. Here are just a few ways you can make a difference in the year ahead:

1. STAY CONNECTED

Stay in the loop about all things Hawthorne Valley by signing up for our newsletters. You'll receive updates on our programs, events, and opportunities to get involved. Sign up today at <https://hawthornevalley.org/contact/sign-up/>.



Scan to Sign Up

2. LEND A HAND

Want to make a tangible difference? Volunteer with us! Opportunities are shared through our newsletters, so don't miss out—sign up using the link above and join our amazing volunteer community.

3. PARTNER WITH US

Support from local businesses ensures that our events and festivals can be free and accessible. Interested in being a sponsor? Let's collaborate! Email our Development Director, Stacy Szymaszek, at sszymaszek@hawthornevalley.org.

4. INVEST IN OUR FUTURE

Every contribution counts. Your tax-deductible donation—whether one-time or recurring—directly supports our mission and programs. Donate now at <https://hawthornevalley.org/giving/> or contact Stacy at sszymaszek@hawthornevalley.org.



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Thank you for being part of the Hawthorne Valley community!



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We pay respect to the Mohican People, and their elders past and present. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together today; and please join us in uncovering the truth.

Hawthorne Valley is located within the Hudson River Estuary watershed on the stolen ancestral land of the Mohican People, who call themselves Muh-he-con-ne-ok or People of the Waters That Are Never Still. The Muh-he-con-ne-ok have been stewards of these forests and fields throughout the generations.

We recognize that colonialism, which is ongoing today, resulted in the theft of these lands from Indigenous Peoples. We understand that the colonizers profited from that theft, and that Hawthorne Valley has inherited benefits from those acts.

Today approximately one third of the enrolled tribal members of the Stockbridge Munsee Band of Mohicans (about 1,500 people) lives on a reservation in Bowler Wisconsin on the traditional lands of the Menominee Nation. Enrolled tribal members also live in other parts of Wisconsin, the United State, and the world. We invite you to learn more about the Stockbridge Munsee Community by visiting their website (<https://Mohican.com>).

Please read our full Land Acknowledgement on Hawthorne Valley’s website: <https://hawthornevalley.org/mission-vision/>.

WRITTEN IN CONSULTATION WITH THE STOCKBRIDGE MUNSEE BAND OF MOHICANS

Photo by Heather Gibbons

DEAR HAWTHORNE VALLEY COMMUNITY,

Walking the woods in the hills, above the farm, above the valley, one is struck by the resiliency of the native trees.

I learned from Conrad and Claudia, of the Farmscape Ecology Program, just how much of this land was cut, altered, and biologically impoverished by the hand of early European settlers. But, just like the glaciers that once rolled over these hills, that, too, has melted away. The spirit of place has recovered to be reborn, again and again...this time, morphing into a cultural landscape created by the synergistic interplay of a Waldorf school, a Biodynamic farm complete with its associations, and a renewed forest, thereby opening the door to a huge, experiential biodiversity.

The lowing of cows and the glee of childhood play resonates with a new voice for this timeless valley: a cultural landscape, in this case comprised of the mixing of fields, plants, animals, soils, and compost with stories, puppets, watercolors, projective geometry, ancient mythologies, and even more stories told ad lib.

In Biodynamics, we like to say that the best fertilizer is the eyes of the farmer. Observation and awareness of the whole, from a blade of grass to the very stars, marks the beginnings of human consciousness entering the farm ecosystem.

But the key is the eyes.

Yet, the guileless, open eyes of children looking out and seeking to be a part of the farmscape becomes a very internal affair. They are absorbing their most precious and timeless imprint—their subconscious life—such that the biodiversity of Hawthorne Valley can mushroom in their consciousness, going forward like mycelium running through all of their adult days.

I am a Biodynamic farmer, but also a Waldorf parent. I found a freedom in the parenting experience when shared with a Grade teacher’s deep familiarity with our children over many years—a freedom that can bring a more diverse intimacy and objectivity, at the same time.

A wise man once said to me, “Don’t try to explain Waldorf education. There is too much genius in it.” So, too, there is in a richly biodiverse farmscape that works inwardly to grow on one.

Perhaps it is the magic touch of the puppet mistress/storyteller/enchanter that, from early on, fosters children’s love of coming to school. This is a great achievement in itself! Is it the dark woods, the

river, the bridge, the endless play? There is a deep experience and remembrance of place, of being part of a cultural landscape that is the making of an inward biodiversity.

In fact, the greatest Net Positive the school can bequeath is an undercurrent of *biophilia*—the love of life, at home and rooted in the natural world. From there, one can rise up to defend what one loves.

In the delicate meal of timing and rhythm that is a whole education, the biodiversity of natural experiences that this cultural landscape provides feeds creativity’s infinite spring, from mucking manure to listening to contented cows teach a class in contemplation...creativity as an antidote to the virtual world.

Biodynamics has drummed into me: *give back more than you take.*

We give back to the spirit of place with a farming method that is life affirming, consciously connected to cosmic rhythms.

We give back when we teach the science of weight, number, and measure, but expand beyond that cul-de-sac of materialistic reductionism.

We give back by cultivating experiential biodiversity, as here with the infectious *joi de vivre* of the poet:

“...These were the woods the river and sea
Where a boy
In the listening
Summertime of the dead whispered the truth of his joy
To the trees and the stones and the fish in the tide.
And the mystery
Sang alive
Still in the water and singing birds.”

Christopher Tebbutt, Co-Founder, Filigreen Farm
Hawthorne Valley Board of Trustees
(poem excerpt courtesy of Dylan Thomas)



Artwork by Tor Yacobellis
(’24), Grade 12

THE FARM

by Spencer Fenniman

HAWTHORNE VALLEY FARM thrived as a hub for education, community building, and environmental stewardship. This year, the team reflected on their efforts to connect with learners of all ages, welcome the community, and steward the land for future generations.

The farm played a vital role in cultivating agricultural knowledge and career pathways for youth and adults alike. High school students from Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School (HVS) were integral to daily operations. Thomas, for instance, started as a volunteer three years ago and eventually transitioned to a paid role. He was occasionally spotted cracking garlic—not as part of his job but simply because he enjoyed being part of the farm’s environment. Similarly, Mateo and Oliver began through practicum and community service opportunities, exploring roles across the farm. By the end of the year, Oliver worked in livestock, demonstrating the range of skills young participants developed.

The farm’s reach extended beyond local youth. Kaela, a Bard College student in Environmental Studies, worked on Fridays at the farm, while earlier in the year, Williams College students participated in a winter elective on dairy farming. For the third year, the Climate Farm School, an adult education initiative, brought individuals leading food systems transformation to learn and contribute. These partnerships highlighted the farm’s role as a center for lifelong learning and mentorship. Notably, three apprentices returned for a second year, and two transitioned into staff roles, continuing a tradition of fostering careers in sustainable agriculture.

