

Creativity and Collaboration Abundant at Farmers' Market

Champlain Islands Farmers' Market – Community Collaborations, South Hero

Vermont is a state full of bustling and fun farmers' markets, and the Champlain Islands Farmers' Market (CIFM) in South Hero is no exception. Not only do shoppers frequent this market in Grand Isle County for its abundance of local produce, but also for its variety of creative programming and collaborations as well.

Regardless of the time of year, the Champlain Islands Farmers' Market has something to offer. From November through April, shoppers head to the once-a-month winter market. Market goers can expect to find fall vegetables, eggs, grass-fed beef, homemade breads, pickles and jams along with a variety of wooden bowls, yarns, handmade soaps and crafts. Happily, the South Hero Congregational Church has both the space and the willingness to host the market during the cold winter months. During the warmer months, the market moves outside behind St. Rose of Lima Church in South Hero and behind St. Joseph's Church in Grand Isle where shoppers can find the above products plus an abundance of summer produce and a variety of programs. Emily Alger, one of the market's executive committee members, says that the market, "pulls in partners from all over the community by offering workshops on fiber, dairy, honey, canning and flower arranging." Additionally, a couple of times each summer the market sponsors Youth Farmers' Market Day, where it allows kids to sell produce that they've grown, food that they've made, or crafts that they've created. Open Farm and Studio Tours are another unique offering of CIFM. These tours are the brainchild of a group of farmer/artists who both raise sheep and spin wool.

Many of the different programs are made possible by a collaboration with the South Hero Land Trust (SHLT), who Alger says, "we are thrilled to partner with." SHLT co-sponsored moving the market to South Hero and making it a sustainable organization, and many of the residents of Grand Isle County are happy that they did so.



Emily Alger, provided by South Hero Land Trust

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Islanders Teach One Another How to Save Energy

Islanders Caring for the Environment and Town Offices Collaboration, South Hero

Islanders Caring for the Environment (ICE) is a grassroots organization whose members aim to make improvements in their own backyard, and they've teamed up with their local town offices to do just that.

ICE is an effort seeking to reduce the carbon footprint of both individuals and the community. Using grant money, ICE performed energy audits on South Hero's town office building, town garage and town museum to learn what energy improvements they can make. Already on the town office building they have replaced outside doors, exchanged the light bulbs for energy efficient compact fluorescent bulbs and replaced the forty-year-old furnace. ICE member, Bob Buermann, says, "The intention is to use these buildings as examples of what home owners can do, along with saving the town money and reducing our carbon use." Clearly, at least one of those goals, that of saving the town money, already is being accomplished. In one year, the change in the lighting alone saved the town \$269, which is more than they spent on the new bulbs

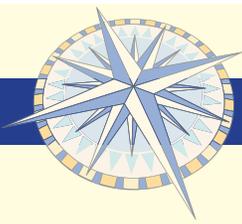


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thanks to the financial assistance they received from the grant and from Efficiency Vermont. And the town will realize these energy savings for years to come.

Not only does ICE plan to use town-owned buildings as examples, they also are developing a list of the many locations in South Hero and Grand Isle County that use alternative forms of energy. Initially, they plan to create a photo demonstration so people can see what different forms of energy work in the area, and later they hope to lead tours of some of the sites so homeowners can learn how to replicate projects in their own homes. In South Hero it seems that when islanders care for the environment, they care for their neighbors too.

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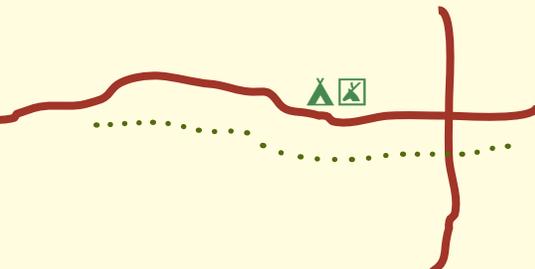
Taking Children from Awareness to Action

South Hero Land Trust – The Land, the Farms and Me, South Hero

In 2002, Reina Warren, a Folsom School parent, had the idea to create a program for the school that would connect students to their food and the land. Her hope was that some day the program would cease to be an extra in the curriculum, and that it eventually would become just a part of the school culture. With the help and support of the South Hero Land Trust, *The Land, the Farms and Me*, became just what Reina wanted, an integral part of every child's education.

Part of what makes *The Land, the Farms and Me* so successful is that Warren had some valuable goals right from the beginning. One of those goals was, "to assist the Folsom School teachers in meeting the Grand Isle County curriculum and State of Vermont Grade Expectations." Aligning the program with Vermont's state standards meant that the program was viewed as more than just extra work for the teachers. Rather, the program has become a way for teachers to cover topics required by the state in engaging ways that address different learning styles. This focus on the ways in which children learn also has been central to the program. As Warren describes it, "awareness to action is the spectrum." In other words, the program meets the developmental needs of different ages. In kindergarten and first grade, the focus simply is on visiting local farms and learning about the plants, animals and people that live there. Meanwhile, seventh and eighth graders do community service projects that benefit the land.

Weaving together the community and the children's education also has been important from the start. Warren says, "There's no problem getting chaperones and not only are you educating the kids but also the parents. The program has made a lot of nice community connections." In fact, cultivating the partnerships between the teachers and the farmers and other community members has been integral to keeping the program viable. Those connections are now firmly established, so much so that Warren no longer has to lead many of the educational experiences, but rather she is able to act as a resource. The connections that have been fostered with the community have allowed Warren to step back and let the teachers run the show, which is just what she and the South Hero Land Trust always wanted.



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