

LEGACY FARMS VIRGINIA

# Seasonal Sessions

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2017 Summer Garden Program

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Legacy Farms is committed to helping individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other developmental disabilities explore opportunities that advance their employment, education, life skills, health, and well-being. The contents of this document will outline the overall objective of the Summer Program and how they will be accomplished.



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# LEGACY FARMS

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Legacy Farms is a nonprofit, green care social venture dedicated to providing support services and agrarian based vocational training to adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), as well as other developmental and social challenges. Since 2011, the Board of Directors and volunteers have been working to provide a sustainable model to deliver job skills training, employment services and a farm based day program that would inspire individuals with developmental disabilities to consider a career in local agriculture, while building relationships with potential employers in the Loudoun County Region. This document will outline programs, workshops and other services Legacy Farms seeks to offer in 2017.

Legacy Farms is committed to helping individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other developmental disabilities explore opportunities that advance their employment, education, life skills, health, and well-being. We will provide both day support and employment services through seasonal workshops and other programs designed to generalize our clients to a farm setting and provide an environment that allows them to experience a wide array of agrarian based job skills and tasks, all designed to give our participants “hands-on” learning opportunities while contributing positively to their community.

Employment is a fundamental value and aspiration in American culture. People, including those with disabilities, gain many benefits from having a job. They have relationships with co-workers, fewer health issues, and an increased sense of wellbeing. They report a greater sense of accomplishment, increasing their feelings of competence and self-worth, and contribute to the economy.

Many people with disabilities live at or below the poverty level, and earning income from paying jobs helps supplement their resources and improves the quality of their lives. At Legacy Farms, our overall purpose is to help our clients get jobs. The workshops programs we provide are all designed to familiarize our clients with “life on the farm” and by doing so we help smooth the transition from school to work and improve their chances of finding competitive employment opportunities in Northern Virginia’s Agribusiness and Agritourism industries.

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# OUR HISTORY

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In 2010, a group of teachers and parents, with a common vision, found each other and began teaming to create a post-secondary residential and vocational community for adults with autism and other developmental challenges. Based upon our experiences raising and teaching children in the classroom and home we recognized the lack of meaningful post-secondary opportunities for our students and children to live independent and productive lives. Thus, the idea of establishing a working farm for adults with autism and other developmental disabilities in northern Virginia was born.

It was our dream to create Legacy Farms as a residential and vocational community for adults with autism and other developmental challenges. This community would be based on a holistic model that will provide meaningful vocational and recreational opportunities in a farmstead setting. Legacy Farms has always strived to foster independence and a sense of achievement by recognizing and developing individual potential in a supportive home environment.

We soon realized that such a vocational/residential model was considered “exclusive”, not “inclusive,” and therefore not eligible for any government funding sources. We would have to find money sources elsewhere. Following that Department of Justice decision, we discovered that good hearted people/businesses might be interested in donating money, however, they wanted to see our track record. What has Legacy Farms accomplished so far? Hence, our first Legacy Garden was created on the vacant family owned lot adjacent to my home. Adults with disabilities helped frame, plant, grow, water and harvest our first crops. We concluded that growing season with a very successful Garden Party, complete with a live auction and over 100 guests. It was nothing short of awesome!

That following spring, due to a series of very fortunate events, Legacy Farms embarked upon a wonderful partnership with Temple Hall Farm Regional Park. They “gifted” us a plot of their land, which they fenced and tilled pro bono. We planted, we grew, and we taught adults and young adults with autism and developmental disabilities gardening and farming skills. We donated hundreds of pounds of produce to our local food bank, and those who had always had others do for them learned the wonderful satisfaction of doing for others. And best of all, we placed several Legacy Farmers with jobs in local Loudoun County Agribusinesses. At the end of that growing season we had another successful Garden Party, complete with a silent auction, live auction, and entertainment by A Place To Be. That winter we wrote a grant for a greenhouse through 100WomenStrong and was awarded the full amount.

Our second summer in the garden at Temple Hall Farm was another success, placing more adults with disabilities throughout the county and strengthening our ties in the community. We hired an interim Executive Director, expanded our Board of Directors, and hosted a joint fundraiser with Temple Hall Farm that centered around the famous Temple Hall Corn Maize, which this year incorporated the Legacy Farms logo. With this event, we also hosted a vendor fair that brought in local businesses and non-profits. The fall and winter were spent planning a large programming expansion along with preparing the footprint for the greenhouse.