The farm’s connection with the local community remained a cornerstone of its mission. Through an open campus policy, visitors walked laneways, visited the herd, or simply spent time outdoors, fostering a sense of belonging. Events like the annual Chatham Area Farm Tour invited locals to learn about our farming practices, drawing people who had lived nearby their whole lives but were visiting the farm for the first time.

Hands-on “community days” provided another way to connect. Families and individuals helped with tasks like harvesting squash, clipping garlic, and planting crops, leaving with boxes of produce and a deeper appreciation for the rhythms of farm life. These days were particularly popular with new parents from the HVS community, offering a meaningful way to engage beyond traditional routines.

Through education, community outreach, and environmental stewardship, the farm wove a vibrant narrative of collaboration, learning, and sustainability.

This year brought significant progress in biodiversity management and climate adaptation. The team planted trees along laneways to create hedgerows, enhancing habitat restoration and reducing erosion. Improved rotational grazing strategies balanced animal welfare with sustainable land use, while eco-friendly upgrades like new laneways, cow brushes, and stanchions optimized workflows and cow health. The farm also enrolled in a five-year National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Stewardship Program, which provides funding for ecological farming practices related to habitat protection and grazing management.

Soil health also saw remarkable improvements. By emphasizing cover cropping and allowing more land to rest, the farm enhanced fertility and moisture retention. These efforts earned high marks in a Cornell Soil Health Assessment. Deer fencing installed earlier in the year bolstered crop yields, significantly improving harvests and team morale. High tunnels for vegetable production optimized water use and boosted yields per square foot, aligning with National Conservation Practice Standards. Collectively, these initiatives strengthened the farm’s commitment to sustainability and resilience.

Hawthorne Valley Farm cultivated not only crops but enduring relationships and a shared sense of purpose. Through education, community outreach, and environmental stewardship, the farm wove a vibrant narrative of collaboration, learning, and sustainability. Each initiative, from planting trees to mentoring new farmers, reinforced the farm’s place as a vital part of Hawthorne Valley Association’s and the region’s cultural and ecological fabric.



Students from the Climate Farm School learn about dairy herding from farmer, Betsy Brennan. Photo by Stacy Szymaszek.

FARMSCAPE ECOLOGY PROGRAM

by Claudia Knab-Vispo, Conrad Vispo, and Anna Duhon

FARMSCAPE ECOLOGY PROGRAM's (FEP) educational and outreach efforts are deeply rooted in our original research and place-based knowledge of Columbia County and the surrounding areas. This past year, we've taken part in an exciting variety of activities to share this work with the community. We facilitated high school students in creating a Biodiversity Trail, partnered with local teachers to bring participatory, place-based research into their classrooms, and helped organize an international wasp identification course that engaged hundreds of participants. We offered customized programs for groups like the Climate Farm School, SUNY Albany, and Wild Ones, and established demonstration sites showcasing native plant installations that support pollinators, beneficial insects, and biodiversity. Through free public ecology walks, talks, and displays, we've invited people from across the county and beyond to engage with their local environment. One of our most enriching experiences this year has been hosting a learning circle where farmers and ecologists come together to explore agroecology research.

Our community partnerships have allowed us to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation for the natural world. Claudia Kenny and Willy Denner of Little Seed Gardens, who have participated in our farmer circles and attended many of our public events, reflected on the impact of our work: "Participating in the learning community—farmer circles hosted by the Farmscape Ecology Program—has helped us to deeply examine our farming practices with the goal of producing food for humans while also stewarding the land for the plant and insect and animal beings who share our place."

One of our most impactful contributions to education is our Learnership Program. Each year, we hire undergraduate and recently graduated students to join us for hands-on experience in fields like entomology and biology. Meg Ritzau, one of our current learners, described her experience: "I've been able to talk to farmers, graduate students, professors, self-taught naturalists, and the many other people connected to FEP about their approaches to conservation in food systems — this has been a useful, memorable, and remarkably personal window into just how many different ways there are to do this work."

We also continue to create and share high-quality, place-based educational resources. Our website hosts unique tools like annotated plant and animal lists and detailed guides to public areas in the county. Our social media channels, customized walks, and publications—most notably our recently published *From the Hudson to the Taconics: An Ecological and Cultural Field Guide to the Habitats of Columbia County, New York*—extend the reach of our research. Deborah Lans, a local reporter, describes our work as the definitive source for understanding the ecology of Columbia County.

Our partnerships with libraries, historical organizations, the Columbia Land Conservancy, and other local initiatives have enabled us to bring programming to all corners of the county. Ellen Winner and David Lewis, long-time participants in our events, have expressed their appreciation for how our walks and talks have enriched their understanding of Columbia County's flora and fauna. For many, our work provides not just knowledge but a stronger connection to the places they inhabit. *continued on page 13* ▶



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American Robin. Photo by Kendrick Fowler.



Working with the farmers at Hawthorne Valley, we have helped to create and maintain ecologically important habitats ...to support pollinators and other beneficial insects...

Bumble bee on impatiens. Photo by Kyle Bradford.

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Many organizations and community members also rely on us for resources and guidance. Glenda Berman, a Master Gardener with Cornell Cooperative Extension, describes how she has drawn on our data to promote pollinator corridors and create native plant meadows. Our biodiversity studies and free public programs have supported countless other projects, from habitat restoration to ecological research.

Environmental stewardship is central to our mission. At the Creekhous, our headquarters, we've transformed a mown lawn into a vibrant native plant garden that supports over 100 species of plants, insects, birds, and other animals. At Hawthorne Valley Farm, one of our most significant contributions to environmental stewardship was the 2022 publication of our Biodiversity Report, which is both derived from ecological research we conducted at Hawthorne Valley and a resource to inform stewardship of the property. We contribute to that stewardship in many ongoing ways. For example, we are working to protect the threatened Spotted Turtle (*Clemmys guttata*) population at Hawthorne Valley through habitat mapping and movement monitoring, and have also been engaged in the installation and long-term monitoring of deer exclosures to study the impact of deer on forest plants (and are planning a new deer exclosure to protect an important Leatherwood [*Dirca palustris*] population).

Working with the farmers at Hawthorne Valley, we have helped to create and maintain ecologically important habitats at Hawthorne Valley Farm to support pollinators and other beneficial insects, as well as birds on the farm; altered hayfield management for the conservation of Bobolinks; restored riparian corridors, including through plantings of native shrubs; and helped manage invasive species. In an effort to help this stewardship be a learning opportunity for the wider community, we are also coordinating the creation of a Biodiversity Trail at Hawthorne Valley that will have interpretive, educational signage highlighting key habitats and management choices. Beyond Hawthorne Valley, the Farmscape Ecology Program is currently involved in creating and maintaining pollinator habitats at the Hudson Valley Farm Hub, Overmountain Conservation area, and the Forge Project.

