

## ADVENTURES IN GROWING

### THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND MAKING THE BEST OF OUR GROWING SEASON



Another gardening season has come to an end. I'd love to be able to tell you how wonderful our garden did this year - but in all honesty, I can't tell you that.

Everything started out fine. We planted our seeds and nursed them along under the lights in our classroom, moved them out to the greenhouse when it was warm enough, then out into the hoophouse to allow them to "harden" under the shade cloth. Then, all 2000 or so seedlings were planted in our ½ acre garden. That's when things took a bad turn. It rained 28 out of the 30 days in June. With that and our clay soil, nothing grew. By the Fourth of July, the pepper and tomato plants were no taller than they were the day they were planted in the garden. We scrambled to re-plant

what we thought would still mature by the end of summer. Alsip Nursery donated vegetable plants for our second planting.

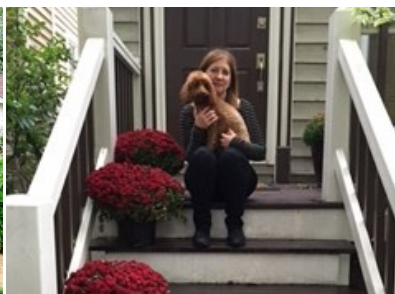
Then, the second wave of bad luck started: the wildlife moved in! What the geese didn't nibble away to the ground, the deer did. We had some produce to provide to Alsip Nursery's farmers market, but not nearly as much as we had expected.

But, being the eternal "glass is half full" types, we took away some very important lessons that will make our crop better for next year. Under the direction of our horticulturalist, we will add black dirt and more organic material to our soil this fall. Next season we will let a portion of the garden rest, while we plant a more

condensed garden in a smaller section of our ½ acre. And, we've invested in some temporary fencing.

Even though this year's garden didn't work out quite as well as we had hoped, many people did have great growing seasons and sent us pictures of their gardens. Some grow flowers, some vegetables, and some grew a combination. Different spaces, from entire back yards to front porches, accommodated our readers' gardens. Thanks to all who shared their garden pictures with us! Hopefully ours will look as good next year.

Most Sincerely,  
**Mary Anne Neiner**  
*President, Planting Possibilities*



# SPREADING FALL COLORS

REVIEWING OUR ANNUAL MUM SALE ON SEPTEMBER 19



Our fall mum sale couldn't have been a more beautiful day! The weather really cooperated this year. We nearly sold out. As usual, we had a variety of sizes and colors of some of the most beautiful mums you've ever seen. The leftover plants were taken to **Pepino's Italian Restaurant** in Schererville, where Joe Daniele generously allowed us to display and sell our remaining autumn

flowers. Thank you to our loyal supporters who repeatedly come to our spring and fall flower sales, and to those who just found us. See you again next fall!

Also, special thanks to **Sarkey's Florist** in Highland, for allowing us to use their yard for our annual mum and geranium sales. Please keep them in mind when you look for a local florist.

# CHILI CHALLENGE

SERVING AWARD-WINNING CHILI AT MUNSTER CONTEST

On October 5, Planting Possibilities competed in the Munster Chamber of Commerce **Touchdown Chili Challenge** for the third year in a row. We took home 2nd place in the People's Choice awards for our chili this year! Thank you to Chefs Dave Lerner and George Christ, with help from Eric Neiner (all Ivy Tech culinary students) for such a

tasty chili recipe. And thanks to the creativity of board member Brad Hemingway, we've won Best Decorated Booth all three years! Thanks Brad, you really make us look good!

Joe Hemingway, Dominic Daniele and Eric Neiner served our chili for the evening and were the perfect hosts.



# ALSIP NURSERY'S INAUGURAL FARM-TO-TABLE MARKET

JOINING WITH LOCAL FARMERS TO SUPPLY THE INAUGURAL CSA MARKET



Although we had a disappointing garden this year, we did have a variety of produce to provide the Alsip Farmers Market. We took kale, squash, eggplant and tomatillos to the market. Our students were very proud of their crop and look forward to doing even better next year.

We thank Rich Christakes for giving us the opportunity to participate in the market. We also thank Ben at Alsip for his encouragement. While we didn't have the best growing year, this was a great opportunity to participate in the NWI farming community and share our harvest in any small way we could!

# ANNOUNCING OUR SPRING FUNDRAISER

## MARGARITAS, SALSAS, AND A TROPICAL PARADISE IN THE REGION

### April 2, 2016 - Save the date!

Our annual spring event will be held on Saturday evening, April 2, 2016 at Innsbrook Country Club in Merrillville, Indiana. Get out your favorite island clothes to welcome the coming warm weather!

We will welcome back our popular salsa contest! Contestants can enter their favorite salsa recipes for everyone to taste and vote for their favorite salsa. Come and enjoy an evening of island food and tropical entertainment.

Watch your mailbox, email and social media in January for more information. In the meantime, start testing salsa recipes!



# JOIN OUR SPECIAL OLYMPICS TEAM

## WE'RE LOOKING TO FILL A SECOND BASKETBALL TEAM

After taking a break from basketball this summer to learn softball, we're back dribbling in the gym again. There has been so much interest in our team that we are looking for a few more players to fill a second team.

