

# FREEDOM FARM NEWS



(L)SPRING GREENS READY FOR HARVEST. (R) FALL HARVEST TO OTISVILLE- MT. HOPE PANTRY

## Get Behind Me by Edgar Hayes

After reading Mark 8:31-38 & Matthew 16:21-26, I began to sink in deep thought. What was the message being conveyed through the writer? What was happening at the time of the story? How is the message relevant to my life at this moment in time? Jesus had just foretold of his impending imprisonment, suffering and death so Peter chastises him saying, "God forbid it Lord!, This must never happen to you". Jesus quickly rebukes him saying, "Get behind me Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." Peter's intention for Jesus is to stay alive and restore the



NICOLE TENDING TO PEAS



SUMMER CREW



FOOD CHAIN LESSON

# Get Behind Me...continued

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Jewish kingdom. God's intention for Jesus is freedom from sin, everlasting grace, abundant life for all of God's people. There are times when I miss the mark. Sometimes my human intentions get in the way of God's intentions for me and others through me.

When I was courting Ann way back in the mid 90's, I had the wonderful opportunity to visit the Alex Hailey Farm in Tennessee. I was there for a week of Freedom School training. The focus was to learn how to teach African American children in inner-city neighborhoods about their cultural heritage using Freedom School curriculum. It was profound for me on a personal level, because I was re-learning about myself as an African American male living in America. The instructions were intense and beautiful at the same time. Growing up as an inner-city child whose family was on welfare, I had never been around so many positive African Americans, moving and working towards the betterment of selves, families, communities, country, and the world.

While I was still there, the darkest moment ever in my life came upon me. I felt God had abandoned me. I felt alone, as if He were not there at all. I called up Ann one day and told her, "I don't think our relationship can go any further.... How can I look a little African American girl in the eyes and tell her that she is beautiful, all the while being with a Caucasian woman?" For those of you readers who don't understand the nature of the question, might I suggest you walk in the shoes of racism in America before reading ahead. Its going to be uncomfortable, but that is what we need right now.

You see, it would have been comfortable for me to go along with America's view of "stay with your own kind." If Jesus had followed Peter's advice, there would be no grace from death on the cross, no redemption for our sins, and no life everlasting. If I had followed my limited insight, there would have been no marriage between Ann and me. Micah and Josiah would not have been born. Freedom Farm would not have grown food on this land to share. Life-giving relationships would not have been built. The young people, interns, families, guests, inquirers, friends, relatives, strangers, volunteers who've come over the years would not have experienced the love and healing this place has to offer. God spoke words of grace to me before I left Tennessee to go back home. All God said was, "I am here!" That was enough for me to go beyond being Satan's stumbling block and start focusing on the amazing work God had (and still has) in store for us. Have you become complacent in your comfortability? Are you a stumbling block to God when it comes to America's sin? Repent! Put on those shoes and walk. Listen to people's stories. Read. Invite! Talk with! Question! Love! "Is not this the Fast that I choose, to loose the bonds of injustice... to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yolk?" (Isaiah 58:6). Like the gospel song says, tell ol' "Satan, get thee behind, victory today is mine." Oh, watch and see what God can do in our lives and the lives of others when we set our minds on "Divine things."

