Hello and Welcome to Karen von Huene, Executive Director

Community GroundWorks recently welcomed Karen von Huene as Executive Director. Karen comes to Community GroundWorks with broad experience in non-profit
management, operations and fund development, mostly in community based social service agencies. She is the former Executive Director of Wisconsin Lakes, a statewide lake advocacy organization. Karen has spent her first weeks getting to know the staff, programming and community partners. She brings a fresh perspective to this very unique organization and has some great ideas for moving it forward. You will be seeing Karen out and about, so please introduce yourself and say "hi!"

Community Gardens

CAC Garden Days at Troy Gardens - September 14

Community Action Coalition is once again sponsoring CAC Garden Days at community gardens across Madison. Meet at Troy Community Gardens between 10-2pm for fresh apple juice press with an antique hand crank machine, kid’s activities, cooking demos and tastings and tours of one of Madison’s largest community gardens. Stay tuned for more details.

Pepper Beer Coming Soon

Steamy August weather is just what Troy Community Farm's hot peppers need to ripen up and be ready for the Great Dane Pub & Brewing Co. to make a special Community GroundWorks Pepper Pilsner beer. The spicy and refreshing brew will be available for a limited time on tap at all Great Dane Pubs in September, depending on how soon the peppers ripen in the field and at CGW's Capitol Garden. We hope to be able to host a tasting of our unique Pepper Pilsner Beer at Troy Community Gardens' Harvest Celebration, on the land on Saturday, Sept. 14. If the beer is ready, we'll be tapping the keg at noon!

Troy Community Farm

Weekly Recipes and Musings from the Troy Farm crew

Every week CSA members look forward to their fresh picked share of organic vegetables AND to the CSA newsletter -- Urban Roots. The newsletter offers recipes and insight into what goes on at Troy Community Farm every week through the summer. It is terrific reading. Good news ... all newsletters are archived on the website. If you are looking for recipes for your garden bounty, check out Urban Roots! And don't forget to stop by the farm stand every Thursday. We list what will be available weekly on the farm stand on Facebook.

Introducing WSGI

In Support of School Gardens and Garden-Based Education...

The Wisconsin School Garden Initiative (WSGI) is a new project of Community GroundWorks working to increase the health of Wisconsin’s children. Through training, resource development, and evaluation focused on the importance of school gardens and garden-based education, the Wisconsin School Garden Initiative will provide support to schools, child care centers, and after-school programs across the state. In just its first quarter of this three year project, the Wisconsin School Garden Initiative has already hosted 6 trainings supporting more than 200 Wisconsin educators. Participants
were eager to bring the lessons to their sites.

One early childhood care provider stated, “I would like to start a garden with the daycare children. I think it would be a great idea to have them help grow the food they eat. They would have a lot of pride in knowing that they had grown the food.” Partnerships with state agencies, nonprofit agencies, and faculty from the University of Wisconsin Madison will promote the development of a statewide youth gardening network to sustain the work of the Wisconsin School Garden Initiative. Learn more and show your support for the Wisconsin School Garden Initiative! Visit our page on the Community GroundWorks website, subscribe to our newsletter and join us on Facebook. Funding for this project was provided by the UW School of Medicine and Public Health from the Wisconsin Partnership Program.

Troy Natural Areas

Urban Forestry Career Day in Troy Natural Areas

Community GroundWorks hosted its third Urban Forestry Career Day on Thursday, July 25th. The event was intended for high school aged students, particularly underserved or adjudicated youth. The day featured five thirty-minute interactive workshops or presentations from professionals in urban forestry and related fields. Groups of students rotated through the workshops where they also had the opportunity to ask questions of the presenters. After the workshops, students and workshop leaders came together over light refreshments, where the students asked more specific questions about the professions represented as well as obtain information about various post-secondary education and certificate programs that can help them on a path towards a career in urban forestry, horticulture, landscape architecture, restoration, and others.

Approximately twenty-five youth attended the career day, including youth from Operation Fresh Start and the Goodman Community Center. Presenters included Elizabeth Dierickx (Urban Forestry Coordinator and Specialist at the DNR), Adam Alves and Dave Haag (Dane County Arborists), Garrett Hughes (Certified Arborist at Gere Tree Care), MaraLee Olson (Landscape Architect at Ziegler Design Associates), Evan Slocum (Executive Director of Urban Tree Alliance), and Bobbi Kubish (College of Natural Resources at UW Stevens Point).