We're proud that our work has also had ripple effects in the local economy. By promoting native plants and ecological landscaping, we've contributed to the growth of local nurseries and businesses. The publication of our *Field Guide* has been another highlight, not just as a tool for education but also as a boon for local businesses, from bookstores to designers. Steve Hoare, our publisher, noted that the book has become a bestseller, creating economic benefits for many in the region.

At its heart, the Farmscape Ecology Program is about fostering a deeper connection between people and the land. Whether through research, education, or partnerships, our goal is to inspire curiosity, stewardship, and community conversations that help us all better understand and care for our shared landscape.

SPOTLIGHT ON ANNA DUHON: Community, Biodiversity, and Research at Hawthorne Valley

by Stacy Szymaszek

THE FARMSCAPE ECOLOGY PROGRAM (FEP) at Hawthorne Valley has been a hub of innovative research and community engagement for over 20 years. One of the FEP researchers at the heart of this work is Anna Duhon, whose journey from studying local food systems in the Berkshires to fostering biodiversity at Hawthorne Valley exemplifies a lifelong commitment to understanding the intricate relationships between people and the land.



Anna Duhon, photo contributed

Having grown up in Great Barrington, Anna's path to Hawthorne Valley was a homecoming and a deepening of her ties to place. After earning a master's degree from the University for Peace in Costa Rica, with a focus on Natural Resources, Anna returned to the Berkshires to research local food systems for her thesis. "It was a moment of growth in local agriculture," she recalls, describing the upswell of new farms and food outlets in the late 2000s. This work planted the seeds for her role at FEP, where she continues to explore the interplay between human, agricultural, and ecological communities.

BIODIVERSITY IN ACTION: THE TRAIL

Among her many projects, the Biodiversity Trail stands out as a living embodiment of FEP's mission to connect people to the ecological and cultural landscape of the Hudson Valley through innovative research and outreach.

A multi-faceted initiative, the in-progress trail will offer the Hawthorne Valley community a chance to experience our unique biodiversity while walking through a working farm.

"The trail combines so many layers," Duhon explains. "It will incorporate tagged plants for our phenology research, interpretive signs highlighting

biodiversity and agricultural management, and even poetry inspired by the landscape." Phenology, she notes, is the study of the timing of natural life cycle events, such as flowering or migration, which are often influenced by weather and climate. The team has been documenting phenology observations for over a decade, as well as drawing from 19th-century records uncovered by FEP in partnership with other researchers, to analyze shifts caused by changing climatic and environmental conditions across New York State.

This dynamic approach extends to the trail itself, which will integrate research findings, educational tools, and student-driven contributions. "The students in our Ecology Club were deeply engaged in designing the trail," Anna says, describing their role in charting a path that highlights biodiversity and agriculture, brainstorming interpretive signage content, and even beginning trail construction.

The trail also bridges the practical and poetic. Inspired by the multi-faceted vision of a trail through the farm championed by Spencer Fenniman in collaboration with Jill Jakimetz, FEP, and others, the project has grown to encompass themes of ecological research, artistic expression, and sustainable land management. It is intended to be, as Duhon puts it, a "living trail" that evolves with new discoveries and creative contributions. "We want the trail to be a place where people experience the richness of this landscape, both its natural and working aspects. It's about seeing how these pieces fit together—how farming and biodiversity can coexist and support one another," she said.

BALANCING FARMING AND CONSERVATION

Creating a biodiversity trail on a working farm poses unique challenges, particularly where agricultural demands intersect with ecological conservation. Core to FEP is seeing the potential synergies in these intersections, even while recognizing places where different goals may be in tension.

For example, she highlights the management of hayfields to support declining grassland-breeding bird species. "These birds rely on specific grassland conditions to reproduce," she explains. "Intentional management of hayfields with the needs of grassland-breeding birds



Deer mice make themselves at home in a bluebird house, photo by Kendrick Fowler



Shining Waxcap mushrooms, photo by Josie Laing



Candy-striped leaf hopper, photo by Kendrick Fowler

in mind can help ensure they have a chance to nest and fledge their young before the fields are cut." Similarly, Hawthorne Valley's dry meadows—less fertile from an agricultural standpoint—harbor rare ants and important native grasses and plants that provide critical habitats for pollinators and other insects. "These landscapes include a range of different types of habitats," she says. She explained that some habitats that used to be created and maintained by beavers, fires, or flooding, all causing disturbances that are much less common in the current landscape, can now be maintained by certain farm activities.

BEYOND THE TRAIL

This year marked the publication of a unique book project over 10 years in the making: *From the Hudson to the Taconics: An Ecological*

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Ice crystals of hoar frost, photo by Anna Duhon



Woodcock, photo by Kendrick Fowler

and *Cultural Field Guide to the Habitats of Columbia County, New York*. Anna, along with Conrad Vispo and Claudia Knab-Vispo from FEP, and Gretchen Stevens from Hudsonia, co-authored the book, which is a deeply researched and richly illustrated companion for exploring the ecological and cultural fabric of the local landscape. Anna has been engaged in sharing this field guide with audiences of all kinds, including potentially through the development of an accompanying educational curriculum.

As Anna's work continues to evolve, so does her vision for the intersection of research, community, and conservation. In her words, "It's about creating spaces where people and the land connect in meaningful, dynamic ways."



Partnering with our local waste management facility and their bio-digester, we were able to divert 800 pounds of organic waste from the landfill each week...this system has been a vital step in closing the loop on food waste.

Photo by Keetch Miller.

THE FARM STORE

by Jeremy Laurange

HAWTHORNE VALLEY FARM STORE had a highly successful and transformative year, furthering our commitment to environmental stewardship through several impactful initiatives aimed at reducing waste and promoting sustainability.

One of the year's most significant achievements was the implementation of our new composting procedure. Partnering with our local waste management facility and their bio-digester, we were able to divert 800 pounds of organic waste from the landfill each week. This initiative not only helped reduce our environmental footprint but also contributed to improved soil health across the community. By turning organic waste into a valuable resource for fields and gardens, this system has been a vital step in closing the loop on food waste.

We also launched a community collection program for alkaline batteries, recognizing the harmful impact improper disposal can have on the environment. This program enables local residents to recycle used batteries responsibly, preventing toxic materials from entering landfills and waterways. With growing participation, this initiative reflects our role as a community hub for sustainable living, allowing residents to make small but meaningful environmental contributions.

In our efforts to reduce plastic waste, we installed a new water refill station. By offering this service, we've been able to eliminate the use of approximately 4,000 single-use plastic bottles this year alone. This initiative encourages our customers and Hawthorne Valley staff to embrace reusable options and aligns with our larger goal of reducing single-use plastics.

Furthermore, we began our efforts to move away from offering single-use flatware in our facilities, continuing our push to minimize plastic waste. This change will reduce the amount of plastic in our waste stream, and foster a culture of mindfulness around consumption and reuse.

