



"I feel more confident. I feel way more connected with the community. Being able to work around the county and make it a better place is very satisfying."



THIS YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

662 youth served in 2023 - so far!

70 youth employed on Trail, Farm, and Build Crews

17 worksites in MA, NY, CT, and VT

6,384 pounds of food donated July-September

7 footbridges built

68 students attended the 2nd annual

Women in Conservation & Agriculture Conference

22 Front Lawn Food garden beds installed by youth crews

80 students in Spring after school and Summer programs

80 youth on field trips at April Hill

181 visitors to Mohican Miles Exhibit at April Hill

46 youth in service learning and volunteer partnerships

51 youth camped overnight at April Hill

1 new youth crew focusing on carpentry and trades skills and projects: the Summer Build Crew!



FROM THE DIRECTOR

"It occurred to me that if we spent more time individually converting raw materials into useful objects, we might be better placed to contextualise the challenges that face a society addicted to excessive and often conspicuous consumption. Perhaps more importantly, we might be a little bit happier."
– Alexander Langlands, *Craeft*

Trades education is getting deserved, if not belated, attention these days in our education community as well as the broader community. We bemoan the dearth of construction contractors and land design professionals yet we've not formally educated or lauded these trades for at least two generations. It's no surprise, then, that there's a shortage (don't get me started on farmers...).

At Greenagers, with your help, we've successfully piloted a Pathways to the Trades program that focuses specifically on the construction trades. In a more fundamental way, all our programs lay the groundwork for a successful career in the trades or, equally as important, a true appreciation for working with one's hands and a respect for those who choose that work for a career. Greenagers youth crews build bridges and shelters, stack stone walls, puzzle out wiring and plumbing problems, and split firewood. This process—envisioning, planning, measuring, cutting, forming, fastening, and finishing—is the stuff of skills that puts roofs over our heads, tables, lights, and sinks under those roofs, and a landscape to tie our shelters to our environs with beauty and function.

You'll see many examples of this skill building in this newsletter. The biggest take away, to my mind, is that each student of these crafts takes away these skills and owns them for their lifetime (and can build upon them).

We like that kind of empowerment here at Greenagers and we're ever so grateful that you're with us in the mission.

Will Conklin
Executive Director

"I learned how
to respect
nature, as well
as how to
motivate others
through
difficult times."



A ROCKING THE BOAT PARTICIPANT MILLING LUMBER AT APRIL HILL

Women in Conservation & Agriculture Conference



SEED SAVING LED BY SARAH MONTEIRO OF GREENAGERS



BECOMING A SHEEP/GOAT SHEPHERDESS LED BY MARLEEN VAN GULICK OF BEAVERTIDES FARM



WISDOM OF THE WATERS WORKSHOP LED BY SUNDER ASHNI OF MUMBET'S FREEDOM FARM

Our second annual Women in Conservation and Agriculture Conference was a great success! 68 students from 5 schools came to April Hill for a day of workshops and discussion led by local women professionals in the fields of conservation and agriculture.

A big thank you to our sponsors, **Webster Landscape Design & Build** and **Berkshire Food Co-op**. Thanks to our wonderful presenters and all the students and teachers who participated. A huge thank you to Sarah Monteiro our amazing Farm Director for organizing this event.



ARBORICULTURE LED BY MAEVEN BRODERICK, AN ARBORIST WITH HARRISON MCPHEE, INC.



CHEESEMAKING LED BY AMELIA CONKLIN OF SKY VIEW FARM

"I think Greenagers is a great environment for building confidence and I feel more sure about myself after trying out new skills on the farm."



THE BASICS OF WILDLIFE RESEARCH LED BY CAROLINE BLACK OF THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Struggle, Work, Build, Succeed

When recruiting at local high schools we often advertise that working on a trail crew is “not a retail job” and that there is “zero customer service”. That turns heads. We quickly follow up by saying you’re guaranteed a summer of hard work in the woods, building with your hands, and regular paychecks. That turns away some, but to others that trifecta of paid employment, out-of-doors, doing something tangible, can be enticing.

