

# DISMAS House

## From the Directors

We are delighted with the arrival of a new llama, Nina, at the Dismas Family Farm. Nina's arrival, the sound of new lambs bleating in their pens, and the budding plants in the greenhouse, remind us that winter is fading, and that spring, the season of hope, is finally here.

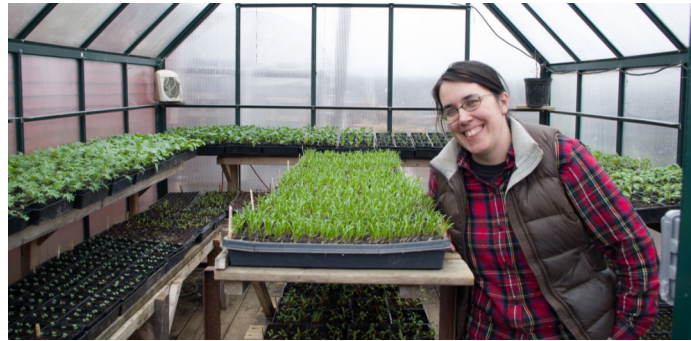
At Dismas, a wonderful community of church volunteers, college students, residents and staff, come together to create opportunity and healing for men putting their lives back on track after long battles with homelessness, incarceration and addiction.

It is with this dynamic support that we have been able to open the doors of Dismas House, the Father John Brooks House and the Dismas Family Farm. Our BAR None Program continues to provide civil legal support to Dismas residents and members of the wider community. This year also marks the fifth year of the Westborough Farmers' Market, founded and operated by Dismas House.

Please stop by and visit us at the farmers' market this year, or spend the day with us at our annual fall harvest festival. Please visit us on Facebook for updates on Nina and all members of the Dismas family. Thank you for your support and for helping us plant the seeds of hope in our community!

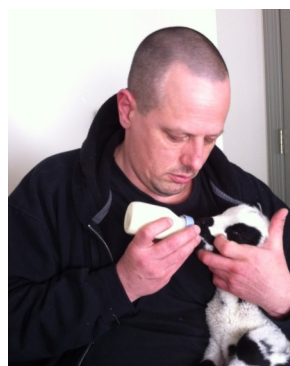
*Colleen and Dave*

## Planting the Seeds of Hope



*By Jen Burt*

As the farm steward at the Dismas Family Farm for three years, I have seen the healing power of farm work. For the residents of Dismas,



they each have the chance to contribute to the farm in their own way. Each resident is responsible for a barn chore; collecting and preparing eggs for sale, caring for our pigs, chickens, turkeys, sheep, llama, and dog. Caring for another living creature is restorative for many. And the residents here take pride in producing goods to be sold at the farmers' market, craft fairs, and through our CSA program. There is deep value in doing work that has a tangible outcome and

maintains the land and home where you live.

In addition, being connected to nature is new for many of our residents and the peacefulness is a welcome change. Many men show up here and tell me, "I can't plant that, I'll kill it." Over time they learn the basics of vegetable farming and gain confidence. Not everyone becomes a master gardener but they all tend vegetables from the field to the plate. Watching vegetables grow from a tiny seed over the course of a season is powerful. It teaches patience and observation. As is said in recovery, you have to live life on life's terms. Farming reinforces this. We plan for each season to go a certain way and then weather, bugs, physical limitations, and group dynamics present challenges for us to overcome.



Donate online at [www.dismashouse.org](http://www.dismashouse.org)

# Eating Green...

## The Dismas Family Farm CSA



A great way to support Dismas House is by joining the Dismas Family Farm CSA. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a collaboration between consumers and farmers, where consumers agree to buy a 'share' of a farm's harvest. For twenty weeks, from mid-June through mid-October, Dismas CSA members receive a weekly share of the best food that the Dismas Family Farm produces, including over 50 varieties of vegetables, farm fresh eggs, and pork and lamb when available. In addition, CSA members receive weekly recipes, fun facts about the vegetables in the share, and news from the farm.