These initiatives illustrate our unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship and our belief in the power of small, consistent actions to create significant, positive change.

Looking ahead, we are eager to build on the momentum we've established. Our goals for the coming year include eliminating more single-use plastics and further developing our food waste management plan on campus, as we continue our journey towards net positivity and environmental responsibility.

THE BAKERY

by Delsia Hilton, Bakery Manager

The mission of Hawthorne Valley Bakery remained steadfast: to provide the highest quality biodynamic and organic food to the community at reasonable prices, all while operating profitably. By fulfilling this mission, the bakery supported the broader goals of Hawthorne Valley Association—advancing education, the arts, and agriculture.

Throughout the year, every staff member contributed to cultivating an environment of respect, honesty, and trust among colleagues, while ensuring the delivery of exceptional products to customers. The bakery's commitment to maintaining its reputation as an ethical and positive workplace continued to be a priority, fostering both staff satisfaction and customer trust.

In addition to producing high-quality food, Hawthorne Valley Bakery remained dedicated to its role as an educational resource on ecological, environmental, and food-related topics. The Visiting Students Program and summer camps partnered with the bakery to provide valuable hands-on experiences in food service, offering students the opportunity to engage with the art and science of baking. As they worked in the bakery, students and campers frequently asked insightful questions about baking techniques and participated in production and packaging tasks, gaining both knowledge and enjoyment from the experience.

Through the Columbia-Greene Workforce Program, the bakery also provided local students with summer work opportunities. Participants worked 30 hours a week, gaining experience in bakery operations while earning a paycheck. Because the program spanned the entire summer, students became well-acquainted with various aspects of the bakery's operations, developing their skills and contributing meaningfully to the team. Emily Macchi, a junior at Taconic Hills, was one of the recent participants. She now works with us on weekends and after school, inspired by her time in the bakery to pursue a career in food service. Emily is currently studying culinary arts at Questar, and her journey illustrates the lasting impact of our commitment to workforce development.

Hawthorne Valley Bakery continued its dedication to sourcing locally, ensuring that as many ingredients as possible came from nearby producers. We used milk, buttermilk, and quark from Hawthorne Valley Farm's Creamery; eggs from Oliver's in Frankfort, NY; sunflower

In addition to producing high-quality food, Hawthorne Valley Bakery remained dedicated to its role as an educational resource on ecological, environmental, and food-related topics.

oil from Sunflower Valley Foods in Hudson, NY; and custom-made butter from a collaboration between Norr Organic and Kriemhild Dairy Farms in Hamilton, NY. In addition to our focus on sourcing quality ingredients, Hawthorne Valley's marketing team helped facilitate donations of baked goods to Farm Aid and other community events, further strengthening our ties with local and neighboring communities.

For the holiday season, we prepared to introduce pies for sale in the Farm Store—our first full-sized desserts in quite some time. These pies, including apple-cranberry crumb and pumpkin varieties, were available in both 9-inch and 5-inch sizes. In keeping with our commitment to sustainability, the pies were baked in tart pans, eliminating the need for single-use pie pans.

As we move forward, the bakery will continue to foster its mission of providing quality food, promoting sustainability, and offering meaningful educational opportunities for the community.



Earth Stewards camper works alongside a professional baker in the Hawthorne Valley Bakery. Photo by Keetch Miller.



While raw milk has its loyal following, its sales are limited to on-farm transactions. By offering Biodynamic® and organic pasteurized milk, we can extend our reach to farmers' markets, store, and other off-site venues, sharing the abundance of our farm with a broader audience.

Photo by Black Mountain Visuals.

THE CREAMERY

Expanding Horizons with Pasteurized Milk Production

by Jeremy Shapiro, Creamery Manager

This year marks a pivotal shift for our creamery as we near the completion of our transition to producing pasteurized milk. This evolution responds to growing customer demand and opens new avenues for distributing our high-quality dairy products. While raw milk has its loyal following, its sales are limited to on-farm transactions. By adding Biodynamic® and organic pasteurized milk to our offerings, we can extend the reach of our milk to farmers' markets, sharing the abundance of our farm with a broader audience. Our raw milk customers can rest assured, we will continue to bottle our Biodynamic/organic raw milk and sell it in our Farm Store.

This transition brings exciting opportunities and a few adjustments. To meet the production demands of pasteurized milk, we are reimagining our product line. Our current cheese inventory is being sold, and pasteurized milk will eventually take its place. We anticipate some questions from our customers about this shift and are committed to engaging them with transparency and enthusiasm. Looking ahead, we see the potential to redesign our cheese aging space, enabling us to reintroduce cheeses of even higher quality in the future.

The introduction of pasteurization doesn't just expand our product offerings—it also enhances our operational sustainability and community impact. Our new equipment dramatically reduces water usage and processing time, improving efficiency and aligning with our commitment to responsible resource management. Additionally, this investment enables us to explore new dairy products and co-packing services, providing valuable support to other small farms in our network.

As we move forward, we're excited about the expanded possibilities pasteurization offers, both for our creamery and for the regional food system. With your support, we're taking another step toward creating a resilient, collaborative, and sustainable future for local agriculture.

THE GREENMARKET

by Zach Tattersall-Hill, Director of Sales and Production

Hawthorne Valley continues its commitment to bringing fresh, nutrient-rich food to communities throughout the NYC metro area, maintaining a consistent presence year-round at eight markets, including seven unique locations, every week. These markets serve as vital hubs for connecting urban residents with the bounty of sustainable agriculture, fostering relationships that extend beyond mere transactions to genuine community connections.

In response to ongoing environmental challenges, we have refined our market operations to align with our values of sustainability and efficiency. Our team has transitioned to reusable packing containers, significantly reducing the use of disposable plastics, and streamlined our truck routes to minimize fuel consumption. These changes not only reflect our commitment to reducing our environmental footprint but also support a more cost-effective and reliable workflow, ensuring that fresh produce reaches our customers in peak condition.

Despite facing challenging weather conditions and occasional truck maintenance hurdles, our dedicated market staff remains resilient and solutions-oriented. Their positivity and adaptability are key to maintaining the high-quality experience our customers have come to expect. Thanks to their efforts, we continue to meet sales goals, achieve strong gross margins, and manage labor costs effectively—all of which sustain the long-term viability of this program.

The impact of these efforts extends far beyond the markets themselves. For many, our stands represent access to food that nourishes not only the body but also a deeper connection to sustainable farming and the natural world. Customers often express their gratitude for the opportunity to buy directly from a farm that values both the health of the planet and the communities it serves. As we look to the year ahead, we remain steadfast in our mission to provide nutrient-dense food to the NYC metro area, enhancing food security and environmental stewardship while continuing to inspire trust and loyalty among our customers. By staying on our current path of thoughtful innovation and dedication, we aim to strengthen our impact and uphold our role as a beacon of sustainable agriculture in an urban context.