Once on the crew I like to make a point of telling youth that we live in the largest, healthiest, most connected temperate deciduous forest in the world. This globally impressive system of trees that stretches up and down the eastern United States into Canada is home to curiosities that intersect with our daily lives. In a given week youth trail workers will encounter trees that smell like root beer (black birch) or fruit loops (sassafras), the only known photosynthetic vertebrate on earth (spotted salamander), wild ripe blueberries and huckleberries, herds of grateful hikers, the flute-harmonizing song of a hermit thrush, and other delights. Of course, it’s not all roses. In fact, all roses is often the worst case worksite—invasive exotic blood-letting multiflora. Other unpleasant sensations to name a few include bug bites, stinging nettles, the first itch of a poison ivy outbreak, dewy spiderwebs to the face on the morning commute up a mountain, or the sting of ground hornets.

At the end of a work day, despite the hardships and natural marvels, and long after the paycheck has been cashed and spent, the longest lasting senses to stay with a Greenager are accomplishment and camaraderie. To see and walk upon a trail, staircase, wall, that hours earlier wasn’t there is a simple and fulfilling delight. To struggle, work, build, and succeed in the company of your peers makes for memories that endure.

If you are a teen in the tri-state area, or know one, and they’ve a penchant for adventure, check out Greenagers! We’ll be hiring for our summer 2024 crews starting in February.

- Elia Del Molino, Conservation Director



THE TRAIL CREW AT WORK IN THE WOODS IN SUMMER 2023

PROGRAM UPDATES

What's happening now

- Fall Trail Crew employing post high school youth.
- Wood Bank distribution begins in November
- Storage crops are being prepped for late Fall distribution to food banks
- After school programs at DuBois Middle School and Salisbury Central School
- Pathways to the Trades Fall semester internships are underway.



BUILDING A TIMBER FRAME ROOF FOR THE SHEFFIELD COMMUNITY BREAD OVEN



Spotlight on Pathways to the Trades

Summer Build Crew projects at April Hill included:

- Deer proof gates added to the garden perimeter
- Electric on demand hot water system installed for our youth tent residents
- Garden structure designed and built with guidance from professional timber framer
- Welcome kiosk for visitors to April Hill
- Collaboration with Brooklyn based youth organization, Rocking the Boat

Pathways Internship projects underway:

- Completion of garden structure roof and interior
- Assembly of timber frame structure and mobile shed for Parish Church in Sheffield
- Improvements to our Warner road operations, including shelter for equipment and crews
- Field trips to active build sites
- Skill building workshops and demonstrations



SITTING DOWN WITH OUR YOUTH LEADERS



ISSY : ASSISTANT TRAIL CREW LEADER



NATE : FARM & TRAIL CREWS



PHOEBE : PITTSFIELD TRAIL CREW

Is there a skill you were surprised to find you really enjoyed or felt confident with?

Issy: "I've surprised myself in my ability to lead others effectively, and contribute to the smooth running of a crew. Instructing or adjusting others with tasks I am more familiar with, and being listened to and heard is something I feel more empowered doing after a few months working here."

Nate: "When working on the farm, I liked going to the food pantries and seeing people's reactions to the fresh produce we created. On the trail crew, I liked building the bridges and seeing people walking through and being very impressed."

Phoebe: "I was surprised by how much I enjoyed using power tools when we built the bridge. I was expecting to be scared of injuring myself, but once how to use them was explained, it was fairly simple and I could work confidently."

What are the skills you are most proud of learning or improving during your work with Greenagers?

Issy: "The physical strength and fitness you get working outside all day is a deeply satisfying thing. Pushing your body past its limits and feeling more capable week by week and month by month is a powerful feeling!"

Nate: "I felt that working with other people and being able to be part of something bigger than me."

