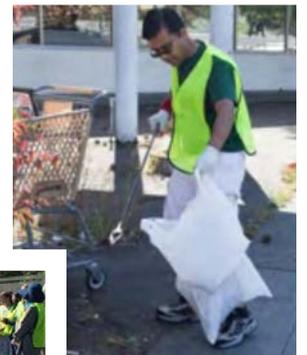


Amma's 60th Birthday Litter Pick Up Work Party cont.



Interfaith Day of Service at Marra Farm

by Maheswari



In support of the Interfaith Day of Service, hosted by John Hale of the Interfaith Community, on September 14th, Mechas, Visala and I volunteered for the work-day at Marra Farms. I am embarrassed to admit that I had never heard of South Park and I was astounded to hear the statistics of poverty and the needs of the people living in this

area. It was amazing and inspiring to see a flourishing farm, greenhouses, bee hives, children's garden, worm bins, and community gardens in the middle of an industrial area.

Together with members of other groups, we cleaned up several long garden beds and planted lettuce, onions, and spinach. It was fun sharing stories, talking about GreenFriends and Amma, and hearing about what others in the larger community are doing. With dirty hands and dusty jeans, at the end of the day we all felt a sense of accomplishment and joy in having served Amma and our larger community while planting healthy vegetables to feed those in need. Over and over again I was reminded of Amma saying, "Compassion for the poor is our duty to God."

Although the day was cloudy, working at Marra Farms inspired me and it brought hope and sunshine into my life. It warmed my heart to see the community gardens that were planted and nurtured by the Mein and Latino families. There were many plant varieties I had never seen. The tall groupings of yellow sunflowers towered like cheerful guardians throughout the gardens.

The scale of work on the farm is substantial and most of it is done by volunteers. If you would like to volunteer at Marra

Farms in the future, please send me an email and maybe we can go out together. Maheswari1@msn.com

About Marra Farm

Marra Farm is a model urban community farm engaging people in sustainable agriculture and education while enhancing local food security. Tucked into the South Park neighborhood of Seattle, it has 4 acres of historic preserved farmland.

Community Served & Needs Addressed

- **Poverty:** South Park is an area of high poverty, with very few affordable fresh produce sources. About 12.5% of South Park households live below the poverty line, and 85% of children at South Park's Concord Elementary School qualify for the free or reduced school lunch program. According to 2000 Census information, the population is 37% Hispanic, 43.7% White, 14.1% Asian and 8.4% Black – and 47.1% speak a language other than English at home.
- **Pollution:** South Park is one of the most polluted areas in our region, making the pristine farmland at Marra Farm a particularly vital community resource. A freeway and a large highway isolate South Park from other, nearby residential neighborhoods of the city. Surrounded by industrial land, South Park includes an unusually high number of industrial sites for a residential neighborhood.
- **Food insecurity:** Access to nutritious food, particularly fresh produce, is very limited in this community. While two small mini-groceries exist, they have limited offerings of fruits and vegetables. South Park has no supermarkets, and Seattle's recent growth in farmers markets has not yet reached the neighborhood.

Giving Garden

Marra Farm generates tons of fresh, organic produce each year. In 2012, volunteers helped us grow more than **17,000 pounds at Marra Farm!** In addition to South Park residents growing food for their own families, the food grown at Marra Farm goes to local residents and the senior lunch program through the Providence Regina House

Interfaith Day of Service at Marra Farm

cont.

Food Bank, Mien senior citizens, and Concord Elementary School students and their families. Also, through a Seattle Parks and Green Spaces Levy, the adjacent property was transformed into the **Marra-Desimone Park** in 2009.

Children's Garden

Lettuce Link maintains a Children's Garden at Marra Farm where since the year 2000, they have facilitated a series of gardening and nutrition programs for children in South Park. The children walk to the farm, garden in their own plots, taste and cook fresh vegetables, and learn about their environment through scientific exploration and outdoor-themed games. At the end of the class series, children take home their harvests to share with their families.

The Children's Gardening and Nutrition program connects students to their food, encourages them to try new recipes, and cultivates healthy eating habits. Moreover, students gain self-confidence and pride by working together to grow their own food and reap the harvest.



Litter Stories and Reflections



From Stanley at North Cove:

I am sure my Amma's Birthday litter pick up was much different than yours. I was alone (along with more people on the beach than any day this summer) and picked up two big black bags of garbage... including probably 1,000 dolleros worth of fireworks "bones"...lots of really big fireworks remains and more garbage than our beach has seen in a long time..... 47 people must have made a nice dent in the litter in Rainier Valley..... thanks for organizing the work party... Stanley

From Paige in Seattle:

Erin, Shayla, Lorelei, and I spent an hour cleaning up Rainier Vista with our community on Saturday. We'll be doing it once a month. They don't separate the butts, but I couldn't help myself! I left a bag of them on your porch yesterday - I bet you were wondering where they came from.)

Important Information



This image is of a 15 ton glob of slime the size of a bus. It was made from cooking grease and wet wipes that were flushed down the toilets of London. <http://www.newser.com/story/172094/15-ton-fatberg-nearly-caused-sewage-explosion.html>. It took a crew of eight several days to blast through the glob. If it had not been found and demolished, raw sewage would have started coming out of London's manholes.