THE PLACE-BASED LEARNING CENTER

contributed by Matt Davis and Joe Harris, Co-Directors, Children's Programming

CULTIVATING CONNECTION THROUGH FOOD

Over the past year, lunchtime at the Visiting Students Program (VSP) was a lively and social affair. Every day at 12:30 PM, the dining hall buzzed with enthusiastic children, teachers, and farm educators, united by the joy of sharing delicious, organic meals. Both the VSP and Farm Camps upheld their reputation for serving meals that delighted young diners from across the Northeast and beyond, with favorites like Spiraled Roasted Potatoes, Burrito Tuesdays, Cheesy Millet Mountains, and Monday Vegetable Stir Fry.

One memorable moment came during a lunch with a group of 4th-grade visitors from New York City. "This is probably my favorite meal of the week!" one child exclaimed, savoring mac and cheese paired with lemon-butter broccoli. The children had learned just that morning that many of the ingredients in their meal—eggplants, leeks, potatoes, and other vegetables—had been harvested the day before from the Place-based Learning Center (PBLC) Children's Garden by their own hands.

This sense of connection extended beyond the kitchen. A child who initially avoided the broccoli skeptically was gently encouraged by his teacher to take a "farmer's taste"—just one bite. That tentative nibble turned into bold bites of sunflower seeds, salad, and more, demonstrating the transformative power of engaging with food at its source.

FROM GARDEN TO TABLE

Every week during the fall, children enjoyed popcorn and apple cider for their morning snacks. On Tuesdays, they learned that the cider they were drinking had been pressed the previous week by their peers, using apples from the PBLC apple trees and local partners like Rose Hill, Thompson Finch, and Perelandra Orchards. For many children, this was their first encounter with fresh-pressed cider and the processes behind it, deepening their appreciation for locally grown food.

When ingredients weren't sourced directly from the PBLC Children's Garden, their origins remained close to home. All vegetables served were organic and locally sourced, with a strong preference for produce from Hawthorne Valley Farm. When necessary, additional supplies came from trusted partners like Miller's Crossing, Blue Star Farm, and Common Hands Farm. This commitment to local agriculture

These experiences not only introduced children to the joys of agriculture, but also instilled lasting lessons about the value of community, sustainability, and self-sufficiency.

underscored the PBLC's mission of fostering sustainability and community resilience.

TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES IN FOOD AND FARMING

Throughout the year, the VSP and Farm Camps inspired countless transformations. Children arrived hesitant about trying new foods—especially vegetables—but left with newfound enthusiasm for cooking, eating hearty farmer's lunches, and harvesting produce. On the final day of each program, children often shared how much they enjoyed experiences they initially resisted, such as preparing soup or picking vegetables.

The impact extended beyond taste buds. As children waved goodbye at the end of their stay, they carried a sense of pride and connection to the land, farming, and gardening. These experiences not only introduced children to the joys of agriculture but also instilled lasting lessons about the value of community, sustainability, and self-sufficiency.

PBLC continued to fulfill its mission of nurturing meaningful connections between children, food, and farming. By grounding children in the rhythms of nature and the work of sustainable agriculture, the program planted seeds of understanding and respect for the environment that will continue to grow in years to come.



Farm Explorer's summer camper gets to know one of the program's hens. Photo by Katie McCurdy.



Photo by Stacy Szymaszek.

THE BUZZ ON BIODIVERSITY: *How Yuuki Metreaud Inspires Connection Through Beekeeping*

by Stacy Szymaszek

YUUKI METREAUD is a math, chemistry, and practical arts teacher at Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School (HVS) as well as being an alum (Class of '97). His love for science and the environment is rooted in a childhood fascination with insects, particularly bees. Growing up in the community, Yuuki spent afternoons watching his friend Ben Madey's grandfather manage his beehives, sparking a lifelong passion. By high school, he was managing his own colonies, a commitment he sustained until leaving for college.

Though his path diverged into carpentry, project management, and even outdoor education with Outward Bound, the bees were never far from his mind. After settling down with space to keep hives again, a hobby blossomed into a business of over 100 colonies. Eventually, this journey led him to the University of Minnesota's Bee Lab, where he worked with Dr. Marla Spivak, well known for her research to identify stress factors that compromise bee immune systems and develop methods to mitigate these stresses.

Now, as an educator, Yuuki draws on this rich background to inspire the next generation. In the spring, he introduces high school students to the art and science of beekeeping, offering an elective and an after-school club focused on hands-on experience. Students learn about spring colony management, creating new colonies from thriving hives, and even selling beeswax and honey to support class funds. "There's a business aspect, but it's more than that," Yuuki reflects. "It's about developing a personal connection with the bees."

For Yuuki, this relationship is key. "Without a relationship, bees don't carry the same meaning. When students engage emotionally and scientifically, they gain a deeper appreciation for these creatures and their role in the ecosystem."

Beekeeping also serves as a lens for larger environmental lessons. The plight of honeybees, which garnered attention during the colony collapse crisis of the mid-2000s, offers a cautionary tale about human impacts on biodiversity. Yuuki emphasizes the nuance often lost in sensational headlines. "Yes, bees are struggling, but it's not as simple as 'they're all going to die, and so are we.' Instead, we should ask, 'What is this telling us about how we care for the environment and other species?'"

Bees teach us so much about interconnectedness. They remind us that the health of one species reflects the health of the whole system.

Drawing on his experience at the Bee Lab, Yuuki highlights sustainable solutions: improving habitat quality, eliminating environmental toxins, and breeding bees with enhanced immunity through what scientists call "social immunity"—the collective health benefits derived from their communal behaviors. These efforts reflect a holistic approach that prioritizes resilience over mere productivity.

While honeybees are often celebrated, Yuuki reminds his students that they are not native to the United States, having been brought over by European settlers. Their presence, while beneficial for agriculture, can sometimes overshadow native pollinators like bumblebees, mason bees, and sweat bees. "We need to strike a balance," he explains. "Managed honeybee colonies are important, but we also need to ensure we're not outcompeting native species."

Yuuki has witnessed ecological changes in the Valley over the decades. Invasive species like Japanese knotweed have proliferated, displacing native plants but also providing late-summer nectar for bees. "It's one of those complex stories," he notes. "Knotweed benefits honeybees preparing for winter, but it also disrupts waterways and native ecosystems."

Through his teaching, Yuuki strives to instill a sense of stewardship and curiosity. Whether through scientific observation or fostering an emotional bond with bees, his ultimate goal is to empower students to think critically about their role in the environment. "Bees teach us so much about interconnectedness," he says. "They remind us that the health of one species reflects the health of the whole system."

