

Happy New Year, Everyone!

Wow, what a year it's been. Before 2011 takes a bow and we belly up to 2012, I thought I'd bring our growing community of friends and supporters up-to-date on what took place this past wondrous year.

Our friends in Ohio will recall that it was a bit more than two years ago that a vision in my sleep woke me up and suggested I find a way to plant a round garden. My brain wanted to know "why round?" Turns out our Native elders grew that way out of respect for the power of the Medicine Wheel. Local legend had it that an Indian Chief's grave was found underneath the house Elizabeth and I were living in at the time so, who knows, there may have been some spiritual power at work. Anyway, one mysterious thing after another kept happening and Heirloom Peace Gardens was born. It's become a great deal more since then, but I'll get to that in a minute.

Our original Ohio group kept the love alive this year by re-planting the first Medicine Wheel garden behind Kircher's Flowers. There were challenges, as there are every year, so kudos to you Ohioans for keeping the spirit growing. Phil and Diane Sherry were inspired to spread the green to several public places besides their organic family farm and influenced many people about the wisdom of growing local.

One job change later and Elizabeth and I found ourselves migrating to Flint, Michigan, one year ago December 28. Along with us came the novel idea of growing gardens in a truly community way, but also the need to teach children living in a violent city how to live more peaceful lives. We established the Peace Cranes and Peace Gardens project at the Boys & Girls Club of Flint. We started out teaching a group of about 12 kids how to fold origami peace cranes, how to live more peacefully, and how to overcome food insecurity by planting their own food, while also gaining a better appreciation for Native American culture. Their 1000 peace cranes are now an art exhibit traveling to several different local establishments starting last Nov. 29 until next summer. A smaller version of the 2'X4' poster that is part of the exhibit is attached.

The administration of the Boys & Girls Club were so taken by the results of this project that they have requested that we build a large high tunnel greenhouse and expand the project for next year. We'll also add a new group of kids to create a thousand more peace cranes and spread the love around town. We'd like to read in the news how young people are folding peace cranes and planting gardens rather than wielding guns and knives.

Elizabeth is working on researching and publishing results of the project and will make presentations at different conferences coming up in 2012. Tim has been raising an army of volunteers to help build the greenhouse and teach others how to grow plants next season. The Boys & Girls Club has raised the revenue to make this all happen. Meanwhile, a local elementary school would like to start a similar project there next year as well. To say we'll need a lot of volunteers would be a huge understatement (maybe just in time to add to your list of New Year's re-soul-utions...)

In so many ways, for so many people, it's been a tremendously difficult year of living. In the face of such challenge, Elizabeth and I are grateful to inspire as many others as possible not to lose sight of that most positive particle of the human spirit called hope. We hope you'll be here with us for another year of growing strong. Send us a note and share a good memory from 2011 which, with your OK, we'll post on our new website (or post one yourself once we get our blog site going). May 2012 be a better year for us all. Migwetch (thank you) for all your love and support!

Community Farmer Tim

See our new website under construction at: <http://HeirloomPeaceGardens.weebly.com>

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Heirloom Peace Gardens

Tim & Elizabeth Collardey

"We sow peace; we grow community!"

<http://picasaweb.google.com/114202671842016157810/>

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Tim Collardey Co-Founder, Heirloom Peace Gardens

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