



## And on this farm there was a new family

by Christiana Peterson

Nearly a year ago, we left our rented home in the middle of Washington DC, packed up a Penske and made an arduous road trip with Matthew's mother and our baby daughter Neva in tow. We were a little surprised at ourselves and a little numb to our decision. All we knew is that we weren't content in DC. I was a lonely new mother trying to make close friends with moms who worked full-time and with the lovely people at our Lutheran church who seemed to be mostly satisfied with seeing each other just once a week. Matthew had a good job at a non-profit but it felt a little like drudgery to him.

He came home one evening after walking our dog in our DC neighborhood and I could tell he'd been



Neva in her Easter best, with some of her new neighbors

pondering our future. "Let's move to a commune," he said.

I raised an eyebrow and I think I shocked him a little by saying, "Okay, as long as it's a Christian commune."

We'd been craving the same things: deep relationships and something out of the ordinary, something extraordinary, somewhere to grow and serve and teach our child what is important in life. We wanted her to know the life that humans have known for centuries, a life close to the dirt and potent smells, where she knows which season a zucchini squash grows in and what an ear of corn tastes like fresh from the stalk. We wanted her to get muddy and snowed on, to be hot in summer and cold in winter, to feed chickens and pick so many strawberries that her fingers were raw and red with the juice and her grinning lips were stained.

We wanted to be able to call her to dinner from the woods and the creek.

But most of all, we wanted her to know God, to live in a community that helped her be a faithful member of creation, to love and know her neighbors and to be known and loved by them.

So we moved to Plow Creek. It's not a commune, but it is the kind of close-knit Christian community we wanted to experience.

Life is not perfect in any community. Knowing our neighbors, I mean, really knowing them means disagreeing with them, sharing in their sorrows, suffering their idiosyncrasies and praying that they will suffer ours. But what a rich life we are living. We don't take it for granted that we are able to feed Neva the best food and that she is excited about the chickens and cows in her picture books because they are right outside her

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## And on this farm (continued)

door. We know that God is changing us and growing our relationships with each other and with people at Plow Creek. We feel loved and cared for and we are really beginning to be known by our community. That is what we wanted and it is more beautiful than we could've imagined. •



Look for Matthew at farmers' markets, and read Christiana's writing at [andonthisfarmtherewasa.blogspot.com](http://andonthisfarmtherewasa.blogspot.com)

## News From The Farm

by Matthew Peterson

The 2009 farm season was laid to rest last December in the ice and snow as we spent four long days putting last years strawberry plants to bed for the winter under a thick layer of straw. The plants were recently awakened this spring to brilliant sunshine and an especially warm spring. It looks like the warm temperatures will have the strawberries coming a little earlier than normal, probably starting in late May, so keep up to date on field conditions on our website and answering machine (815-646-4862).

When you do come out to pick your strawberries this year don't be surprised to be greeted with a carrier, a strawberry flat, and flock of honking geese. If you have spent much time on this farm you probably have noticed that growing crops the way we do, without the use of herbicides or pesticides, requires a lot of weeding. And while the weeding will continue, this year we are enlisting the help of the Chinese Goose to help out with the job. On April 27th fifty-two goslings arrived at the farm which will soon be put out to pasture the weeds by

eating grass and young weeds, but leaving the strawberry plants alone. In addition to helping with the weeding, the geese will also provide healthy and delicious meat come Fall. If you are interested in ordering a goose for Thanksgiving or Christmas, let us know and we will reserve one for you.

Last year was a great year for blueberries and we have high hopes again this year for a good crop. One visible change blueberry U-pickers will notice this year is a new picnic area under the big, shady oak at the top of the hill. The spot should be a great place for a picnic after a long morning of picking blueberries, so don't forget your lunch.

One exciting new development for the farm this year is the addition of a new farmers' market in Lombard, a suburb west of Chicago. The farm already makes a trip to the Chicago area every Wednesday to deliver weekly produce boxes to our CSA customers there, so we decided to combine the trip with a new market that is beginning in Lombard.

The busyness of planting and preparing the land for another year of growing was abruptly interrupted on the evening of May 8th when a fire broke out in the northwest corner of the Prairie House, a duplex that was constructed by members of this community in 1992 and was the newest house to be built in the community. Fire departments from nine towns came to help fight the fire which quickly spread throughout the house. The fire was a tragic loss for the Graham family who lived there and lost nearly all their possessions, and also for the community as a whole. We thank God that no one was seriously injured and pray for rebuilding and rebirth, both for the Grahams and the Plow Creek Community.

In a recent attempt to find out how long this farm has been in business I discovered, amazingly, that this farm has been growing food for the public since 1975. It is remarkable to think of all the people who have had the opportunity to work, steward, and find sustenance from this piece of land for the last 35 years. We again look forward and thank God for another year of working and harvesting this land and thank you for your support of the work we do. We look forward to seeing you in June. •

**Naturally raised, grass-fed  
Beef is available**

**Now taking orders for 1/4, 1/2, and whole steer**

# 2010 Crop Calendar

## Strawberries

**late May-June**

Our kick off crop: Pick your own (PYO), preorder 8lb or more, pick up a quart or two at farmers' market, or at our farm stand. Don't miss these "Jewels."