HAWTHORNE VALLEY WALDORF SCHOOL

contributed by Karin Almquist, School Director

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF WALDORF EDUCATION

This year marked a momentous milestone for Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School—our 50th anniversary. We celebrated with events that honored our history and set our sights on the future. The October gala, held in the School greenhouse, brought together faculty, parents, alumni, and community members in a warm, festive gathering. Throughout the year, we continued this celebration with an alumni reunion, a student art exhibit at Lightforms Art Center, and a retrospective display of photographs and yearbooks. These events highlighted the enduring strength of our school community and the creative spirit of our students and alumni.

ENROLLMENT AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Enrollment growth was a key success this year, with 314 students on closing day, including 63 high school students. This steady increase reflects the vibrancy and relevance of Waldorf education in our region. Families continue to be drawn to the unique opportunities we offer, from rigorous academics to experiential learning.

Our students flourished through hands-on experiences and field practicums, including 8th-grade wilderness trips, the 11th-grade journey exploring the American South's civil rights history, and the 12th-grade trip to Spain. These transformative experiences extended classroom learning into the broader world, deepening students' understanding of history, culture, and their civic responsibilities.

SUPPORTING THE WHOLE CHILD

This year, we expanded our Hickory Program and learning support services using federal EANS funding. Two part-time learning support teachers joined our team, enabling us to better meet the social-emotional and academic needs of our students. While the costs of this vital work are significant, the benefits are undeniable: students who might otherwise struggle are thriving. Our expanded counseling staff also played a pivotal role in supporting the well-being of our school community.

FACULTY AND STAFF INNOVATIONS

Staffing changes presented challenges and opportunities. Three long-serving class teachers transitioned out of classroom roles, allowing us to add a dedicated lower school substitute teacher, a full-time Middle and High School Learning Support Coordinator, and other skilled faculty members. These additions are ensuring continuity, reducing stress on current teachers, and fostering a healthier balance for our faculty. The introduction of the Raptor Communication system enhanced

campus-wide safety and communication protocols, particularly in emergencies. These measures, combined with ongoing professional development, reflect our commitment to providing a secure and supportive environment for learning.

FESTIVALS AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Our festivals and traditions, including Michaelmas, May Fair, and the Yuletide Fair, brought joy and connection to students and families. The expanded Michaelmas Pageant, Martinmas Lantern Walk, and Maypole Dancing underscored the rich cultural and artistic life of our school. Events like Grandparents' Day and the MLK Jr. Day community gathering strengthened bonds across generations and highlighted our shared values.

THE ARTS IN FOCUS

A highlight of the year was the first-ever after-school musical, *Miranda's Quill*, a collaborative production involving students across grades. Our Winter and Spring concerts showcased the growing talent in our music program, including the debut of a high school jazz band and exceptional performances by students in grades 3-12. These artistic achievements reflect our commitment to fostering creativity and collaboration in our students.

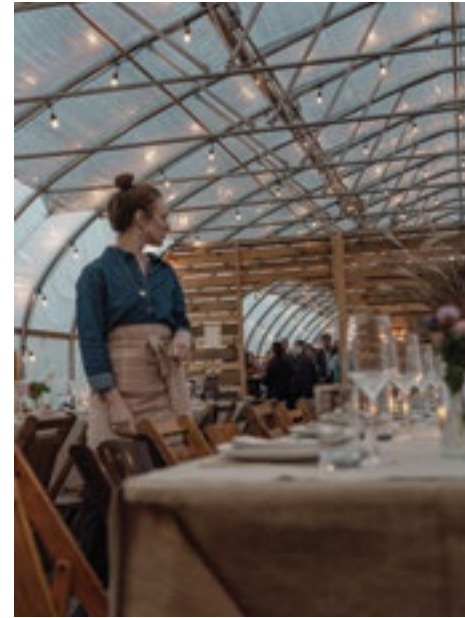
ATHLETICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR GROWTH

We expanded athletic opportunities through partnerships with Taconic Hills, offering sports like volleyball, soccer, track and field, and baseball. These programs provided our students with valuable team-building experiences and contributed to school spirit. Extracurricular offerings, including chamber orchestra, culinary arts, and aerial acrobatics, gave students diverse outlets to explore their passions.

INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

Our 2023-24 capital improvements supported the continued growth of our school. From classroom renovations to upgrades in our parking and gathering spaces, these projects enriched the daily experience of students and staff. Looking ahead, we're focusing on sustaining these advancements and further enhancing the learning environment.

As we enter the 2024-25 school year, our enrollment remains strong, and our staff is prepared to meet the evolving needs of our students. We are committed to deepening the impact of our educational offerings, strengthening our community, and fostering the values of Waldorf education for generations to come.



Top Left, October gala in the School's greenhouse; Top Right, 12th grade graduation speaker, Matt Fleury (HVS Class of '83), President & CEO of the Connecticut Science Center, speaks to the graduates; Above, gingerbread contest entry; Right, students enjoy High School art on display at Lightforms Art Center in Hudson during the 50th Anniversary exhibition. All photos by Keetch Miller.



Alkion Summer Course participants in conversation. Photo by Keetch Miller.

ALKION CENTER FOR WALDORF TEACHER EDUCATION

contributed by Patrick Stolfo and Martina Müller, Alkion faculty and Co-Administrators

THE ALKION CENTER has always been dedicated to preparing students to teach and embody the educational insights of Rudolf Steiner, which have been enriched and expanded over the past century. This mission guided us throughout the past year as we worked to support both aspiring and experienced educators, ensuring that Waldorf education continues to flourish in schools, communities, and homes.

CELEBRATING 21 YEARS OF IMPACT

This past year marked the 21st year of our initiative at Hawthorne Valley. Since its inception, Alkion has been shaped by a consistent core faculty, joined by community educators, professionals from Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School, and experts from other branches of Hawthorne Valley Association. This collaboration enriched our curriculum, strengthening its relevance and breadth.

A GROWING LEGACY OF EDUCATORS

In 2023, 20 teachers and staff members at Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School studied with us at the Alkion Center. Many achieved Waldorf Teacher Certification through AWSNA and WECAN. Still others continued their journey toward certification while actively teaching or assisting in classrooms.

Our graduates made a meaningful impact beyond Hawthorne Valley as well. They brought their expertise to Waldorf schools and educational initiatives across North America, with significant influence in Northeast communities such as Mountain Laurel and Saratoga Springs in New York, Berkshire and Hartsbrook in Massachusetts, Housatonic in Connecticut, as well as the NY Mountain Top and Acorn Early Childhood programs. Increasingly, Alkion alumni stepped into leadership roles in schools, helping to shape the future of Waldorf education.

The homeschooling movement also benefited from our work. Parents of young children enrolled at Alkion to incorporate Waldorf principles into their home education practices, ensuring their children received an inspired and holistic education.

