



# "Rooted in Hope"

## Racine Dominican Eco-Justice Center

Summer 2012

Vol.7 Issue 1

**Vision:**  
Justice for Earth

**Mission:**  
Environmental education  
and care of Earth in the  
context of community,  
contemplation, creativity,  
and cultivation

**Values:**  
Conservation  
Education  
Sustainability

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Eric Roberson and his nifty skidsteer makes easy work of digging the posts holes for the grape arbor project!



Zola & Paul Sloth, Julia & Cordyon Martin, and Eva Geisler work at installing the grape vines and posts.

### "Grape" Expectations

To earn their Girl Scout Silver Award, three ambitious and dedicated young women, Zola Sloth, Eva Geisler, and Julia Martin took on the task of putting in a grape arbor at the EJC. They began the project by watching educational videos about growing grapes, researching the kinds of grapes suited for our location, visiting the vineyard of Ted and Shannon Pintaro, selecting the best site for the arbor, planting the vines, installing the posts and support wires. Soon they will be posting informational signs telling about each of the varieties featured in the arbor: Marquette, Sabrevois, King of the North, Frontenac Gris, Bluebell, Somerset, and Reliance. Some were chosen as good table grapes, others were selected for making jelly, juice, and wine.

The girls could not have completed the undertaking without the help of their dads and Eric Roberson who dug 17 of the 19 post holes with his handy auger. We are also very grateful to the Pintaros for donating the Marquette vines and to the Potpourri Garden Club who donated the funds for the other vines and materials needed for the project.

It will take four years before we can harvest the grapes. Although considerable growth will happen this first summer, it is necessary to pinch off any fruit that may form so the plants can devote their energy to establishing strong root systems. In the fall, the vines will be pruned back; the same pattern of pruning is followed the next two years as the main "trunk" of the vine is trained to grow straight, strong, and reach for the top wire, five feet above the ground. In the summer of 2015, the fruit will be allowed to develop. With great expectation, we look forward to bountiful harvests.

Thank you, Zola, Eva, Julia, Paul, Cordyon, Eric, Ted, Shannon, and Potpourri Garden Club!

## Fall Festival

Sunday, Sept. 16, 2012  
11 am - 4 pm

Food and Fun for All !



### Crossed the "Rainbow Bridge"

After a long and brave fight to overcome parasites and other health challenges, Jasper crossed the "rainbow bridge" on May 6th. Although Jasper never won a prize for his fiber or good looks, he was a winner with a great personality; he was always patient, pleasant, and never spat at anyone! He will be missed very much. Thanks to Eric Roberson and Ken Parker who dug Jasper's grave and helped to bury him in the hay field next to Annabelle, the goat.



Allie Pluth, Sabrina & Ben Poulin, Kristen Calvert, Jordan Olson, Natalie Asp, and Adam Smtana armed with tools of weeding.

## Lewis University

To close their academic year, five energetic and hard-working students from Lewis University in Romeoville, Illinois and their campus minister came to spend a week at the EJC. Their service-retreat was a blessing to us as they assisted with the extra work that comes with “spring on the farm.” In addition to doing morning animal chores, the students weeded, planted, and watered gardens, cleaned the hen house, washed windows, carded alpaca fiber, and gave Grace, our Golden Retriever, a bath!

Some of the things they said about their experience:

“Work hard, pause often, reflect always!”

– Kristen

“I had a fantastic week and learned so much about the environment and using resources wisely.”

– Natalie

“I learned how to garden, care for plants, build a fence, how to compost, to care for each living thing and a lot about bees!”

– Allie

“I learned the importance of weeding and that garden-ing takes a lot of work!”

– Jordan

“I appreciated the hospitality of the Sisters and loved all the home-cooked food!”

– Adam

“This is a special and sacred space.” - Sabrina



During her week at the EJC, Kristen Calvert triumphed over her fear of the geese; she is holding Chives, a big African goose!



## The buzz this spring...

The mild weather was good for the bees this winter, giving most bee keepers like us, a great survival rate on hives. The warm temperatures of February and March urged the queen to start laying eggs earlier than usual; as a consequence, the hives got crowded and many colonies decided to swarm. That means the queen and half the workers took off to find a new home. Bees usually hang out on a branch of a tree until the “scouts” return with news of a satisfactory new place to settle. If the bee keeper is lucky, he or she is able to capture the swarm and get a “free” colony.

