



BEN LUKOWITZ AND PATRICK MCDONOUGH WITH POTATOES.

Vineyard Students Plant Potatoes to Help Needy

By JULIA RAPPAPORT

Spring has sprung on the Vineyard and thoughts are turning towards summer. The end of school and the start of beach days are mere weeks away. But for students at four Vineyard schools, summer vacation will not stop until they get their hands a little dirty. That is why, this past Tuesday, first, second, fifth and sixth graders from the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School lined up in the tilled fields of Katama ready to plant potatoes.

The students and teachers made the trek from West Tisbury on this windy afternoon as a part of a new program launched by the FARM Institute called Read for Seeds. Educational manager Nora Kennedy developed the program, which started on Tuesday and will last through Sunday, to raise money for teaching gardens and to support efforts to supply the Island Food Pantry with fresh, local food.

This March, Ms. Kennedy visited classrooms at the Edgartown, Tisbury, Charter and Montessori schools to discuss issues related to worldwide and Islandwide hunger. "The Island is diverse culturally," said the history major who came to the FARM from New York to fill the missing link in her life—farming. "People assume an economic level here that is above par, and we're giving kids the chance to relate to what it might mean for people not to have enough."

While at the schools, she planted potato plants with the students to introduce them to the concept of growing food locally for the community. "The Island Food Pantry buys a certain number of potatoes, a staple item, every week," she said of her choice to grow potatoes. "It's important for kids to know they can buy food from this Island. It turns into a routine where kids get in the car to go to the grocery store with their parents. They'll throw a box of Cheerios into the cart, but we want them asking, 'Where's the wheat in the Cheerios coming from? Can we grow that here?'"

This past fall, Ms. Kennedy spoke with a nonprofit farm in Boston called Gaining Ground that runs a read-a-thon project, also known as Read for Seeds. Gaining Ground had kids reading books and soliciting money from the community. The idea intrigued her and she floated it by school parents and teachers. Generally, the response was cool. Islanders were hesitant about having their kids asking for money. A few parents and teachers combined to continue the discussion and returned to Ms. Kennedy with the idea of hosting a book drive.

The FARM, a center for food, agriculture and resource management established in Katama in 2002, invited all Island schools to participate in the book drive. Four signed on. The Charter School collected books for a week and a half. Karin Nelson, the school's reading teacher, reported that the students collected 400 books. The books have



STUDENTS HOE KATAMA LAND FOR PLANTING. Pictures by M.C. Wallis

intention for each potato they will be planting. "To grow," exclaimed one student. "To be really big for someone to eat it for a long time," suggested another. "So that the potato is happy," another shouted out over the wind. While they got to work, Ms. Kennedy explained how a potato grows and why the students were working the soil with different tools. She also allowed them to rotate tools, explaining that some people don't have that luxury. "There are people who do jobs like this," she told the students, "who do the same job all day."

Back at the barn, another group of students chopped potatoes for tomorrow's group to plant. Ciara, a first grade student at the Charter School, was busy making sure that her chopping was even, but had time to think about what her favorite part of the project had been. "Planting the potato plant," she finally settled on.

In addition to the book drive and potato planting, the FARM Institute runs an after-school program Monday through Saturday and provides transportation for different schools four days per week. In the summer months, they host different camps. The programs are seasonal and chore based.

"Sixty percent of the programs deal with the needs of the farm and how to incorporate kids into that," Ms. Kennedy explained. "Forty percent is kid-directed. We want to know what they're most interested in."

Although it was only the first day of the project, Ms. Kennedy already had high hopes for its future. "I hope it will continue and be more than an experiment," she said. "It will be something that kids look forward to each year." In the meantime, the FARM has its sights on the more immediate future. Plots are available for purchase in their community garden and registration is starting for a new program called WISP, Work Income Sharing Project, available for 11 to 15-year-olds for 11 weeks this summer. The kids will grow food in plots then sell it to farmers' markets and restaurants. In return, they will receive a percentage of the profits each week. And, on May 5 from 4 to 6 p.m., there will be an opening reception for high school students that have been photographing the FARM all year.

The book sale runs through Sunday in the horse barn from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will be a community planting on Sunday from noon to 2 p.m. If you are unable to get to Katama, but still wish to make a donation, checks can be sent to the FARM Institute, 14 Aero Avenue, Edgartown, MA, 02539. Memo: Read for Seeds.

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Wallace & Co. Inc. of Edgartown and Chilmark has joined the Sotheby's International Realty real estate network.

The firm now will do business as Wallace & Co. Sotheby's International Realty. Wallace will have access to exclusive real estate products and services to better market their clients' properties to buyers throughout the country and world.

"Thomas Wallace's leadership in the Martha's Vineyard real estate market is well-known, and we are very honored that such a successful and highly regarded firm is now part of our global real estate network," said Michael R. Good, president and chief executive officer of Sotheby's International Realty Affiliates Inc. Mr. Wallace said, "Our mission remains to share the beauty, character and charm of our Island with people throughout the country and world. We have proudly served this market for more than 25 years and look forward to serving our clients with great distinction as a Sotheby's International Realty affiliate."

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Wallace & Co. Sotheby's International Realty has offices in Edgartown and Chilmark with 13 sales associates. More information is available by calling the firm at 508-627-3313.



TRAP CHAMP: Nick Bologna of Chilmark has won the 2007 Trap Championship at the Martha's Vineyard Rod & Gun Club. Nick bested 10 other trap shooters that took advantage of the most perfect weather conditions to compete in this annual event. Participants each took aim at two rounds of twenty-five clay targets. Class B went to last year's champion, Allan Albee of Edgartown. Phil Hughes of Oak Bluffs picked up the Class C title. The club's next function is the annual trout tournament, which will be held May 5 at Duare's Pond off Lambert's Cove Road.

Seaman's Cemetery Gift Goes To Island Nonprofits

The Boston Seaman's Friend Society Inc. has donated the Sailors' Burying Ground in Vineyard Haven to the Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission and the Martha's Vineyard Historical Society.

The property, on Sailor's Burying Ground Road, comprises an acre. The land bank and the historical society now each hold a half-interest in the property, which will remain open to the public. The historical society will manage the actual cemetery while the land bank will oversee the rest of the parcel.

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