

The Caring Community



“Helping the community where we can and bringing people together to do good things... Imagine the community you want to live in, and then spend a little time every day taking small steps to create it!”

The Caring Community Summer 2022 Newsletter - #4

www.thecaringcommunity.love

What Happens Under the Fruit Tree...



...stays under the fruit tree!

I volunteer for this organization called The Caring Community. I volunteered to do things for others. Or so I thought.

One fine fall day, I found myself under a starfruit tree with a woman who has become a good friend. We were harvesting the fruit generously donated by the homeowner. As we bent and stretched and climbed up and down ladders to get as much of the fruit for the food bank as we could, we chatted about this and that.

We both were experiencing the challenges of how to take care of someone we loved. We talked about the difficulty of helping someone know when it was time to accept help, and how to do that without making them feel like they were losing something, or being restricted. We didn't solve either of our dilemmas that day, but I think we both walked away feeling a little less alone with our burdens. We joked a bit about therapy under the fruit tree, and each felt a little lighter for sharing.

My short time under that tree left me feeling good in mind, body, and soul. I had contributed to the betterment of my community. My body had gotten a

great workout and I had connected with another human in a sincere and authentic sharing that helped us both. As we walked away, agreeing that “What happens under the starfruit tree stays under the starfruit tree!”, I reflected on how much the world needs things like this. We need the simple gratification that results from coming together for the pure joy of giving of ourselves.

A few months ago, I gathered with some wonderful women from The Caring Community to create gifts for our Volunteer Appreciation Day. We had such fun, making teas, salves, and medicine balls to give in appreciation to all who come to our gardens to help provide fresh food for food banks. In the garden and under the trees we have not solved all the problems of the world, although sometimes we think can! We always walk away feeling hopeful for the future of our world, and deeply satisfied that we've done our best to do our part.

For me, Volunteer Appreciation Day isn't just about thanking the volunteers for their time. It's acknowledging the gifts that we give each other when we volunteer. It's thanking the people who show up, full of love and ready to do what it takes to help someone else. It's thanking them not just for what they give to the gardens, but for what we give to each other.

I hope to see you volunteering with us, or with any organization. I promise you'll get more than you give, exponentially. You'll find all sorts of different people in the garden, each bringing what they can. I'll be the one saying “Hey, can you guys work while you talk?” 😊

Cynthia Schaefer is an herbalist, homesteader, founder of *Flurban Paradise and GrowSocial*, and community organizer for various organizations such as *The Caring Community and South Florida Edible Gardening and Sustainable Living*. Find her at Flurbanparadise.com

“Nature has been for me, for as long as I remember, a source of solace, inspiration, adventure, and delight; a home, a teacher, a companion. ~ Lorraine Anderson

Big Thanks to Veronica Poses for her donation of a bench to the HOPE Outreach Food Bank Garden! Claire spent much of a morning in April cleaning and sanding it and, although color-loving Alejandra and I had grand plans of decorating it with painted flowers and vines, once we saw the gorgeous wood grain that revealed itself, we deferred to Zen Claire's judgment and Let. It. Be... with two applications of a clear-coat sealer. Eventually the trellis (which we built from bamboo from Kerrie's yard and chicken wire) will be blossom-covered to provide shade as well as visual interest. Ommmm... 😊



Kiana Raphael, COO and Website Manager of The Caring Community, raphael.kiana@gmail.com

This quarter was a little quiet for TCC since this is usually the planning period before things get busy for us. We still are in the process of getting everything together for our next self-care station set-up and we are always on the hunt for grants and funders!

On the back end of things, we're always working on fixing our processes to make sure we are being efficient with how we work with our gardens, teachers, and ultimately our volunteers. In the meantime, please consider TCC when making donations. If you're an avid user of Amazon, TCC is registered for Amazon Smile. Please consider using [AmazonSmile: You shop. Amazon gives.](#) and searching for our organization when making your purchases, as 0.5% will be donated to our cause with every eligible purchase!



As always, we thank all the hands that have helped us with our journey and continue to show up!

Alejandra Jeldrez, HOPE Outreach Food Bank Garden Leader, hopeoutreachfoodbankgarden@gmail.com

Spring is almost over and we look forward to a restful Summer. We are transitioning into the Summer season with the goals to let the soil rest and to rest our bodies as well.

Many wonderful things happened in our garden this Spring. We started off in April with a successful Spring Planting event. Lots of heat-resistant plants and beneficial companion plants were added: cowpeas, callaloo, eggplant, comfrey, squash, and Chinese cabbage. We have been harvesting some of these throughout the Spring. They might not produce as abundant a harvest as the winter crops but our goal is to continue taking harvests to the food banks during the hot season, which we achieved.