Phoebe: "The skill I'm most proud of improving over the summer is the ability to focus on one task for an extended period of time, like raking, mulching, or crushing rocks."

How do you describe your work with Greenagers when talking to friends and family?

Issy: "When I share my experience with Greenagers outside work, I tend to highlight the social experience and culture present here. The most significant part of a job for me is who I spend my time at work with. My time with Greenagers crews have been generally light-hearted, committed to the task at hand and flexible to accommodate for all members of the team."

Nate: "I tell people when I worked on the trail crew how we fix, redo and build new trails. On the farm crew I tell people I planted cover crops and harvested onions, potatoes and cucumbers which were brought to the food pantry."

Phoebe: "When I tell people about the work I did with Greenagers, I usually list some of the places we went, some of the jobs, like bridge building or removing sod. I tell them that the work was tiring but I had a very good time and it was rewarding work."

"I know more now and knowledge brings confidence. I also am proud of myself for realizing that farming is something I like and want to explore, and for figuring out how to make it happen for myself."

Yo Yo Ma & Emanuel Ax Return



We were so thrilled that Yo Yo Ma and Emanuel Ax returned to April Hill for another amazing benefit concert for Greenagers. We can't express enough our gratitude for their generosity and commitment to this community. It was, for the third time in a row, a truly unforgettable evening.

Thank you also to our wonderful community of friends and supporters who supported this event and Greenagers programs so generously: we raised \$120,000 for our programs for youth!

Finally, a big thank you to our concert sponsors: Hemenway & Barnes LLC, A.C.R.E.S., Guido's, Herrington's, Greylock Federal Credit Union, Konkapot Tree & Timber, Theory Wellness.





The Greenagers team continues to grow! In 2023, we welcomed four new year-round team members. We are so grateful for their time, passion, and expertise!

Cynthia Gray, Education Director

Cynthia comes to Greenagers with a background in public and private education, small business administration, and nonprofit leadership. She is a certified teacher and former director of a nature-based school with extensive experience in curriculum development and education. She earned a BFA in Visual Arts from Purchase College and, after working as an account executive in the fashion and celebrity photography industry in New York City, earned her MS degree in Art Education. In her prior academic roles, Cynthia enjoyed delving deeply into progressive educational philosophy, practicing emergent curriculum, and spending her time with students focusing on sparking their natural curiosity, inspiring creative thinking, and helping children stay in touch with their sense of wonder. In other professional roles, Cynthia has been responsible for overseeing program and staff development, curriculum design, service learning programs, professional development, and a multitude of business management tasks including financial management, community outreach, and building partnerships with other community organizations. In her free time Cynthia has a multitude of hobbies. She loves to travel, hike, cook and preserve produce from her garden, and she is currently remodeling a really cool vintage camper with her husband.

Peppa, Education Coordinator

Peppa earned a Master of Arts in Teaching from Clark University and started working in education as a public high school art teacher. Peppa has since worked around the country with youth in several other environments including after school programs, outdoor education spaces, bilingual school, residential homes, private classes, institutional corrections facilities, youth leadership groups, and QTBIPOC affinity groups. Peppa went on to receive a Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture from Cranbrook Academy of Art and has shown her art work locally and internationally. At Greenagers she is excited to bring her art, outdoor education, and youth work experiences together to foster holistic spaces for kids to build relationships with each other, their environment, and their communities.



PEPPA WORKING WITH A SCHOOL GROUP



Hannah Bracken, Development Manager

Hannah earned her BA in History of Science, Medicine, and Technology and Environmental Science at Johns Hopkins University and then worked for a restoration effort focussed on the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. After a thru-hike on the Appalachian Trail, Hannah found herself back in the Berkshires with a renewed love for the place she grew up. She has spent the past 15 years farming in the Berkshires including 11 years with Susan Sellew at Rawson Brook farm caring for the goat herd and making Monterey Chevre. She has led after school gardening clubs; grown vegetables, flowers and seedlings in her own market garden; managed community and school gardens and farmer's markets; tutored students in math and science; and offered hikes with goats around the Berkshires. Her work has always been centered around food, health, environment, and education. She is excited to join the Development team to support the Greenagers mission which encompasses these interconnected fields.