Youth Education

Growing Minds: Garden-Based Learning from the Ground Up

In July, twenty area K-12 teachers and community educators gathered at the award-winning Troy Kids' Garden for the “Growing Minds: Garden-Based Learning from the Ground Up” course. The class, taught by Nathan Larson, Education Director and Beth Hanna, Training and Outreach Specialist emphasized a hands-on approach to teach educators how to implement, sustain, and teach in school gardens. Feedback from course participants captured the excitement of the week.
“Every day I walked away feeling inspired by what I saw and what was around me,” one alumna said. Nathan hopes that teachers will share such inspiration with others at their schools. “It’s an excellent opportunity for teachers to come together for a week at Troy Gardens and learn techniques that they can carry back to their home schools,” he said.

Course topics and techniques included school garden design and construction, teaching in a garden, funding and resources, recommended tools and equipment, organic gardening methods, culinary arts in the garden, garden-based nutrition, earth art, program evaluation, and more. Community GroundWorks has offered Growing Minds to area teachers for the past four years.

Goodman Youth Grow Local Farm Honey Harvest
It’s been the summer for bees at the Goodman Youth Grow Local Farm (GYGLF), a project of Community GroundWorks on Madison’s east side. The half-acre site not only hosts an organic vegetable farm run by area youth, but is also home to two bustling bee hives. These ladies - mostly ladies, that is - have run such a booming honey business with the flowers of the nearby prairie, farm, and community gardens, that GYGLF students were able to extract almost five gallons of that delectable liquid.

Students at the Youth Farm also get a chance to participate in the "bee" side of beekeeping, many for the first time. "The students go from being afraid of the bees to totally in love with them," said Jennica Skoug, farm manager. "We had one middle schooler that was particularly nervous, but after about ten minutes at the hive said that she was the calmest she’d ever been in her life. It’s amazing the effect they can have.”

Students enjoyed plenty of honey on the farm, and bottled the remainder to sell. Proceeds from the honey sales will help support the beekeeping program at the Youth Farm. You can find Youth Farm honey starting this fall at the Troy Community Farm farm stand - look for kid-created labels!

Building an Earth Oven in the Kids’ Garden
The kids had lots of fun in the Troy Kids’ Garden in August building an earth oven. First, they got out a big tarp and dumped clay, sand, straw and water on it. Next came the fun part. The kids—and various community gardeners who happened to be walking by—took off their shoes and socks and mixed everything together with their feet! Other kids got out the drumsticks and played rhythmic music so we could dance while mixing.

Next, they used the earthen material as a mortar, stacking up a rock foundation for the oven. In just a few hours, the base had taken shape and was ready to cure. In the coming weeks, the kids will build the oven dome and start cooking up some garden fresh pizza! Stop by the Kids’ Garden culinary classroom to see how our oven is growing!
In Community

Gardening for Good Writing Salon

Gardening for Good is a program at Troy Community Gardens, developed by Rebecca Starke. Now in its second year, G4G pairs people with and without disabilities in a shared garden plot. Among other fun activities, participants engage in a G4G writing salon called Gardenstories. The following poem was created from that rich reservoir.

THE GARDEN BASKET

Written by Gardeners for Good

Woven by Marge Pitts

- Imagine a basket, woven of voices. Each voice fragile as a blade of grass, and the weaving irregular; yet this basket is strong enough to carry home the fruits of Gardening for Good. Marge P.
- We planted watermelon in straw bales, sunflowers. Pulled weeds. We are growing tomatoes. -Ken A.
- I want dirt. Sun and water! What’s good is the vegetable part. Eat! That’s what I want. -Kate K.
- Come out to pick veggies. You get out in the sun. -Sarah B.
- Little basil turns into big basil. Dig several holes in the dark soil. Plop the basil root first in the ground. Water basil vigorously. -Steve S.
- The peppers are good. I like the spice ones. Counting the peppers, eating the peppers. -Doug K.
- I enjoy pulling mulch for the ground. In return it helps the plants grow along with the sun. -JoJo D.
- I live at Troy Gardens, it’s my home. I love the birds at Troy Gardens. They’re my friends. It’s fun to garden together. -Marge M.
- I helped put all sorts of flowers in bottles. We made arrangements for the tables at the Good Food Garden Party. -Rick L.
- I like pumpkins to grow for Halloween and pie. I like to bake the seeds I dig out. -Edward E.
- Pull weeds, spray water on everything. We put up signs in people’s gardens that said, “I like your garden,” and we signed our names. -Julie S.
- I like cucumbers and onions. I am growing them in my garden. My favorite thing is getting in the dirt. -Andy B.
- I remember watching my mom in the garden when I lived in the country. I would go out and see her in the garden and look at the plants she was planting. “How is that seed going to come up as a potato?” I thought. -Laura W., also known as Wind Turbine.
- When we garden together, not only are we cultivating a bounty of fruits from the Earth, we are tapping into a powerfully positive source of joy. Side by side with our neighbors, we celebrate our harvest of good food and good friends. Rebecca S.