In May we cleaned up the Banana Circle and gave a class on how to grow your bananas with the banana circle method with compost in the middle. The older and decomposing banana plants were removed and dead leaves were cleared, to help with better air flow and nutrient uptake. The plants are loving it already.

Then came June and we harvested the last of the Spring crops and planted cover crops for the Summer. The cover crops help the soil regenerate, help suppress weeds, and improve soil fertility. The cover crops planted were sunn hemp and sorghum. In some of the garden beds, we left a few spring crops that are still producing



while sowing cover crops around them. They will get cut back as the cover crops get taller. We also cut tall grasses in the Perennial garden and made a path with logs and mulch.

Throughout those months we also completed a lot of projects during the Friday Maintenance and Harvest days. A lovely tea garden is now blooming with tulsii, butterfly pea flowers, mint, Jamaican sorrel, and chamomile. We surrounded the garden signs with klip dagga, corky stem passion vine, milkweed, cranberry hibiscus, wildflowers, and a cool vintage bike that will soon be holding two grow bags (plant TBD). We got started repainting the signs as well, but are not finished yet. Our garden bench was adorned with a lovely trellis, which was made with chicken wire and bamboo. We planted two passion vines in hopes they it would provide shade but the lucky fritillary butterflies found them right away, laid eggs, and their hungry hungry caterpillars devoured every leaf within a week. We are happy for the butterflies, but are now looking for other vines to put next to the passion vine. Will also be adding more corky stem passion vines around the perennial garden, to transfer any future ravenous caterpillars to, in hopes that it will give a break to the trellis adornment.

Speaking of adornments, we have decorated the garden with gnomes, dragonflies, and wind chimes. This is part of our fun plan to "funkify" the garden. We continue to add flowers to the pollinator garden and pops of color everywhere. There is so much happening in the garden, but you must come see it for yourself!



If you are interested in volunteering at Hope Outreach Food Bank Garden, please contact Alejandra: hopeoutreachfoodbankgarden@gmail.com

Alex Rakita, The Caring Community Davie Educational Garden at Robbins Park, Asr1025@yahoo.com

We had a great month of May. The garden is growing, and the Mulberry tree is giving us the first taste of its delicious fruits. We built a beautiful trellis for the

passionfruit vine to grow up and over. In June we planted papaya, soursop, and jackfruit trees while continuing to improve our banana circle for increased production. We look forward to growing our volunteer base to provide more educational events and food for our local food banks.



We welcome Kyle Bastos, who has agreed to take on the role of Student Garden Leader; regular volunteer hours will now be every Saturday from 8-10 a.m. We are already brainstorming future tasks, ideas, and classes!

Scott Holtzman, South Creek Sanctuary Food Bank Donation Garden, scottholtzman@mac.com

South Creek Sanctuary in Coconut Creek has a garden plot all set up and ready to be planted and managed! The plot of land currently has 3 raised beds and plenty of other space where crops are grown in-ground and native/pollinators adorn the area. While it would be ideal if someone has gardening experience, not any more than the basics is enough. For the person who wants to learn to work the land, grow food, and support community (by donating harvests to the local food bank) in the process, there is guidance, wisdom, and a joyful heart offered by Injie, who manages the property currently. The garden will remain organic and without animal/environmental exploitation. If interested, e-mail us at tccwithlove@gmail.com



Calendar of Events – July/August/September 2022

*****HOPE Outreach Food Bank Garden**, Marando Farms, 5151 SW 64th Ave., Davie FL (behind the barn)
~Saturday, July 23, 8-10 a.m.: Create a wine bottle border for the pollinator garden
~Saturday, August 20, 8-10 a.m.: Garden Play Date! (a potpourri of odds-and-ends on the To Do List)
~Saturday, September 24, 8-10 a.m.: Little Free Seed Library construction/decoration and seed swap (plus accepting donations for regenerative gardening kits)

We also meet every Friday from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. to plant, weed, harvest, mulch (whatever needs doing!)

