



**Friends of
Loma Vista Farm**



Spring Newsletter 2011



Educational Visits to Loma Vista Farm

By Rita LeRoy

Loma Vista Farm is a sought-out destination for people from all over the San Francisco Bay Area. The Farm's unique school district/community collaborative is open to students of all ages and abilities. Nearly 3,000 students from American Canyon, Antioch, Benicia, Berkeley, Clayton, Concord, Fairfield, Hercules, Pinole, Richmond, St. Helena, Suisun, Vacaville and Vallejo are scheduled to visit this spring. Along



with the students comes a multitude of adults that are always impressed to see such a quality, positive, and educational experience within an urban setting.

Educational activities abound for every age level. The youngest students are preschoolers. The building blocks of a child's education are enhanced through the Farm's experiential, sensory-based activities. These youngest learners are encouraged to touch the plants and the animals, building on the child's vocabulary and sense of wonder.

Older students learn math by counting, weighing, and measuring animals, garden beds, cooking ingredients, pumpkins, etc. They develop a stronger sense of the association of words and writing when they write about the sights, sounds, smells, & tastes of their Farm experience. Students play the role of scientists by observing ladybugs eating aphids with magnifying glasses or observing pond water samples under a microscope and recording data. Students develop an awareness of different cultures by cooking foods that are common dishes in a variety of cultures such as Egg Flower Soup, Homemade Tortillas and making bread from freshly harvested blue corn the way the Native Americans did.

Our goal is to strengthen students' abilities. Developmentally disabled young adult students come to the Farm to participate in job training. Through their time spent at the Farm the students learn skills that enable them to graduate into paid positions within the retail market.

Senior citizens from Merrill Gardens and 4th graders from Elsa Widenmann have partnered to form an Intergenerational Team. The seniors benefit from the experience by sharing their

memories and enjoying time outdoors with the youngsters. The 4th graders learn respect and compassion for their elders and pride in showing off their love and knowledge of the Farm.

Adults are students, also. Community members take advantage of workshops at the Farm on gardening topics that provide them with the skills to grow their own healthy fruits and vegetables at home. Master Gardener trainees are taught the art and science of plant propagation and composting by Farm staff. And college students from Carrington College in Pleasant Hill receive hands-on training by their veterinary instructor on how to give medical care to our Farm animals.

Loma Vista Farm is a resource in sustainable living, nature and nutrition education, and life skills for the entire community. A healthy community is sustained by the health of its individuals. Call the Farm or check out the website for more information on field trips or other group visits.

Susan Schuepbach, Kindergarten Teacher Sheldon Elementary School, Fairfield

Our annual visit to the Farm is by far the most exciting day of each Kindergarten year!! My colleagues and I (teachers in Fairfield) have been bringing our classes to the Farm each year for 20 years. We eagerly anticipate the Farm visit each year . . . and each year we marvel at the Greenhouse, the nesting geese, the peacocks, the baby chicks, the bunnies, and the very friendly goats and other animals, not to mention the sheer delight on our students' faces. Many of our students have not had "hands-on" experiences with animals, nor have they had yard/garden experiences. The visit to Loma Vista Farm is so gratifying and enriching for them!! Our newly adopted reading curriculum includes units on food, animals, community and plants. Our end-of-the-year

visit to Loma Vista Farm will be a perfect experience to tie together what our students have learned in those units, and a very special way to end our Kindergarten year!!





Judi Salvadori, Board President

Volunteering has been my love for years. I have been active with Vallejo and Benicia Soroptimists for 18 years, I worked at the 'Relay for Life', helped in numerous Vallejo Chamber Events including the Ducky Derby and attended and completed the Master Gardener Program. I found Loma Vista Farm and was intrigued.

Years ago I had a daycare and the girls just loved digging and picking the vegetables. Most had never seen where potatoes came from and I had a big hill of them. I love seeing the look on their faces as they eat what they have grown. I have been active with the Loma Vista Farm for 5 years and have found it very rewarding. The Farm is definitely a hidden treasure in Vallejo.

This has been a busy beginning of the year for the Farm as we try to dry out between all the rainstorms and care for the animals. Our **Pasta Feed** was a huge success and it was nice to see so many people attending. We are getting ready for **Spring field trips** as well as our great **Spring Festival** on Saturday May 7th. I love watching families walk around the farm and seeing the kids check on all the animals for any new additions.

Rita is beginning her **Garden Workshops** and will have them ongoing until December. **'Summer Fun on the Farm'** camp begins July 11th and runs weekly through August 5th. See more information about these programs on our website.

It is wonderful to see numerous improvements happening at the Farm. One great change that has come to life this year is **Cal's Barn**. It will be in memory of the previous Caretaker, Cal Calvert. We will keep you updated with the progress of the building. Thank goodness for Ghilotti Construction and the Cement Masons. A special word of appreciation to Arlene Hoffmann for all the hours she devotes to the Farm.