This spring and summer we look forward to teaching in both the garden and the greenhouse. We look forward to placing even more amazing adults with autism and developmental disabilities in our community agribusinesses. Why? If their families are here, they will stay here as well. And we owe it to ourselves to give everyone the opportunity to have meaningful work and a meaningful life.

*-Martha Schonberger, President and founding member of Legacy Farms*

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# MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

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## Mission Statement

Legacy Farms is a nonprofit, green care, social venture dedicated to providing support services and agrarian based vocational training for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), as well as other developmental and social challenges.

## Vision Statement

Our vision is to be a well-recognized, positive presence within our communities and a leading provider of agrarian based vocational training, employment services, and day support for individuals with autism, as well as other developmental and social challenges.

Our core behaviors will help guide our way:

- **We commit to doing all we can to find competitive employment opportunities that fit the skills and strengths for all who desire to work.**
- **We commit to provide programs and services that guide individuals with Autism toward leading meaningful lives.**
- **We provide the opportunity to become a productive member of our community.**
- **We recognize change and respond constructively to everyone's needs.**
- **We treat individuals with respect and compassion.**
- **We create a positive and accepting environment.**
- **We encourage altruism and service to our communities.**

## Goals

- To provide agrarian based workshops and programs that serve up to 30 participants each season and lead to the employment of at least one-third of those who apply.
- To inspire our students to get involved with the community and remain a part of the Legacy Farms family as volunteer farmers and teaching assistants.
- To encourage altruism by donating a portion of food grown to local food banks and others who serve the community.
- To raise awareness and advocate for the need of more full time/part-time employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities in Loudoun County

## Core Values

- All persons have worth and dignity.
- Each person is unique and learns in their own way; It is our job to instruct in a way they understand and best absorb, provide the right environment for them to learn and allow the needed time it takes to do so.

- Everyone deserves a chance to do meaningful work in a competitive work environment.
- Positive community relations facilitate our mission.
- Good business practices are essential for success.
- Quality service means effective, accessible service.
- Fair human resource management promotes quality service.

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# LEGACY FARMS SUMMER GARDEN PROGRAM

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## Program Summary

The Summer Garden Program is in its third year of operations and is designed to generalize the students to the farm environment by teaching them what tools and resources are available on a farm and how to use them while gaining a greater understanding of the different types of plants and planting methods used in a garden/farm. Adults with autism will learn job and interpersonal, relationship-building skills through hands-on vocational training that is customized to support each participant's abilities, current skills, goals and needs.

## Program Goals

Students, with support, will prepare the land, lay down weed barrier, and set up protective "Hoops" in garden.

Students, with support, will identify/label gardening tools, either verbally or by matching pictures to tools, and where to locate the tools in the garden shed. These tools include:

- Hoe
- Hose
- Trowel
- Shovel
- Bucket
- Wheel Barrel
- Sprinkler
- Garden tiller
- Lawn mower

Students, with support, will identify/label items and equipment in the greenhouse, such as:

- Seed trays
- Top soil and amendments
- Cooling/heating
- Irrigation
- Grow lights/bulbs
- Plant containers
- Paper potter
- Dibber
- Scoops
- Twist Ties
- Labels

As one of our goals is to encourage altruism by donating a portion of food grown to local food banks with healthier food choices, students, with support, will select, grow and maintain and make weekly donations to Loudoun Hunger Relief. They need:

- Tomatoes
- Green and red peppers

- Jalapenos/habanero peppers
- Melons
- Garlic
- Greens
- Potatoes
- Ginger

Students, with support, will select, grow and maintain an herb garden. Herbs and spices will include:

- Cilantro
- Parsley
- Tamarac
- Garlic
- Rosemary
- Thyme
- Oregano
- Dill
- Basil

Students, with support, will select, grow and maintain flower garden and learn the importance of companion planting to discourage pests and attract beneficials. Flowers will include:

- Zinnias
- Marigolds
- Sunflowers
- Mums
- Calendula
- Sweet Asylum
- Borage

Students, with support, will plant seeds and/or transplant seedlings weekly to ensure continuous harvesting throughout the season.

Students, with support, will maintain the garden by watering, hoeing, pruning, and pulling weeds, as needed, choosing the correct tool(s) for the jobs.

Students will identify “ripe” produce, using pictures and real life examples, and pick them from the garden plants and/or sort them at a produce stand.

Students will identify “over-ripe” or “spoiled” produce, using pictures and real life examples, and dispose of them appropriately.

Students, with support, will build and maintain compost bin.