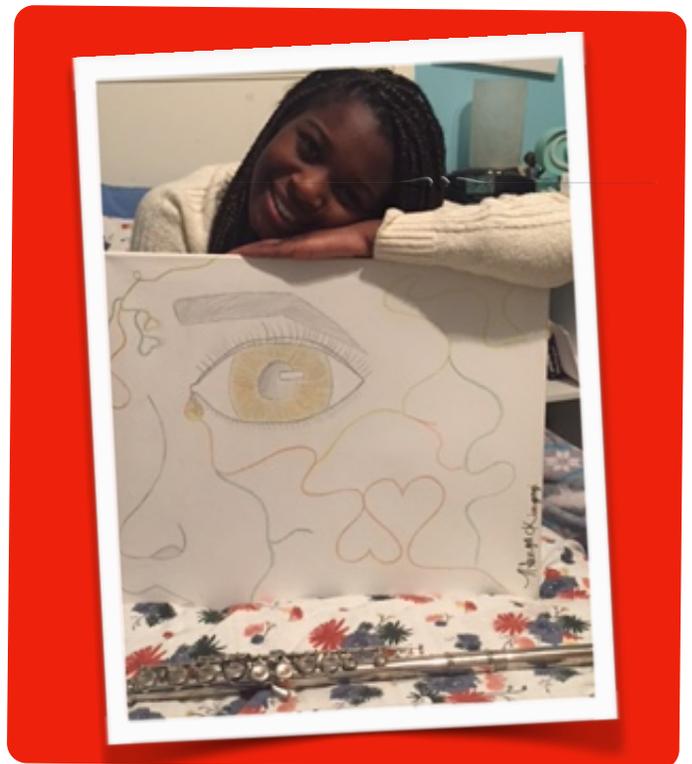
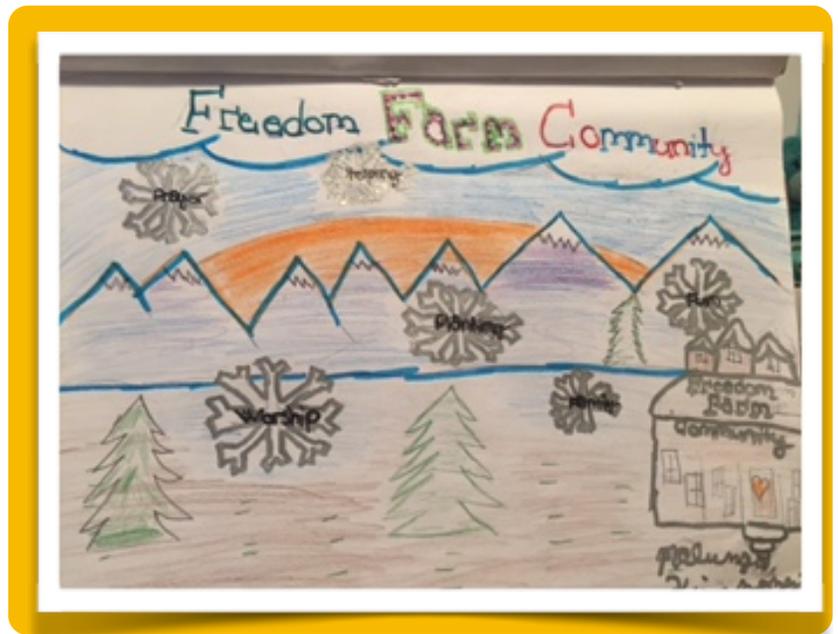


## Reflections of Freedom Farm

by Mukoko Kinzonzi

Over the summer, before getting a job as a lifeguard, I volunteered at Freedom Farm Community. I spent a majority of my time landscaping instead of actual agricultural, as I had done last Summer. In one portion of the garden, the land was uneven and the pathway dividing the plant sections was unclear. The plan was to make the ground even and the pathway discernible. First I excavated the land, digging up rocks, boulders and dirt by hand. I then organized the rocks, in the hole in size order, so they gradually declined, by doing this I was able to turn the indented area into a more even space. I filled in the hole with the dirt I had dug up and spread dirt over the rocks. This made the land leveled and the pathway easy to see and walk through. When I showed my mom she was really surprised and amazed and kept smiling and saying how amazing the work I did was, and how it transformed the pathway. This made me somewhat proud of my work and perseverance in the hot sun.

Although working on the farm provides many life skill experiences, there were other socially rewarding experiences as well. I don't think I will ever forget the late nights playing dodgeball and talking with friends around the fire pit under the stars. Some nights we roasted marshmallows and ate hot-dogs, drinking lemonade or water. Listening to the happy sounds of laughter and stories while the sweet calming sounds of Mr. Hayes' guitar played or Mrs. Hayes' violin, made the experience I had at Freedom Farm community feel like a family atmosphere.



Art from Top to Bottom:  
Malunga Kinzonzi\*, N'Senga Kinzonzi,  
Edgar Hayes

\*Malunga's snowflakes say: Prayer, Worship,  
Helping, Planting, Family, Fun

## Opening up to the Divine at Freedom Farm by Nicole Kinzonzi

The Freedom Farm Community is like a family of believers that support one another and provide inspiration, hope, laughter, awe, reverence, joy, perseverance and unconditional belief in The Father's divine presence. The divine presence that calms our fears, pushes our spirit, protects our faith and comforts our pain. The divine presence that we see in Ann and Edgar's unwavering commitment to feed communities, both nutritionally and spiritually. The divine presence in their commitment to afternoon prayers and communicating with The Father. This year I saw The Father's divine presence in so much of the behaviors in Freedom Farm Community's mission...behind the scenes of their farming mission.

The never ending movement of planning, preparing, planting, maintaining, evolving, executing, harvesting, distributing, and sharing. I saw many worker ants also. Volunteers from community groups, family and friends.