Pete Gray, Pathways to the Trades Director

Pete is a craftsman with 25 years of experience in design and building. His background is in cabinet and furniture making, but has experience in nearly every aspect of residential and commercial building. His work has contributed to many residential projects as well as commercial projects like SUNY Albany, the Jeff Koons Studio, Columbia University, and the White House. Pete specializes in a wide variety of wood and metal working skills and applying them in creative ways. His education is in visual arts and has exhibited drawings, paintings and sculptures locally and internationally. He currently lives in East Chatham, NY and is excited to be working with Greenagers.



“I saw a lot of cool places while working here and it’s nice to feel like I’ve had some part in making them even better.”

WAYS TO GIVE

Join our Stewardship Circle

Create your legacy as a champion of youth employment and education in environmental conservation and sustainable agriculture! Planned gifts of all sizes play a critical role in sustaining our programs for youth – now and for years to come. They help you maximize your impact and can minimize your tax liability. Options include gifts of appreciated stock, IRA distributions, and/or naming Greenagers in your will.

I can't think of a better way to have a positive impact than securing the future of our community's youth. That is why I named Greenagers as a beneficiary in my estate plan.

- David Sheehan

Remembering Greenagers in your will is a gift for future youth whose lives will be touched by the work they do with Greenagers and a gift for the environment and our community that will reap the benefits from these future land stewards.

Those who know me, know that education of Egremont's children is a passion of mine. Having the opportunity to continue to support them through Greenagers' mission is very satisfying.

- Susan Bachelder

Interested in learning more? Have you already planned a gift? Let us know!

Contact Samantha Suters, Development Director, at samantha@greenagers.org.
Visit greenagers.org/plannedgiving





JESSE BUILDING OUR NEW WORKBENCH LAST YEAR

WAYS TO GIVE Donate Monthly

Our son Jesse has benefited enormously from his time working for Greenagers, starting from when he was a small 13 year old volunteering to now, as a full-grown 20 year old. He worked (primarily outdoors) at April Hill all through COVID and we feel that it kept him strong and productive and happy to be working and learning carpentry skills with [Pathways to the Trades Director] Yuri. As a family we support the ethos and care for the land that Greenagers embodies, and supporting a local community resource that helps so many just feels right. We hope our monthly contribution (in a small way) will help with operating expenses and will support the people who do such spirited good work there. A big thank you to everyone who cares and contributes and volunteers at April Hill.

- Ron and Naomi Blumenthal

Recurring donations create life changing opportunities for youth while providing consistent funding to support the Greenagers mission. Your gift employs, educates and inspires youth Conservation Crew members building and maintaining trails, Farm Crew members growing food for local families in need, and members of the Build Crew learning traditional and sustainable trades skills.

Did you know small monthly donations have as great an impact on Greenagers mission as a large one-time donation? Regular gifts provide predictable funding and ongoing support for our programs.

A monthly gift is a convenient way to make a lasting impact. Recurring donations are processed automatically and can be adjusted at any time. You will stay involved and informed about all the ways your gift is impacting youth in our community.

Visit our website to set up a recurring donation greenagers.org/donate.



FRESH STRAWBERRIES



WASHING POTATOES



OUR ONION HARVEST



MISSION

Greenagers works to inspire teens and young adults to develop deep connections to land, work, and community. We prepare youth for success in work and life by offering paid jobs and education in the areas of conservation, sustainable farming, and related trades.

VISION

Greenagers envisions a culture of community where young people work together to restore forests and fields, grow food, and build spaces that support natural systems and sustainability.

To realize this vision, we work to get young people outside; working with their hands; talking to each other and their elders; listening, leading, and learning. We believe that this work is foundational and the heart of a culture that values education, stewardship, and community.

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