For more information or to register online, visit [www.dismashouse.org](http://www.dismashouse.org). Please feel free to call Dismas Farm Steward, Jen Burt at (508) 882-0000 with any questions. Thanks and happy eating!

### Dismas Board of Directors

- Jill Sullivan, President
- Gail Parker, LICSW, Vice-President
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- Jay Broadhurst, MD
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- Paul Gallagher
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- Michael Kenny
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- Jay Sullivan
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# ...and Going Green

## Green Energy Initiatives at Dismas!

Dismas House continues to implement new strategies for reducing both our utility bills and our carbon footprint at our three homes. We have survived the rough winter at the farm thanks in part to our new pellet-fired furnace, which kept the house warm. Our new solar panels we put on the roof at all the homes have significantly reduced our bills and even produced a surplus during the summer! We have appreciated student interns from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, who have helped develop and analyze all aspects of these energy-saving projects.

We will continue this work, and now work closely with our friends at the Oak Hill CDC to host the Worcester Green Low-Income Housing Coalition, a new, community-wide effort to take the lessons learned from Dismas' experience in energy efficiency, and help other local, non-profits interested in solar power, insulation, pellet-fired biomass heat, and water-saving technology. Many thanks to all of our partners who have made these improvements possible!



### Save the Date!

The annual Dismas Family Farm Fall Harvest Festival will be held on Saturday, October 3rd, from 12—4 PM. Please join us for a day of good food, good fun, good company, with hayrides, games and live music all to benefit the Dismas Family Farm!

# Heard Around Dismas. . .

Before, I had no pride, dignity, self-respect. . . my health got so bad I would barely work a day. . . I then found myself homeless and broke. Being at the farm has built my confidence—working in the garden, barn and woodshop. I feel I have the ability to actually hold a job and do it well. I'm getting a sense of pride back in my life.

-Dismas Family Farm resident

Dismas Family Farm has provided me a break from the business world and offered a rewarding personal challenge. At Dismas, I am not there to manage the issues, lead change or fix problems. I am simply present with the rhythms of the farm, the men, their problems and concerns. The experience is teaching me to open my heart to feel compassion, forgiveness, and humility. . . I do know that I am a better person for getting to know the men at Dismas.

-Greg Howes, Ignatian Volunteer Corps volunteer at the Dismas Family Farm

Working and giving back to the community is what I wanted to do after graduating from Holy Cross. Dismas gave me an opportunity to help and support men who suffer from substance abuse. It makes me happy to know that I have been a great assistance to a social group who has been greatly stigmatized by society.

-Erick Diaz, one of two Holy Cross Fellows completing a year of live-in, volunteer service at Dismas programs



## By the Numbers

- # Dismas House, the Dismas Family Farm and the Father John Brooks House are home each day to 30 homeless and former prisoners trying to rebuild their lives.
- # Over 300 volunteers, comprising 50 different families and church and student groups, prepare and share dinner at Dismas programs each year.
- # Dismas Family Farm residents grow over 20,000 pounds of fresh vegetables each year.
- # The Dismas Family Farm raises 30 free-range turkeys each year at Thanksgiving.
- # The farm has 1 llama, named Nina.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Dismas House of Massachusetts  
Post Office Box 30125  
Worcester, MA 01603

## Dismas Wish List

- ✓ New or gently-used twin-sized sheets and blankets. New pillows and bath towels.
- ✓ Laundry detergent, toilet paper, paper towels and other cleaning supplies.
- ✓ Gardening and lawn tools to help on the farm.
- ✓ Men's work boots and sneakers.
- ✓ Fuel gift cards to help with transportation costs.

Please contact us at (508) 799-9389 to arrange drop-off or pick-up of donations. Thank you!

## Ways to Get Involved

- ✓ Serve a meal at one of our programs.
- ✓ Spend the day tending the animals and crops at the Dismas Family Farm.
- ✓ Mentor residents going back to school and work.
- ✓ Help residents with resume writing.
- ✓ Help coordinate donation and supply drives.



Please call us at (508) 799-9389 to learn more about our rewarding volunteer opportunities.

Donate online at [www.dismashouse.org](http://www.dismashouse.org)  
We appreciate your support!