COLLABORATION ACROSS THE COMMUNITY

Alkion faculty mentored current and former students throughout the year, both at Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School and in other schools. This mentorship reflected the strong connections between Alkion and

the broader Hawthorne Valley community. The year saw countless examples of collaboration: Visiting Students Program staff and farmers joined us as full- or part-time students, while Alkion students and graduates contributed their talents to other branches of the Association.

This cross-pollination extended beyond professional collaboration. Families of graduates continued to establish roots in the Hawthorne Valley community, enrolling their children in the school and integrating their livelihoods into the area. These connections enriched the community while furthering the mission of Waldorf education.

ADVANCING EDUCATION THROUGH AN INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

The Alkion curriculum, rooted in Waldorf principles, created countless opportunities to engage with the cultural ideals of the broader Hawthorne Valley Association. Over the past year, students explored:

- The natural environment, gardening, and farming
- Sustainability and eco-friendly technologies
- The arts and experience-based sciences
- Economics and the threefold social organism
- Holistic health and wellness

These studies equipped students to foster creativity, responsibility, and purpose, ensuring that the impact of Waldorf education extends far beyond the classroom.

Looking back on 2023, we saw the Alkion Center continue to serve as a transformative force in education. Whether through preparing students to lead classrooms, inspiring homeschoolers, or fostering connections within the Hawthorne Valley community, Alkion's mission resonated in every aspect of our work. As we move forward, we remain committed to deepening this impact, carrying Steiner's educational insights into a new era.

CENTER FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

by Gary Lamb, Director of Center for Social Research

In 2024, CSR initiatives took significant steps toward fostering a more equitable and sustainable future, advancing the discourse on socially-conscious economics and human relations. These efforts align with our commitment to promoting educational resources and thought leadership that inspire transformative action.

Our pivotal publication, *Steinerian Economics: A Compendium* (2014), continues to resonate globally. Edited by CSR Director Gary Lamb and former Research Associate Sarah Mecca (Hearn), this landmark text was translated into Portuguese and Spanish this year to meet the growing demand for sustainable economic perspectives.

Dr. Silvinha Vasconcelos, an Associate Professor of Economics at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora, Brazil, who translated the book into Portuguese, recognizes its potential for catalyzing change: “I intend to use this book in a new course, ‘Economics for the Common Good,’ which I will be teaching in 2025.”

In Chile, Joan Melé, President of the Money and Consciousness Foundation, underscores the book’s power to inspire action: “The clarity with which the topics are presented in this book poses a challenge and a great responsibility for us. After reading the book, it is very clear what needs to be done; now it is up to us to decide what we are willing to do.”

These translations are already creating ripples across Latin America, where educators and thought leaders are embracing the text to address pressing social and environmental challenges.

The publication of *On the Wings of Words: Conversations and Human Relations* reflects our dedication to fostering understanding and transformation in human relationships. Edited by Gary Lamb, this concise volume offers profound insights from Rudolf Steiner on the mysteries of social encounter, contextualized for modern readers. Sherry Wildfeuer, a co-worker at Kimberton Hills Camphill, praised the book for its practical application: “A wonderfully concentrated expression of what spiritual science can contribute towards a positive social future by way of enhanced self-awareness and active self-transformation.”

After reading the book, it is very clear what needs to be done; now it is up to us to decide what we are willing to do.

~ Joan Melé

This book serves as a guide for individuals and organizations committed to deepening their relationships and contributing to the realization of a threefold social organism.

Through these efforts, we reaffirm our belief that education and engagement are foundational to driving meaningful change. We are grateful for the ongoing support of our funders and community, who make it possible for us to amplify these voices and visions worldwide. Together, we are shaping a future rooted in compassion, sustainability, and conscious collaboration.

LIGHTFORMS ART CENTER

by Laura Summer, Artistic Director

Last year, Lightforms Art Center strengthened its role as a vibrant hub for creativity, education, and community building in the Hudson Valley. Through diverse programming, we inspired individuals, fostered connection, and supported sustainable initiatives.

In March, children’s author Mike Loki Anthony captivated audiences with his art show and educational event celebrating diversity, family, and individuality. His storytelling through *Henry the Patchwork Whale: My Family, My Patches, and Me* delighted families across Hudson, encouraging meaningful conversations about embracing uniqueness.

We began the year with an impactful MLK Day celebration, hosting a panel discussion titled *Shifting the Cultural Climate through the Study and Practice of Kingian Nonviolence*. The panel featured prominent voices, including Liza Smith, Executive Deputy Director of the African American Archive of Columbia County. Over 50 community members engaged in this thought-provoking dialogue.

In late summer, the Knowing/Unknowing exhibition explored the mystery of abstraction, showcasing the works of artists Jack Millard, Virginia Dow, and S. Moss. From August 30th to September 15th, the gallery welcomed a diverse audience of art lovers, tourists, and

residents of Triform and Camphill communities. The exhibit’s inspiring and beautiful works fostered a meaningful dialogue about abstract art.

Lightforms deepened its commitment to environmental consciousness with the Sprouts of Conscious Action event, hosted in collaboration with local and national organizations. Inspired by the 2023 “Hands In” gathering, this day-long initiative featured artwork, presentations, and experiences tied to February’s Environmental Consciousness Action (ECA) challenge.

Through diverse programming, we inspired individuals, fostered connection, and supported sustainable initiatives.

Participants shared poetry, research, sculptures, paintings, and songs, offering creative reflections on weekly themes such as Local Consciousness, Global Consciousness, and Community Action. Guests also engaged in guided environmental observation walks, fostering mindfulness and ecological awareness. With a strong base of local participants, the event underscored Lightforms’ role as a catalyst for environmental engagement in the Hudson/Harlemville community.

From December through April, the back gallery served as a residency space for Earthstream Tiny Houses, founded by Martin Summer. This innovative initiative addresses the housing crisis by designing affordable, nature-inspired tiny homes that promote mental and spiritual well-being through closer connections to nature. Summer shared his vision: “In my own life, being in nature has supported harmony and health. I saw the need for more people to experience this connection, and Earthstream Tiny Houses was born to bridge that gap in daily life.” By hosting Earthstream, Lightforms supported a local business addressing housing challenges while fostering sustainable design practices.

Through impactful programming, Lightforms continues to weave art, education, environmental action, and innovation into the fabric of our community. We are deeply grateful to our supporters and collaborators who make this work possible, and we look forward to building on these successes in the year ahead.