One afternoon in early May, Michael was working behind the barn and spotted what he thought was a black plastic bag hanging in a tree. Upon closer inspection, he discovered it was a swarm! We quickly put together the boxes and frames needed. By day’s end, the swarm was safely inside its new hive. Then a week later, a friend who lives a few miles away, called to say there was a “bunch of bees” hanging out in their back yard. The outcome was another successful swarm capture. We now have nine hives and are looking forward to a bountiful honey harvest, ready for sale at the Fall Festival!



We are grateful to Michael Raschke who built a “rabbit tractor.” This movable four apartment cage lets the bunnies out on the grass and serves well for displaying the bunnies, turkeys, and little chicks during school field trips.

## Wish List

Work gloves  
Straw bales  
Whole corn  
Garden hoses  
Wild bird feed  
Brown tarps  
Masking tape  
Duck tape  
Sand paper  
Paint brushes  
Zip Lock Bags

“We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more.”

-Earth Charter



## From Pup to Pooch

Miracle, a Wesby Terrier mix, came to make her home at the Eco-Justice Center this spring; she is smart, not-to-be-spoiled, almost house-trained, and a delightful part of community life here at the Center.



Cory Hooten has been a faithful volunteer for more than a year; Cory loves our cats and is a great cleaner and weed eradicator!

## Valued Volunteers

We treasure each and every one of our volunteers. It is hard to imagine the EJC without their dedicated service. In this past year, we have benefited from over 4,200 hours of volunteer service. Their cheerful giving of energy, skills, and time help the Eco-Justice Center thrive and be a beautiful setting for all who live, visit, and participate in programs at the Center.

Individuals or groups that want to get involved, can call 681-8527 to learn how you can match your interests and time with the needs of the Center.



Since 2006, Franc Pauc (rt) has organized friends and colleagues from Conway Freight to give a day of service. This year his crew brought a wood splitter and made a huge stack of wood for burning in our kitchen stove. They also spread gravel on the parking lot and weeded.



Sr. Mary Ann (center) and volunteers work to transplant strawberries to new raised beds. Weeding and berry picking will be much easier this summer.

## Memorials

Another way that people can feel a part of the ministry of the Eco-Justice Center is by making memorial gifts to the Center in lieu of flowers when a loved one dies. Others have chosen to honor someone at a special occasion such as birthday, anniversary, or at Christmas by giving a gift or “adopting” one of our animals. We are deeply grateful to all who support the EJC.

“The protection of Earth’s vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.”  
- The Earth Charter



Johnson Bank volunteers were “Here For Good” one day in May as they spent hours scraping, painting, weeding, spreading wood chips, and cleaning.

## Magic School Bus



David Fawver, a regular volunteer at the EJC, installs a set of stairs for easy access to the Magic School Bus. The stairs were from the 1858 log cabin and were kept in storage in the granary when the cabin was taken down. Dennis Kornwolf who saved the stairs, must be smiling from above to see that they were put to good use!

After being in storage for years, the “Magic School Bus” came to the Eco-Justice Center, thanks to Marybeth Zuhlke, teacher extraordinaire. Delivered by means of two pick-up trucks and a van, all the parts were reassembled by Michael and John Raschke. Situated on the upper hay mow in the barn, the bus took its first magic flight to visit a bee hive when a group of home-schooled children visited the Center. Equipped with a flashing stop light and seating for 10, the “Magic School Bus” sparks the imagination as kids learn about bees and other science related endeavors at the EJC. This spring we had many students from Racine and Kenosha schools take the adventurous ride on the bus with “Miss Frizzle” learning about the marvelous life and important work of bees.

## Small Tractor Needed

The Eco-Justice Center is looking for a small farm tractor for turning compost piles, cultivating, moving wood chips & hay bales and for removing snow in winter. Donations towards the purchase or leads on finding such a tractor will be greatly appreciated. Our fall festival fund raising efforts will also be designated to help purchase a used or new small tractor.

## Coming Special Events

September 16th 11 am - 4 pm  
**Fall Festival**

October 21-22  
**Grounds for Hope - Milwaukee**  
Winona LaDuke, Keynote Speaker

“It is time  
for parents  
to teach  
young children  
early on,  
that in  
diversity  
there is beauty  
and  
there is strength.”

-Maya Angelo



“In the end,  
the world will  
be saved by  
beauty”

-Tolstoy



“The pursuit  
of truth  
and beauty  
is a sphere  
of activity  
in which  
we are permitted  
to remain  
children  
all our lives.”

- Albert Einstein

**Come see all that is new and beautiful at EJC's Fall Festival  
September 16, 2012 11 am - 4 pm**

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