I saw Josiah mount a massive machine to cut grass on the acres and acres of land with the ease of a seasoned farmer. I saw his mom educate a most beautiful child of God on how to ride this machine to the comedy of Laurel and Hardy. I watched with amazement and wonder the tireless ideas of Edgar transform patches of land into mounds of vegetable plots that became decorative designs for peas to climb. Every morning with a peace on his face that mirrored his wife's, he solitarily executed some plan with the affect of many. I laughed with Sodelina and Ann and shared stories of womanhood, motherhood, human-hood and spirit-hood. Sodelina's food was delicious to the body as her testimonials to the spirit.

I felt the heat of The Father's most valuable resource to life and endured its blessings. I saw Micah and my youngest daughter Malunga plant flowers, and believed in The Father's faith in the potential of humans. I spent time with my son Mukoko and older daughter N'Senga creating landscape plots that were designed for herbs and flowers, vegetables and fruits(tomato). I even got time to spend with my oldest son Caleb and see his creative problem solving( a childhood strength) develop into a permanent idea for structures to house asparagus and herbs. I saw a huge snake, but stayed the course of the work, thanks to the security of boots provided by Freedom Farm. When I saw another smaller snake, I felt more safe this time in the presence of Micah with his farm tools and curiosity.



## Opening Up...continued

I heard Ann's laughter, so powerful in its delivery and sincere in its origins and experienced her magical hosting skills that I shall never forget and always admire. It seemed during the early part of the day, she was tired and effete. I simply asked her if we could have pizza and out of nowhere came this array of food, deserts, picnic blankets and ambience. My daughter had been asking me about going on a picnic earlier in the day and Ann's surprising presentation at the end of the day, under the indigo sky speckled with diamonds, was like the backdrop and foreground of a theatrical masterpiece. As Josiah ran with his crutches to evade the ball being thrown by the other children, Ann nervously watched alert and brave. It reminded me of the very first time I saw her watching over him in the sandbox at Otisville Elementary. He didn't care about his injury as much as he cared about outrunning the ball. Later when the mosquitos forced us to surrender inside, as swiftly and deftly as the picnic had presented itself from Ann's mind, so did the presence of candles and desert. I told Ann she is an amazing host, wife, daughter, sister and mother. Just like her husband Edgar is an amazing farmer, brother, father and fireman and lay pastor.

I think of Paul, Sodelina's husband, who would spend long hot morning's grafting grape vines, which are so beautifully representative of spring, preparing soil and later find the energy to go and play an 18 or 21 course. He says the work is not demanding when you want to do it...So simple and so true, yet so forgettable.. I met Mennonites from which I began to understand Protestantism and Martin Luther and the Roman Catholic church. Powerful. And I met a young band of African American counselors and administrators from Camp Deer Park who had once been campers. The director Kevin, whose age did not match his confidence and maturity was as pleasant as he was knowledgeable about camp logistics. Meeting millennials, whose smiles and energy did not reflect the self-centered aimless collective of narcissistic meanderings, made me wish I was 23 again, and a camp counselor.

I learned to cook healthy meals from Ann and Sodelina and whip up deliciously heathy smoothies from Edgar. Freedom Farm Community is way more than community, it's family, magic, laughter, delicious food, caring, sharing, and providing a space to meet unforgettable young people, people in general. To learn from Ann and Edgar the importance of Keeping The Father in the midst of our lives was important. I experienced the benefits and truths of work. That it is not so demanding or hard "when you want to do it". I pray The Father keeps us all safe, healthy and blessed until the next planting season....



## Here and back again by Karsten Hess

I'm always so grateful for the time that I spend just outside Otisville, NY. So much has happened in the years since I first arrived as an intern; in all our lives. Family members lost, schools started and finished, and so many prayers for direction.

I've often wondered whether there was something specific I should do with my life; some higher calling. I'm learning that such a thought might have more to do with being wrapped up in epic stories in novels and on screens than with day-to-day living.

A year and a half ago I made the decision to pack my bags and leave for the big city and pursue a career in acting. As you might guess, that forced myself to grow and spend time in introspection. I had to start asking what was motivating me, what my soul really wants and needs, when it's ok to let enough be enough.