FINANCIALS: YEAR END AUGUST 31, 2024

*REVENUE AND SUPPORT OVER EXPENSES (before interest in subsidiary and tax liability)

REVENUE AND SUPPORT

Product sales	10,081,950	56%
Contributions, donations, and grants	1,760,289	10%
Tuition and fees, net of tuition discount	4,346,826	24%
Guests and conference income	814,822	5%
Fundraising events, net of expenses	31,709	less than 1%
Rentals	20,578	less than 1%
Consulting and other services	563,936	3%
Other income	61,231	less than 1%
Interest income	114,863	1%
Investment gains/(losses)	69,543	less than 1%

total revenue + support **\$17,865,747**

EXPENSES

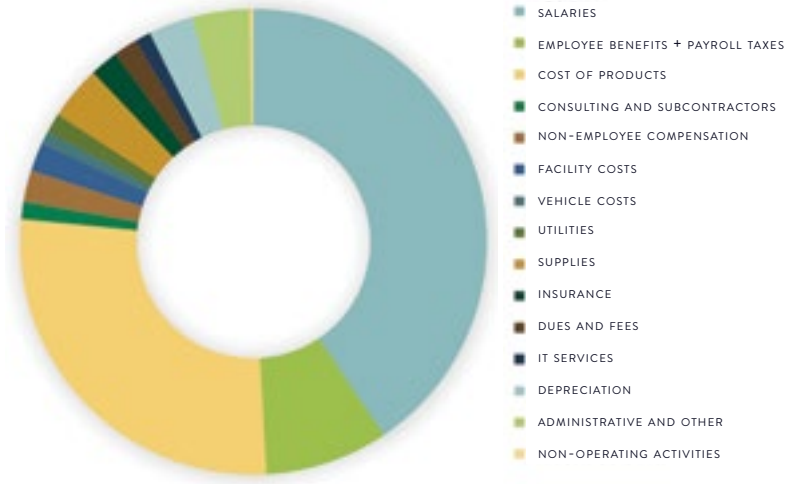
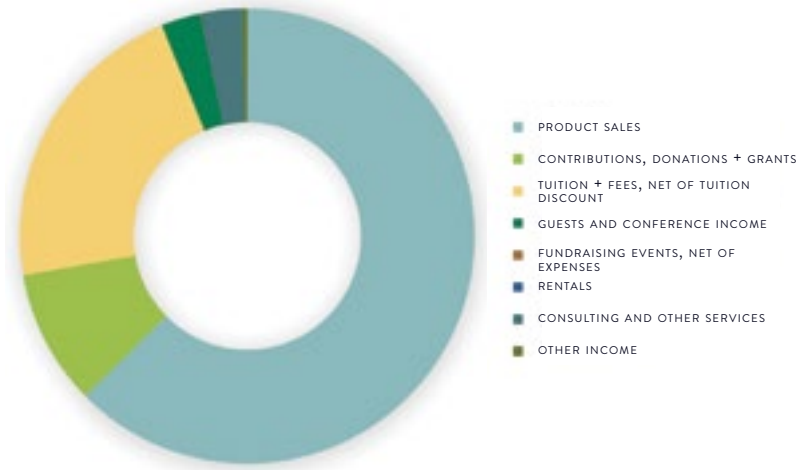
Salaries	7,035,448	41%
Employee benefits and payroll taxes	1,483,181	9%
Cost of products	4,760,658	27%
Consulting and subcontractors	207,987	1%
Non-employee compensation	379,858	2%
Facility costs	346,323	2%
Vehicle costs	157,378	1%
Utilities	232,550	1%
Supplies	651,276	4%
Insurance	345,519	2%
Dues and fees	289,226	2%
IT services	183,932	1%
Depreciation	540,346	3%
Administrative and other	685,077	4%
Nonoperating activities	45,306	less than 1%

total expenditures **\$17,344,065**

beginning net assets **\$8,589,477**

net surplus/(deficit) **\$521,682**

ending net assets **\$9,111,159**



Art by Jess Brobst inspired by the 100 year anniversary of biodynamics. Marker on fabric.

* Subject to audit. Complete financials available at guidestar.org

Hope locates itself in the premises that we don't know what will

happen and that in the spaciousness of uncertainty is room to act.

REBECCA SOLNIT, "HOPE IN THE DARK: UNTOLD HISTORIES, WILD POSSIBILITIES"

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS, FUNDS, AND BUSINESSES FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN 2024:

Abacus Wealth Partners, LLC
Armonia LLC
Austin & Co. Inc.
AWSNA
Bank of Greene County Foundation
Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation
Bernheim Foundation
BNY Mellon Community Partnership
Brighthouse Life Insurance Company of New York
Brown & Brown
Bulova Gale Foundation
CARMA, LLC
CDPHP
Charles Schwab
Charityvest Inc.
Claverack Well & Pump Service, LLC
Columbia County Tourism
Columbia Land Conservancy, Inc.
Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut
Drummore Fund
Crawford & Associates Engineering, PC
Dormitory Authority of the State of New York
Donald C. Brace Foundation

DV Hamann & Co. Inc.
Ed Herrington, Inc.
Fern Hill Fund of RSF Social Finance
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
Fingar Insurance
First Fuel & Propane
Foundation for Rudolf Steiner Books
Greenbush Tape & Label, Inc.
Gregg and Jean Frankel Foundation, Inc
Hygeia Foundation
Jewish Communal Fund
Joyce and Irving Goldman Family Foundation
Kneller Insurance Agency
Loring, Wolcott & Coolidge Trust, LLC
Margaret A. Shipman Trust
Mark Jacobson Charitable Foundation
Massachusetts Audubon Society
Morgan Stanley Gift Fund
New Leaf Ecological Landscapes, LLC
New Leaf Tree Service, Inc.
New World Foundation
New York State Council on the Arts
Nordlys Foundation

Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center
NoVo Foundation
Organic Valley
Partners for Climate Action Hudson Valley
Pershing
Pro Printers
Queen City Roasting Co.
Raymond James Global Account
Repeat Business Systems
Rising Tide Capital
Robinson / Scholastic Objectives LLC
RSF Social Finance
Schwab Charitable Fund
Sojourner Corp.
Spitzer Enterprises
Stone House Grain, LLC
Sumner Gerard Foundation
Swantz Family Foundation
Synchrony Financial
T. Backer Fund
The Dammann Fund, Inc.
The Farm at Miller's Crossing
The Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund

The Fullerton Family Foundation
The Ole Skaarup Foundation
The Sandy River Charitable Foundation
Thrivent
UBS Financial Services
UHY
Ullman Family Charitable Foundation
Upstate Farms of Highland, Inc.
US Department of Agriculture
Vanguard Charitable Endowment Program
Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation
Volgenau Foundation
Whitbeck Benedict & Smith LLP
Anonymous foundations
And our 494 individual donors

Hawthorne Valley Farm's pick-your-own garden is an added perk for CSA members whose pick up site is the home farm. Photo by Keetch Miller.



UNCONVENTIONAL BY NATURE

HAWTHORNE VALLEY

327 COUNTY ROUTE 21C
GHENT, NY 12075
HAWTHORNEVALLEY.ORG

*The Farm's CSA serves more than 300 members with Biodynamic® and organic produce, and many add-on options. There are pick up sites in New York City and on the Farm.
Photo by Keetch Miller.*