Morris Velasco has agreed to be Vice President of the Farm's Facilities. He will make sure projects are being taken care of and finished in a timely manner. Thank you, Morris.

I would like to thank all the people and groups that have helped with the Farm over the years. A special thank you to Buck Kamphausen and the Rotary Club of Vallejo for all their support. The Vallejo High School's Leos from the Lions Club have been a major asset to the Farm. They work hard at our Pasta feed, the Festivals and do a spectacular job.

The fun is just beginning. We look forward to another great year filled with excitement and good times at the Farm. I look forward to meeting you at all the festivals and events.



Vallejo Rotary Proudly Sponsors Loma Vista Farm's Spring Festival

**Saturday, May 7th, 2011
11-4 PM**

**At Loma Vista Farm
150 Rainier Ave.
In Vallejo
(707) 556-8765
www.lomavistafarm.org**

**Directions:
From Highway 37 take
Fairgrounds Drive North.
Left on Corcoran
and left on Rainier.**

**Free Admission
Activity Tickets .50¢
Food for Sale
Crafts to Make
Plants for Sale
Train Rides
White Elephant Sale**



In Partnership with:



Spring forward to the Annual Loma Vista Farm Spring Festival May 7th, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. This is an opportunity for friends and families to come out to the Farm and participate in Farm crafts and activities. With Mother's Day around the corner, there will be an abundance of plants in the Greenhouse for sale. It's a good time to think about spring planting and making a garden of your own. Don't forget about the fun crafts, train rides, and delicious food the Farm's Spring Festival always offers. Curly and our other adorable animals are looking forward to seeing you there!

Plants for Mother's Day

are available now at the Loma Vista Farm's Greenhouse. We have houseplants, herbs, succulents, vegetable plants, and flowers for sale from 9 to 2:30, Monday through Friday during the school year. Buying a plant at the Farm provides you a special opportunity to support the Farm's Greenhouse and to remember your mother on Mother's Day. The Farm's Greenhouse is used as an educational tool for teaching children hands-on math, science, and reading skills throughout the year. Support the Farm and buy your Mother's Day plant there today!





Denise Bodin Caretaker and Animal Committee Chairman

What about Curly? Students always ask questions about our friend, **Curly**. Curly is an alpaca, not a llama. There are two types of alpacas. The Huacaya alpaca has crimped hair or fiber, growing

vertically next to the skin giving them a fluffy appearance.

The Suri alpaca's hair grows straight and hangs down like soft dreadlocks. As you may guess, our Curly is a Suri alpaca.

Alpacas and Llamas are raised for various reasons. Alpacas are primarily raised for their fleece. A llama, roughly twice the size of an alpaca, has a double fleece, a coarse outer coat and a soft-fine undercoat that is good for spinning into yarn. Llamas have



stronger, longer and straight backs, which makes them a good pack animal.

Both llamas and alpacas are herd animals but llamas are a bit more independent and can often be kept separate from other llamas, while alpacas need to be part of a herd.

Curly is kept with our sheep and thinks of them as his herd. Llamas and alpacas communicate with each other by ear, body and tail positions, shrill alarm calls, or a humming, low-pitched sound. If Curly thinks there is danger, he makes a shrill sound to let his 'herd' know. Curly has learned to recognize many of our neighbors who walk their dogs near the Farm on a regular basis so he does not see them as a threat and doesn't sound the alarm.

One of the things I enjoy about Curly is when I can put him in the pasture with his sheep friends. I love to see him run and kick up his feet! He loves to roll on his back just like the horses do and will sometimes play a game of chase with them too! Curly will occasionally give us a scare by laying down flat and looking like he's dead, but he's just relaxing. I hope this has helped answer some of your questions about our friend Curly the alpaca, and you will come visit him as well as the rest of the wonderful animals at the Farm.

Recycling benefits the Farm when you go to Valcore Recycling, Inc. on 38 Sheridan Street in Vallejo. Take your water bottles and cans to Valcore and mention Loma Vista Farm. The Farm will receive credit for your recycling donations. Want to bring them to the Farm instead? We'll be glad to recycle them for you. Bring your drink pouches (any brand) and ink cartridges to the Farm for recycling, as well. Recycling is good for the environment and good for Loma Vista Farm.



Summer Fun on the Farm at Loma Vista Farm is always filled with hands-on...**FUN!** Once again, Loma Vista Farm will be sponsoring four one-week summer sessions, beginning the week of July 11 and ending the week of August 1st. Open to students who have completed kindergarten through sixth grade, the one-week sessions will again be \$110. Thanks to your donations, scholarships will again be available on a first-come, first-served basis. The program includes learning Farm games, songs and cooking Farm grown food. Other favorite activities include caring for the animals, working in the garden, filling out a journal, painting, and working with wool. As Farmer Lin O'Day said last year, "We look forward to having you join us...Vallejo students are always welcome, but if you have friends from other towns and communities, we'd love to see them, too." Are you too old to be a student on the Farm? We'd love for you to apply as a Junior Counselor! Both student and Junior Counselor applications are available online now at www.lomavistafarm.org. Apply early to secure your spot at 'Summer Fun on the Farm'.