Practices are Monday evenings in Campagna Academy's gym. If you know an adult athlete who would like to join our team, please let us know!

# PROGRAMS WITH WHOLE FOODS

## "DIME-AT-A-TIME" PARTNER UNTIL DECEMBER 31, 2015



We've met a new neighbor! **Whole Foods** opened a new store in Schererville this fall and invited us to participate in their "Dime at a Time" program. We also participated in their Pre-Grand Opening vendor fair where we had a chance to introduce ourselves to Whole Foods employees, vendors and future customers.

Whole Foods offers a 10 cent instant rebate for each reusable bag you use at check out. The cashier will tell you the amount of your instant rebate and ask if you

want to keep the rebate or donate it to Planting Possibilities - thus the "Dime at a Time" phrase. Whole Foods is generously making Planting Possibilities the beneficiary of this program through December 31, 2015, at its Schererville store. If you live in Northwest Indiana, please visit the new Whole Foods store - and bring your reusable grocery bags!

On Saturday, November 21 we also hosted a planting activity at the store. Watch our Facebook page for future activities with Whole Foods.

## -UPCOMING-

### APRIL 2

Meet us for Margaritas for our Spring fundraiser event

### MAY 14

Geranium and Tomato Plant Sale

### SUMMER 2016

Rockopelli

### SEPTEMBER 17

Mum Sale

# HORTICULTURE, GARDENING, AND LOCALLY-GROWN FOOD

## AN UPDATE ON OUR EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS AT CAMPAGNA ACADEMY

**BY: TANNER OLLO**

Campagna Academy in Schererville, Indiana is a residential campus for children and young adults in Northwest Indiana. Planting Possibilities works with Campagna to offer job skills training to residents with autism and developmental disabilities and other young adults in the community struggling with similar issues.

This year, we received a \$10,000 grant from the Lake County Community Fund at the Legacy Foundation to continue our program. The learning experiences in our Planting Possibilities classroom are specialized in food, gardening, and horticulture.

Along with the semi-weekly classes that tended our garden of tomatoes, peppers, bean, peas, kale, corn and squash, this summer the Campagna class went on a field trip to the Indiana Dunes to study the unique flora and fauna of that area. Although all of them have always lived in Northwest Indiana, most of them have never seen Lake



Michigan or gone to the Dunes.

For their Halloween party on October 27, the students cooked pumpkin seeds and carved mini jack o' lanterns made out of apples.

Taking advantage of the mild November weather, the students got the opportunity to spend a beautiful, sunny day honing their construction skills with help and guidance from Mark Neiner. Ryan McGrath's morning class was hard at work using power tools and shovels to take down the old playground equipment that had stood since the academy's opening.

Jim Hitz, a horticultural consultant and former teacher, led the class in a discussion about hydroponics, a method in which plants are grown using mineral-rich water without the use of soil. Students planted lettuce in a hydroponic system and transferred it over to the greenhouse to compare it with lettuce planted in soil.

Outside of classes at Campagna, students also attended classes at Pepino's Restaurant in Schererville where they learn how to build and

bake pizzas using tomato sauce made from their own tomatoes. Seven talented chefs-in-training made their own pizzas.

While our outdoor activities will slow down as the weather changes, we will begin to re-assemble our indoor lights and racks in our classroom to start our seeds in January or February. Then we start all over again!

All of these programs and activities would not be possible without the help of the many volunteers who give their time and energy to providing these young men and women the skills they need to live happy, self-sufficient lives.

We are very thankful to Campagna Academy for continuing to provide a home - not only for Planting Possibilities, but also for these wonderful students who are just on the cusp of adulthood - as we continue to search for a place to call our very own, so that we may help and prepare even more students with autism and other developmental disabilities.



# IN MEMORIAM



## IN MEMORY OF JEANETTE FERENCE

These donations were made in memory of Jeanette Ference. Her brother and sister-in-law wish that every adult with a disability will find the same life-long support and friendship in their community as Jeanette did in Highland, Indiana.

Bill & Monica Ference  
Jacqueline Hughes  
Martha Jordan

Ms. E. Martinez  
Ms. S.E. Staley  
Mr. Charles Turman

Pam Vaporciyan



## IN MEMORY OF FATHER MATTHEW J. KISH

We offer our sincere gratitude to the Estate of Father Matthew J. Kish for the generous donation made in his name. Father Kish dedicated his vocation as a Catholic priest ministering to the people of Northwest Indiana. He was a 1935 graduate of Catholic Central High School (now Bishop Noll Institute) and ordained in 1943 after graduating from St. Meinrad Seminary. He retired in July 1994 after 51 years of selfless service to the Gary Diocese. Father Kish passed away in November 2012 after 95 years of a life well lived.



When asked why he chose Planting Possibilities for this generous gift, Father Kish's Trustee said that he wanted Father's legacy to benefit an organization that is truly local, where he was confident that the money would be used wisely to make a difference. We promise you, Father Kish, that your legacy will make a difference for Planting Possibilities and for adults with disabilities - right here in Lake County.



# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

## WE THANK THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS AND COMPANIES FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT

Elaine Apple  
Joe Daniele  
Karl & Marge Dytrych  
Mark & Suzee Fortener  
Paul & Joyce Gergets  
Joe & Cookie Janostak  
Thomas Kirby  
Mark Lindsey

Linda Moran  
Alice Nebelsiek  
Mark & Mary Pallok  
Anita Pickens  
Daniel Pullen  
Evelyn Roberson  
Roseann Rosin  
Joe & Joyce Stodola

Jerry & Ruth Yothment  
Bernie Zeman  
Guru Systems, Inc.  
Pepino's Italian Restaurant  
Alsip Nursery & Home Center  
Sarkey's Florist  
Arcelor Mittal Matching Gifts



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

A donation was made by the friends of Diane and Tim Parker in commemoration of their special birthdays this year. **Happy Birthday, Diane and Tim!** Wishing you many more years of health and happiness!

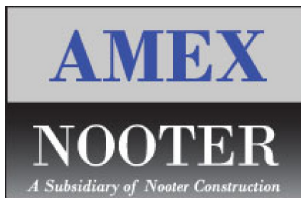
# GOLF FOR POSSIBILITIES

UNFORTUNATELY, OUR GOLF OUTING WAS RAINED OUT. HOWEVER, THESE BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS' GENEROSITY STILL SHONE THROUGH!

## PLATINUM SPONSORS



## SILVER / BEVERAGE CART SPONSORS



### MUNSTER GARDEN CLUB



## BRONZE / HOLE SPONSORS

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Annette Wisniewski

# CHRISTMAS TIME IS HERE

## CHRISTMAS MEMORIES IN THE MAKING



**BY: JOEL RATAJACK**

One of the best things about holiday traditions is that they evolve. Every year before Christmas, my dad and I build a massive wreath with the branches of a Christmas tree. We usually go to a store and ask for their meekest looking scotch pine

since we are just going to chop it up for the wreath. In recent years, we have added another element to our tradition by purchasing our trees from the Knights of Columbus at St. Thomas More in Munster, Indiana. It just wouldn't be the same buying a tree from anywhere else because my best friends from Planting Possibilities, Eric Neiner and Joe Hemingway, wouldn't be there to help us pick out the best tree.

Eric and Joe have worked at the Christmas tree sale for the last few years and it makes the tree shopping experience unforgettable. Eric is the best tree salesman. He will find exactly what you're looking for and make you an offer you can't

refuse. Joe is the hardest worker you can find and he will carry your tree no matter how big it is. Occasionally, you'll even get to see Eric dressed as Santa Claus waving cars into the parking lot. It's the service with a smile from two of the best guys I know that keeps us coming back.

Each year I look forward to buying our meek little scotch pine for wreath making material almost more than making the wreath itself. It is something great that I get to share with my special buds every holiday season and I look forward to making more memories with them for years to come.

## GET YOUR CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

### WE'RE SELLING POINSETTIAS TO HELP FUND EXPENSES FOR OUR BASKETBALL TEAM

Poinsettias are available for \$12, cash and carry, in a variety of colors at Pepino's Italian Restaurant, 2410 Ontario, Schererville, IN. (1/2 block west of US 41 at 77th Ave.)

Please consider purchasing your Christmas poinsettia from Planting Possibilities!

## VOLUNTEER OR JOIN OUR BOARD

Do you have administrative, gardening, or development skills? Know someone with special needs? Just looking for a way to get involved in NWI? We have a place for you. Specifically, we are looking for people to join our fundraising, governance, and finance committees. Please contact Mark Neiner at [admin@plantingpossibilities.org](mailto:admin@plantingpossibilities.org) or 219.237.9353.

## PLANTING POSSIBILITIES LEADERSHIP

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Meagan Yothment, Tanner Olo, Ruth Yothment, Beth Sciackitano, Bianca Cordova



**MERRY CHRISTMAS  
HAPPY HANUKKAH  
AND A HAPPY, HEALTHY,  
LOVE-FILLED NEW YEAR!**





Planting Possibilities  
PO Box 1805  
Highland, IN 46322

## INSIDE...

- >> A review of our 2015 growing season
- >> Educational programs at Campagna Academy
- >> Announcing a tropical spring fundraiser on April 2

- Our special thanks to **Guru Systems, Inc.** of Munster for generously donating their mailing services.

**WWW.PLANTINGPOSSIBILITIES.ORG**



Planting Possibilities is a 501(c)3 nonprofit eligible for company matching programs. Your contribution is tax-deductible in accordance with applicable law.

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P.O. Box 1805 Highland, IN

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Circle one of the following: MasterCard Visa Discover

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\$25
\$50
\$75
\$100
\$250
\$500
\$750
\$1,000



Or donate online at [www.plantingpossibilities.org](http://www.plantingpossibilities.org)

If you would like to support Planting Possibilities with a financial gift, please fill out the following form and mail back to us at the address noted below. We thank you sincerely for your support.