*****Robbins Preserve Park Lodge**, 4005 S. Hiatus Rd., Davie FL (across from the playground)
~Saturday, July 16, 8-10 a.m.: event TBA
~Saturday, August 13, 8-10 a.m.: event TBA
~Saturday, September 10, 8-10 a.m.: event TBA

Teacher Self-Care Stations, Pioneer Middle School, Employee Assistance Program building, 5400 SW 90th Avenue, Cooper City (2nd portable on the right):
~ Wednesday, July 13, 10 a.m.-noon, packing of Yogi tea and Rescue Remedy to distribute to 100 Broward County schools

*****South Creek Sanctuary Food Bank Donation Garden**, 551 Palmetto Dr, Coconut Creek FL
On hiatus; looking for a garden leader (see p. 3): if interested, contact tccwithlove@gmail.com

*****Gleaning for Good** (various locations, various hours); if interested, contact Katy

*****Bring your water and gardening gloves.** Optional items to bring: trowel, pruners, if you have them.

La Zoola Pop-Up Market (on hiatus through the summer, starting back up again in the fall, location to be determined)

Come buy, barter or trade local! Fresh grown fruits and veggies, plants, prepared foods, tinctures, tonics, arts and crafts and much more! FREE to vend and attend!!!

To volunteer, please go to the link below to fill out and submit the form. After your response is received, someone from our organization (another volunteer) will contact you to discuss upcoming events/volunteer opportunities:

<https://love.us1.list-manage.com/subscribe/post>

Join our Meetup group and check our Facebook pages to get announcements on upcoming garden events!

Katy Cain, Gleaning for Good/Society of St. Andrew (soSA) SE Florida Area Coordinator, 954-643-4502
sflgleaning@endhunger.org



Gleaning for Good wants YOU to know that your local food pantry would love to accept your excess fruit! Too many mangoes? Not a problem! Take what you can't eat to the pantry and help feed the needy in your local community. Mangoes will continue to ripen well into July and then avocados will come in, probably peaking in October. Starfruit will have another round late summer. And don't forget about coconuts and bananas! And yes, many food pantries do accept coconuts! If you are unable to harvest your excess, Gleaning for Good does have volunteers who will pick and take the harvest to a food bank.

“The festival of the summer solstice speaks of love and light, of freedom and generosity of spirit. It is a beautiful time of year where vibrant flowers whisper to us with the scented breath, forests and woodlands hang heavy in the summer’s heat, and our souls become enchanted with midsummer magic.” ~ Carole Carlton



Spotlight on Claire Measel, Machete Maven and long-time member of The Caring Community



[Claire's trademark "got machete?" t-shirt... 😊]

Susan: *When did your affinity for gardening begin?*

Claire: My lifelong connection to nature influences my affinity for gardening. My mother used to tell me how she couldn't wait for the produce man to come by the house so she could load up on the pink grapefruit she craved when pregnant with me. I remember picking tomatoes and watching my mother can them for us, as well as friends and family. When my brothers and sister were at school, I would entertain myself in the yard, sneaking up on butterflies, catching and releasing them. There was a strawberry tree next to our carport that I would snack from. I used to climb trees and find just the right spot to read my latest book, or I would picnic under the shade of the arecas, pretending that I was a character in the book.

SM: *When did you become involved with The Caring Community? How has your role expanded?*

Claire: I became involved in the CC about 3 years ago. I came for an event and then started to volunteer on a more regular basis.

SM: *What is your greatest wish/hope for the sustainable gardening community in South Florida?*

Claire: My greatest wish for the South Florida community is for everyone to contribute as much as they can. I would love to see churches with their extra greenspace install gardens for the congregants to raise food for food pantries like we do at Hope. I would love to see individuals and communities grow from their own yards, or local community gardens grow and donate a portion.

SM: *What is your best lesson/takeaway from your involvement with the community?*

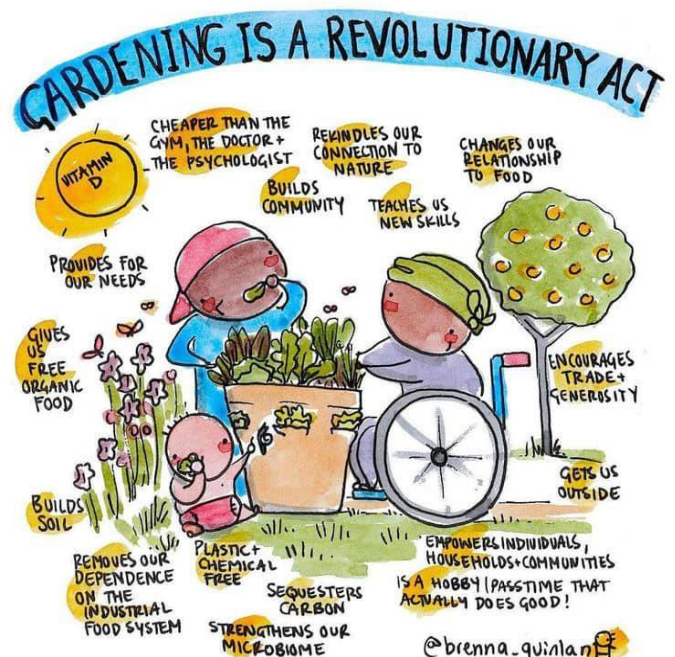
Claire: The best lessons, the ones you know are true and strong, are the ones that present themselves in whatever stage of life/growth that you find yourself. For me now, again, it is this: "You have two hands. One for helping yourself, and one for helping others." (Sam Levenson) and "Many hands make light work." (John Heywood)