## Blueberries

**mid June-July**

Before we're done seeing red in June, blueberries bring a new color to the scene about the last week of June. PYO is the best, easy picking, no bending down! During peak season you can fill your bucket at one bush! You can also pick these up by the pint at our farmers' markets.

## Lettuce / Spinach / Sugar snap peas

**June**

The early veggies will tickle your palate. Sold at markets.

## Blackberries

**mid July-mid Aug**

This juicy fruit is worth the thorny pursuit. Melts in your mouth when picked dead ripe (glossy black and falls easily off into your hand with just a gentle tug).

## Raspberries

**Aug-Sept**

Black raspberries start the season around the first or second week in July. Then the red ones start trickling in and peak around the middle of August. From then on you can PYO till frost in the fall. Also to be found by the pint at our farm stand and at markets. Will take special orders.

## Green Beans

**July-Sept**

The gold standard of vegetables available for most of the summer. Buy them by the pound at markets. Larger orders are accepted as well.

## Bell Peppers

**mid July till frost**

These produce steadily through out the summer in various shapes sizes and colors. A new variety, "Gypsy," is known for its flavor when red ripe. Pick up a couple at market for stuffing, or order by the full or half bushel towards the end of the season for preserving

## Muskmelon

**mid July-mid Aug**

The earliest of the vine fruits. Ask for "Hannah's Choice" for an exceptionally delicious melon.

## Sweet Corn

**mid July-Aug**

It's not summer till you've had corn on the cob. And you won't be disappointed with the flavor and freshness of ours; we only sell corn picked that same day. At markets or our stand. We take special orders for 10 dozen or more.



Oscar Mendez, a second year farm intern, plants strawberries. He is joined this summer by Bruce Schoenwein, April Kunieda, Kate Bierma, and Jake Mau.

For more information on our farm intern program, call or visit our website: [plowcreekfarm.com/intern.htm](http://plowcreekfarm.com/intern.htm)

## Tomatoes

**mid July-Sept**

We offer some of the earliest and tastiest tomatoes around. Mouth-watering cherries, flavorful heirlooms, and red ripe slicers. At market or by special order.

## Watermelon

**mid Aug-Sept**

It's hard to pass these up in the heat of summer. And we'll have them in all shapes and sizes, from the small yellow ones to the larger red juicy seedless variety. Buy them at our farmers markets or at our farm stand.

## Potatoes

**mid June-fall**

We start digging these buried treasures around the last week of June. Buy this staple food by the pound at markets. Look for some new colors this season.

## Popcorn

**All year**

Once again we're growing popcorn. We have last year's crop cleaned and available for purchase. Unique to the popcorn line-up is the Muletail, a small kernel corn with an exquisite flavor.

Full crop list & latest info: [www.plowcreekfarm.com](http://www.plowcreekfarm.com)

**...and don't forget:**

homemade bread, rolls,  
and cookies from

**Plow Creek Bakery**

at market, or call to order:

**(815) 646-4851**



## 2010 Market Locations

### Market Barn at the Farm

Mon - Sat: 9AM - 5PM

### Darius Miller Park, Princeton

Tue: 3:30 - 6:30PM

Sat: 8:30AM - 1PM (starts May 22)

### Peoria Riverfront Market

Sat: 8AM - noon (starts June 5)

### Lombard Market at Yorktown Mall

Wed: 3 - 7PM (starts Jun 9)

17th Annual  
Strawberry Festival  
Tiskilwa West Park  
Sat June 12th, 11 to 2



## 2010 U-Pick Schedule

All schedules subject to change due to weather, shortage or abundance.

Daily updates at [www.plowcreekfarm.com](http://www.plowcreekfarm.com)

### Strawberry U-Pick (late May-June)

Mon - Sat 7AM - Noon; Tue, Thu 4 - 8PM

### Blueberry U-Pick (late June-July)

Mon, Wed, Thu, Sat 7AM - 2PM; Tue, Thu 4 - 8PM

### Blackberry U-Pick (July-Aug)

follows blueberry schedule

### Raspberry U-Pick (Aug-Sept)

Mon - Sat 7AM - 7PM

### Concord Grape U-pick (Sept)

by appointment

We offer U-Pick volume discounts on >50 lbs. strawberries, or >10 pts. raspberries/blackberries

## 2010 Ready-Pick Schedule

### Strawberry Order Pickup:

Mon, Tue, Thu, Sat 9:30AM - Noon at the farm

For Info and Ordering, call

**(815) 646-4862**

visit [www.plowcreekfarm.com](http://www.plowcreekfarm.com)

or e-mail: [orders@plowcreek.org](mailto:orders@plowcreek.org)



**closed  
Sunday**

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