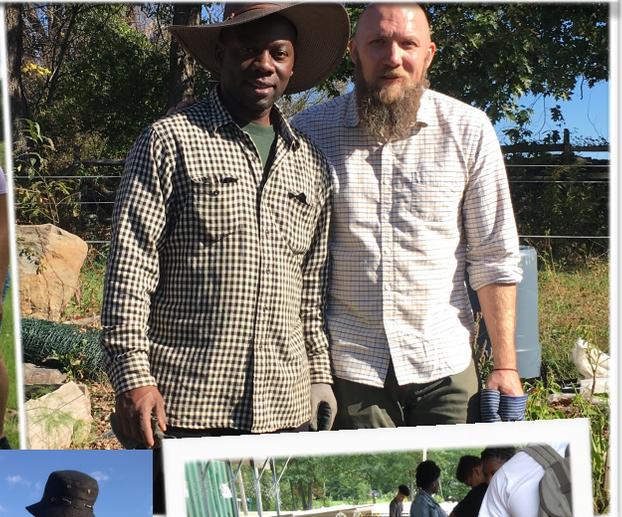
It wasn't long before I realized that I might need to get away from the life I was trying to live, and return to the place that puts my soul at ease. Edgar and Ann graciously accepted my request to join them this summer, and offered to take me on as the intern and volunteer coordinator.

I was blessed with so much during the 2.5 months that I was at Freedom Farm. I got to spend time in prayer, song, and reflection before breakfast (when I woke up). I joined Ann and Edgar in long conversations about life while encouraging delicious fruits and vegetables to grow, and harvesting them when they did. I played, joked and went fishing with Josiah and Micah. I made new friends, both human and fluffy, and got to see old ones again. But most of all I was able to live, breathe, and be, in their lives again; at the same time slow, peaceful and reflective as it is full and busy.

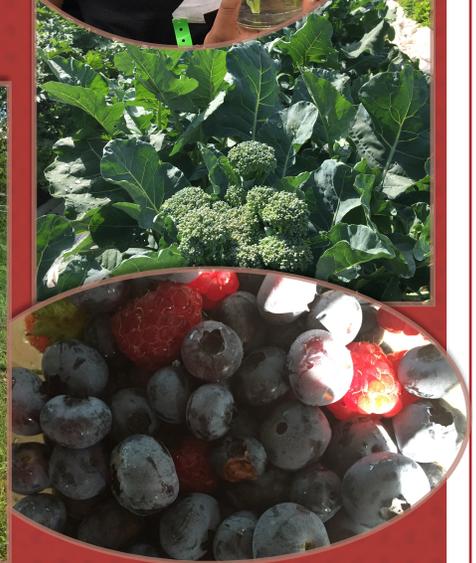
Freedom Farm is always so life-giving for me that I know I'll be back again. I hope that the next time will be a longer stay.

Currently I'm continuing to explore how art might be a part of what I contribute to this world. I started at MOVEO last October 2016, and came back this fall to continue my education. (MOVEO is a small school for corporeal mime and physical theater in Barcelona, Spain) I arrived not really knowing what corporeal mime was, and honestly, I'm still not really sure how to explain it. In short, we're learning how to communicate with the whole body, not just the face or voice.





# PHOTOS FROM THIS YEAR



## FFC IS SEEKING...

- 1. FREEDOM FARM  
COMMUNITY PARTNER  
"CALLED" TO JOIN IN THE  
MINISTRY LONGER TERM**
- 2. VOLUNTEER/INTERN  
COORDINATOR TO WORK  
WITH/FACILITATE  
INTERNS FOR GROWING  
SEASON**
- 3. SUMMER INTERNS TO  
HELP FARM, LEAD YOUTH,  
JOIN IN DAILY PRAYER  
AND COMMUNITY LIFE**

## Let's Do This! by Ann Rader

Gearing up for the 2018 growing season, we celebrate the nearly 1,600 pounds harvested last season thanks to the helping hands of volunteers. The fruits of our labor were shared with: folks who visited Freedom Farm, Otisville-Mt. Hope Presbyterian Food Pantry, Camp Deerpark, and Cornell Cooperative Extension's Gleaning Program that distributes fresh produce to pantries and soup kitchens throughout the Hudson Valley. Nicole Kinzonzi, Sodelina Holderbaum, and Karsten Hess were tag team regulars around the farm. Our neighbor Nicole coordinated volunteers the first part of

the season, and Karsten came back from Spain to help coordinate, as regular groups of New York City teens and children from Camp Deerpark started to arrive. They split into groups, weeding, planting, harvesting, repairing, and building a fence around the children's garden. To all the volunteers who pitched in last season — THANK YOU so much! You're the best!

*Is not this the Fast that I choose,  
to loose the bonds of injustice,..  
to let the oppressed go free,..  
to share your bread with the hungry,..*  
(Is. 58.6-7) Let's Do This!