Week six is here! Check out our updates!

Reminder: Please have baskets ready to return at pick up!
Student Gardens Updates

July 17, 2014 (Week Six)

Weekly Produce

Solo Shares
Green Beans
Peppers
Kale
Hot Peppers
Lettuce
Parsley
Beets with Greens
Pickles
Carrots
Onions
Medium Shares + Full
Asian Basil
Cabbage

This week fruit shares receive organic raspberries!
Farm fresh eggs delivered for $3.00 a dozen!
Please have last week’s empty baskets ready to pick up at delivery.

Through my late teens and early twenties my dad owned a small business in Washington DC where I spent much of my time. I was learning the family trade of Opticianry, which culminated into enjoying the benefits of a well-paid job while in the last years of college. As the memories of those moments fade, and the skill of spinning lenses on a large stone wheel is long gone from my fingers, I still remember back to one specific lunch we had together in the basement of that old row house on 16th St. We had bought a long loaf of French bread and a jar of mayo on the way in that morning. With this and a full bag of garden tomatoes, we sat together in the back corner where my sister did the books and made our lunch. I have mentioned before that my dad was an avid gardener, and still is a lover of harvesting his own food for dinner. That day, with great joy and excitement, he showed me how to make a proper Maryland tomato sandwich created from our own bounty. Last week I did the same. Here, in my studio full of summer teaching mess, I gathered my two boys and tomatoes from our Student Gardens. I think I spent about four dollars on the bread and spread, yet we ate like kings. And so the tradition lives on.

Two weeks back with Foster, one of these same boys, I captained a sailboat for a man from Denver who had a family home in Northport, MI. We left South Haven in his new boat at two on a Friday (I know, bad luck), but the trip turned out fantastic. This was Foster’s first paid delivery as crew. We were both a little apprehensive. He did fantastically, learned tons of new skills, battled through a bit of storm with bold confidence, and was able to see sights and towns never explored before. He held a midnight watch, went up the mast a few times for repairs, and was cook and KP. When we finished the trip Monday evening, we sailed up to the owner’s family compound and grabbed the personal mooring a few hundred yards from his dock.

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We spent the evening and night with this family, so grateful for a legacy left behind by the parents now long gone. The sense of pride for this home and the beautiful escape that was already being shared with many generations was palpable.

My wife picked us up in Leland the next day; we slowly made our way back south where we all went back to work. Later that same week she was involved on a landscape design project that by happenstance was a recently bought home of an old customer of mine. The home was originally built on Lake Michigan about 20 years ago when I first designed it. She asked about plat maps and plans to help her get started, to which they produced original blueprints of my now long faded design. The first owner had saved these and passed them on with the sale of the home. It was a shocking honor to think that my work had been respected for such a long time and still carried meaning.

These events have added fuel to a deep pondering that I find myself often lost in these days. I needn’t use this article as my therapy, but I find it an interesting conversation. When I reached the 40 mark a few years back I looked for my midlife crisis. It’s taken me some time to recognize it, because it’s not fast cars or bad haircuts. It is my legacy. I’m not privileged to pass on a family estate and I didn’t stay in the optical business to pass on a generational organization that my dad would have gladly mentored me in. As a matter-of-fact, my youngest son always said he wanted to be a landscaper, to which I returned the honor by selling my two-decade-old business just last summer. He wasn’t real pleased, to say the least. Now, with no business, large home or coffers full of money, I’m in a little state of midlife panic. Time is running out to set these in place, and society would view us as taking steps backward not forward. I have a great deal of honor for the generations before me and unbridled love for the generations my wife and I now raise. The inner voice in me doesn’t want to listen to Webster, defining legacy as emotions like, “He left his children a legacy of love and respect”.

So, I wonder. Is a legacy of sailing skills, which develop emotional intelligence, artistic abilities, or the support of a child to follow their own dreams enough? I work for the University in the department that my degree is issued from. What is the legacy we leave here? How is a little garden really impacting our community and the students? We have good intentions. But I’m from private industry; good intentions are little without results. Is our mobile farmers market creating progressive conversations behind the doors of those who live in these food deserts? Will our practices with the land bestowed to our management leave viable soil? In two more decades when I look back on this next chapter what will be the corporate legacy left behind. Most of all, will my grandchildren eat Maryland tomato sandwiches from the garden?
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