Students, with support, will landscape “Butterfly garden”.

Students, with support, will select, grow, and maintain flower garden.

Students, with support, will select, grow and maintain Vineyard. This includes trellising and planting new grape vines.

Students, with support, will select, grow and maintain flowers and herbs to grow in greenhouse.

Students will package garden produce for sale to local vendors including Roots and Loudoun Berry, using written/picture/real life directions/examples.

## Program Strategies

### Instructional Strategies

Per other successful gardening programs, we have outlined several strategies and tips to ensure our program is successful and the information we provide is understood and absorb in the best way possible.

- Students explore and participate on their own terms. Many individual's may be tactilely defensive in the beginning, so they are never forced to complete any activity. Curiosity and engagement in the lessons will encourage most students to take down their own barriers.
- Repetitive activities are utilized. Students move through the same steps repeatedly to increase comfort level and experience success. Potting up transplants using different types of plants is a frequent activity.
- Students are slowly encouraged to interact with each other. For example, when the program begins, each student will have their area to learn, by the end of the program they will all be working together on the same project. Also, activities that involve

passing things from student to student are planned, as well as taking items to the shed and greenhouse.

- Positive reinforcement is used to guide behavior. In each session, instructors plan a reward. The reward is never mentioned during the session, so it is not dangled in front of them like a carrot or threatened to be taken away, but the students learn that at the end of the session, if they have exhibited good behavior, they get praise and the opportunity to do something extra like spend free time in the garden or take part in a favorite activity like watering the garden.

Participation in inclusive garden programs benefits all those involved. In addition to plantings, our programs sow seeds of understanding and acceptance that will last them a lifetime.

## Farming Strategies

To get the most out of the garden and ensure we are providing Loudoun Hunger Relief with a weekly delivery as well as local business we grow serve, we should use Relay or Intercropping Techniques. These are the sequential growing of crops in the same bed throughout the season. Once a crop has been harvested, the bed is immediately replanted to a different crop. Using intensive relay cropping, it is possible to plant and harvest three or more crops per bed, per growing season.

Using this technique, we will have an opportunity to grow more food and develop lucrative retail partnerships as well. Loudoun Berry, Roots, Coton and Rye and Vanish Brewery have all expressed interest in purchasing produce from Legacy Farms which means we will need to institute proper food handling to [minimize food safety hazards](#). The best way to do this is to create a Farm-Food Safety Plan.

Other farming techniques will be used as well such as companion planting, raised bed gardening, trellising in the vineyard and hoop gardening to protect greens and other produce from guinea hens and other fowl.

## Program Outcomes

Each student will experience their own personal growth and development. The Summer Garden Program is the second step in a year long journey through all four seasons. This will allow each student to gain a personal understanding of garden planning and plant growth; from putting a seed in the dirt to plucking its fruit at the end of the season. Students will watch as the very seeds they began to sow in the greenhouse, become food for families in need, as well as help us become self-sustainable through retail partnerships.

Along the way, we will see some students flourish immediately and we will seek to find them proper employment. Others may need more time and continue to the Fall Program.

Those not seeking employment, rather more interested in our day support, will have an opportunity to develop social skills and enjoy the therapeutic qualities of gardening.

Key Learnings Include:

- How to select, grow, maintain and harvest vegetables in a farm setting;
- How to select, grow, maintain and harvest flowers in a farm setting;
- How to select, grow, maintain and harvest herbs in a farm setting;
- Interpersonal and relationship-building skills through hands-on vocational training that is customized to support each student's abilities, current skills, goals and needs;
- Basic landscaping skills;
- Care and maintenance of grapes;
- Safe farm-food handling practices;
- Time management; and
- Work as a group or in pairs to promote cooperation and teamwork.

## Program Information

The Legacy Farms Summer Garden Program begins on June 13th, 2017 and runs through the August 14th. We will offer two sessions:

- **Morning Session: 10AM-12:00PM**
- **Afternoon Session: 1:00 PM-3:00PM**

***Suggested Donation: \$550/1-3 days a week \$850/3-5 days a week***

*\*Fee includes gloves, garden tool, t-shirt and hat*

We recommend you arrive early and wear loose fitting clothing, boots and long pants. Wear sunscreen and be prepared for all weather.

This workshop will be taught by an instructor, instructor aid and volunteers; however, we ask that students care/support provider join in and get involved. Space is limited and each workshop shall serve 15 students, 30 total a week.

Students will begin in the indoor classroom where they will learn what the day will entail, then venture into the greenhouse and the garden.