

VINEYARD GAZETTE

Archived Edition: Friday, July 2, 2010

Generations Green Gathers for Summit

By MATTHEW KRAMER

Teenagers and young adults, some from the Vineyard, others from the Caribbean, were on an unusual bus tour of the Island last week, taking in the Dumptique, school gardens, Island Cohousing, the Farm Institute and Morning Glory Farm. The young group was part of the Stone Soup for the World Youth Summit, and the sight-seeing was designed to coax them in their contemplation of how they could build a more sustainable future.



Sidney Morris shares Farm Institute's vision.

Stone Soup's founder, Marianne Larned, has a long history with the Island; it was here that she found the stone that inspired her to chronicle inspiring leaders in her book *Stone Soup for the World: Life-Changing Stories of Everyday Heroes*. As the summiteers toured, she exhorted them, "Think about what you want — you can do this!"

The Stone Soup programs honor everyday heroes and to train future leaders to work together for a better world. The weeklong event wraps today, and reconvenes on July 18, when, accompanied by Livingston Taylor, the youth leaders will sing, speak, share their dreams and unveil a sustainable vineyard maps at a public event at 6:30 p.m. at the Whaling Church in Edgartown.

Stone Soup's youth summits take on different themes, based on the hero being honored. This year the laurels went to Bob Woodruff, the Island-based farmer and conservationist, and the event is called the Sustainable Vineyard Quest.

"They chose students who showed interest in going green and sustainability," explained Courtney Minnehan, a junior at the Martha's Vineyard Regional High

School and one who was chosen to attend.

The idea of the bus tour was to show how different organizations, often started by just a few people, have made substantial differences in moving the Island toward ecological responsibility.



Youth summit brings group studying sustainability to community garden at Island Co-housing.

On Sunday, the visits began at the Edgartown School where Daniel (Nane) Alejandrez led a prayer of thanks for the school garden. Mr. Alejandrez, whose father died from a pesticide-induced tumor, is executive director of the Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos, a California-based organization that offers young people alternatives to gang violence.

Noli Taylor of the Island Grown Initiative explained to the young leaders that the garden is not just for food; it is also used for education. The garden has been used for a variety of purposes, from instruction in simple math, to the demonstration of sustainable growing methods, to the provision of ingredients for tortillas served in Spanish class.

From the school, the group traveled to the Farm Institute, Morning Glory Farm, the West Tisbury dump, and Island Cohousing. From the new wind turbine at Morning Glory Farm, to Dot's Boutique at the West Tisbury dump, the "green" features of each organization were on display.

The week's schedule was packed with varied events on the sustainability theme. On Saturday, the young leaders visited members of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah). "They taught us about their myths of Moshup, and we learned about composting toilets," said Jevaughn Cook, who attends Martha's Vineyard Regional High School.

Ms. Larned emphasized islands as places where, of necessity, people need to work together to overcome obstacles. In addition to the Vineyard, the organization has held summits on Vieques, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands. "The kids express their dreams for their life on their island and for the world, and we develop programs and invite people from our book who can help them move toward their goals," Ms. Larned said.

The rest of their Vineyard week would involve presentations by such green-conscious Vineyarders as Andrew Woodruff of Whippoorwill Farm and Mark Martin of EcoMV.

Ms. Larned holds that having a role model is important to accomplishing dreams. "Once you have a great idea, you need to be able to see other people who did it. The people who speak at the youth summits are the islands' local heroes."

She praised donors who allowed this week's summit to proceed, ranging from the Menemsha Inn, which housed the students, to Jet Blue, which brought participants to the event.

Bob Woodruff, honored for his years of dedication to the environment, led the tour of the Island, teaching geography and history that related to the needs of the land. Using Vineyard examples, he spoke about the "sponge effect," which allows wooded hills to retain water better than denuded ones.

Like others, Shelby Ferry, a Vineyard high school junior, expressed her appreciation, praising the summit as "a very educational experience, and an inspiring one."