Shopping supports the Farm by using your Lucky SHARES card at the checkout counter of Lucky's, Food Maxx, or Save Mart. A percentage of the amount of your purchases will come back to Loma Vista Farm. When you shop at Raley's, remember your Raley's Quality of Life scrip card, as well. We now have JAMBA JUICE fundraising cards! The money earned from these fundraising cards helps support the ongoing educational programs we offer at Loma Vista Farm. If you don't have a card, call 707-556-8765 or log onto www.lomavistafarm.org for your card today!





Arlene Hoffmann Special Projects, Chair

This past fall we had some wonderful Farm happenings. Christmas Tree and See's candy sales went very well. The day the trees arrived from Silver Bells Tree Farm in Oregon, the IBEW electrical worker volunteers arrived behind the forty-foot tree trailer and helped me and my husband John, unload (200) large Christmas trees along with our son Steve, granddaughter Sara, our Farm Caretaker Denise and another great Farm supporter, Mark. We all froze getting the trees off the truck. They were wet and heavily packed with snow.

I contacted the IBEW electrical workers in October asking for help with electrical problems and a lack of enough electrical outlets. Going into the Thanksgiving season we did not have enough power to do Christmas lights this year. The electrical volunteers ran new ground conduits and installed new electrical outlets to the tree area so we had lights for the trees and for future use when we can afford to add to the new system. This was a large gift to the Farm from these three IBEW workers. They each donated nine hours of their weekend time digging and running conduit so we could have festive lights and an area to plug in a radio to play Christmas music and have hot coffee.

You truly see the support the Farm has when families in cold and driving rain show up to purchase a tree and stay to have hot chocolate or warm cider around a campfire. Children are roasting marshmallows or enjoying walking around saying hello to the animals. The Farm is not just a drive-by place to get a Christmas tree, it is a destination off the beaten path of most main streets. It totally is surprising the number of families who just take a wrapped tree with so much trust, knowing that when it is opened it will be "that" tree. Many of us again made door wreaths and swags for the Christmas Season. Some days we could not keep up with the demand, but our customers came back another day knowing they would be able to purchase a wreath freshly-made.

It is truly a wonderful feeling knowing the Farm and its animals are so loved.

Gypsy and Bobby K. are getting a new horse stall! Our new Horse stall is a pre-fabbed building built by FCP Construction in Sacramento and will be delivered



onsite sometime towards the end of May or June. Retired caretaker, Beverly Calvert made the contact to FCP and the owner agreed to do this for a minimum cost to the Farm. In advance, I want to thank the volunteer labor from the Cement Masons, the Ironworkers Trade Union, a donation of \$5,000 by Buck Kamphousen, and other donations made in memory of former Caretaker, Cal Calvert, to have this building completed. Gypsy and Bobby K. will be so happy to have a new, dry and warm stall.

Again, thank you one and all for your continued community support.

Thank you, Phyllis Malicki

Phyllis Malicki very kindly came to the Pasta Feed Fundraiser to enjoy the good food, entertainment and to deliver a check donation from the 'Gem and Mineral Club'. She talked about her



experiences with the Farm and her reason for supporting it. In response to a request, she wrote down her feelings she has for the Farm.

"While attending the March Pasta Feed Fundraiser for Loma Vista Farm, I wondered how many children we know have ever heard a chicken 'cluck', a cow 'moo' or a sheep 'baa'. They have never been able to feed a real live goat. I thought of how much

of our children's time is spent "plugged in" to a cold screen. They can't touch the image to see how it really feels, smells or tastes. Children are unable to find out what wool is like or how a feather feels-is it soft or smooth? Where does our food come from? When is an orange ready to eat, or is a tomato always red? These questions can all be answered by taking a trip to a very special place called Loma Vista Farm. A visit will also teach the children how important it is to be kind to all critters and learn ways to help take care of our environment."

Thank you Phyllis, as well as all of our supporters and volunteers who give to the Farm their valuable time and donations. Because of you, our children are able to discover all of the educational opportunities available at Loma Vista Farm. It is truly a wonderful experience for you and your family to visit again and again!

Mission Statement

The Friends of Loma Vista Farm is a 501(c)3 organization that exists to support the Loma Vista Farm and Garden Education Center, an outdoor classroom which provides hands-on educational activities involving plants and animals for children of all ages and abilities, increasing their knowledge of nature and nutrition while enhancing academic learning, eco-literacy and psychosocial development.

Contact Information

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