If you use Amazon, you can help The Caring Community at NO cost you. Instead of going to Amazon.com, go to <https://smile.amazon.com>, and when prompted, enter The Caring Community Inc Pembroke Pines as your designated charity. For every \$100 you spend on Amazon Smile, we get 50 cents. Every little bit counts, and adds up!

REGENERATIVE GARDENING PROJECT – VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!

We are in the planning stages of a Regenerative Garden Kit giveaway with a launch of mid-October, and we are looking for a few people to commit to two or three months of leading this program in the areas of implementation/plant propagation and logistics. Thoughts? Ideas? Volunteers? Stay tuned!

P.S. We need your help collecting/saving toilet paper (and paper towel) rolls (mini-pots for seedlings), please... 😊



Movie and Book Recommendations

Just Eat It (Hulu) Filmmakers and food lovers Jen and Grant dive into the issue of waste from farm, through retail, all the way to the back of their own fridge. After catching a glimpse of the billions of dollars of good food that is tossed each year in North America, they pledge to quit grocery shopping cold turkey and survive only on foods that would otherwise be thrown away. In a nation where one in 10 people is food insecure, the images they capture of squandered groceries are both shocking and strangely compelling. But as Grant's addictive personality turns full tilt towards food rescue, the 'thrill of the find' has unexpected consequences.

III Nature: Rants and Reflections on Humanity and Other Animals (essays) by Joy Williams

Most of us watch with mild concern the fast-disappearing wild spaces or the recurrence of pollution-related crises such as oil spills, toxic blooms in fertilizer-enriched forests, and violence both home and abroad. Joy Williams does more than watch. In this collection of condemnations and love letters, revelations and cries for help, she brings to light the price of complacency with scathing wit and unexpected humor. Sounding the alarm over the disconnection from the natural world that our consumer culture has created, she takes on subjects as varied as the culling of elephants, electron-probed chimpanzees, vanishing wetlands, and the determination of American women to reproduce at any cost. Controversial, opinionated, at times exceptionally moving, III Nature is a clarion call for us to step out of our cars and cubicles, and do something to save our natural legacy.

Chinese Cucumber Salad by Ree Shaikh

When it's a particularly hot summer day, my mom likes to whip up this cucumber salad for its simplicity and refreshing effect. From childhood, I remember enjoying eating this after a successful day's work accompanying my mom in the rose garden. Now I enjoy it during my summers after working in the garden with The Caring Community!

- ~ 28 oz mung bean vermicelli noodles
- ~ 3 eggs
- ~ 1 English cucumber
- ~ 1 1/2 tsp sugar
- ~ 3/4 tsp plus salt (or to taste)
- ~ 1/4 tsp black pepper (or to taste)
- ~ 2 TBS white vinegar
- ~ 1-2 jalapeños
- ~ Gochucharu (optional) to taste (substitutes include crushed red pepper, paprika, cayenne pepper flakes, chipotle powder) *Blanch additional desired vegetables like julienned carrots or spinach, whatever you like!

1. Soak vermicelli noodles in a bowl of water for 7 minutes. Then boil for 3 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and rinse under cool water.
2. Whisk eggs in a bowl and pour into pan with oil. Fry an egg crepe. Set aside to cool. Then slice into long strips.
3. Cut jalapeño lengthwise. Remove seeds. Dice.
4. Dice /half moon cut/strip the cucumbers as desired.

5. combine sugar, salt, black pepper, vinegar and jalapeño in a small bowl.

6. In a large bowl combine noodles, strips of egg, cucumbers, jalapeño, and gochucharu. Combine with contents from small bowl. Serve.



The Summer Day by Mary Oliver

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean—
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?



Susan Moss, Newsletter Editor/Volunteer Coordinator, ozwoman321@aol.com
Brenda Moiso, Social Media Director, brendamoiso01@gmail.com