

Growing Benevolent Communities 2023-2026 Programs

The following programs are themes suggested by recent Alumni of Reconnecting with Purpose. The descriptions and facilitator groups may change as our new practitioners emerge from the Practitioners Preparation Program with sharper focus and new collaborations.

Earthworkers: Grieving Loss, Remembering Reverence

*We are part of a larger reality,
a vast and vibrant community
of meadow and mountain,
water and sky, a great rush of life
rich with possibility but also
bounded by necessity.
All things come and go.
Whether this be a formula for
weary resignation or
for tranquil acceptance of the inevitable,
the most we can hope for
is that all things come
and all things go, over and over again.*

~John Mogaabgab

For farmers and earth workers, erratic weather and climate uncertainty mean more than resilient production practices and disaster response plans. Caring for and cultivating living beings during extreme heat, drought, flooding and freezing creates stress, helplessness and anxiety. In this program, farmers and earthworkers are invited to step away from the pressures and demands of economic production in these highly volatile times to immerse in the restorative energy and wisdom of nature. As we give our attention and gratitude to the earth, we will also explore loss and grief for the death and change taking place outside and inside of us. Through unearthing the fear and anxiety in our work, we open cracks for the light and energy of change to emerge.

Facilitators (Subject to change)

Jamillah El Bey (She/Her), Courage & Renewal Practitioner

Kate Cowie-Haskell (They/She), Farm Commons

Violet Stone (She/Her), Cornell Small Farms Program, Northeast SARE

Cultivating Farm Wellness

Physical health doesn't exist apart from the health of other things. Health ultimately involves the community, and the community ultimately involves the place and natural life of that place, so that real health is harmony with the world. – Wendell Berry

How do we feed and care for ourselves while we feed others? What types of practices and connections support us to be our best selves in the challenging work of managing a farm business? In this farmer-centered retreat experience, we'll consider how we cultivate wellbeing for ourselves and for those we work alongside on the farm. Retreat programming will consist of a series of full-group and small-group

conversations, space for personal reflection, communal meals, nature walks, yoga and meditation. This

retreat is intended for commercial farmers and farm employees who have at least three years of experience managing or working on a crew on all types of operations in the Northeast.

Facilitators (Subject to change)

Teresa McMahon, Farm Net Consultant

Ben Crockett, Berkshire Ag Ventures

Violet Stone (She/Her), Cornell Small Farms Program, Northeast SARE

Toward Benevolent Agricultural Community

“As we start to really get to know others, as we begin to listen to each other’s stories, things begin to change. We begin the movement from exclusion to inclusion, from fear to trust, from closedness to openness, from judgment and prejudice to forgiveness and understanding. It is a movement of the heart.” Jean Vanier

In this Retreat, agricultural service providers, change-makers, earth workers and activists of all ages and backgrounds are invited to explore identity and integrity in the context of our urban or rural agricultural communities. We will engage in whole-hearted conversations while exploring how pro-social relationship building tools and concepts will support us in successfully engaging in racial dialogue, removing fear and anxiety, while building confidence, consciousness, and compassion. This Retreat is for anyone in the sustainable agriculture community seeking to create safer, more benevolent agricultural communities in New York for diverse people to live and work.

Facilitators (Subject to change)

Pork Rhyne, Pork Rhyne Consulting

Jawhara Taitt, Urban Grower & Herbalist

Meliq August, Revolutionary Gardener, Multi-Medium Artist, & Radical Educator

Violet Stone (She/Her), Cornell Small Farms Program, Northeast SARE

Reconnecting with Purpose for Agricultural Changemakers (an abridged version of our former 5 month program)

As farm and food system educators or change makers, we face enormous challenges to our efforts to support improved livelihoods of those we serve. Although we may work hard toward positive change and genuine service, our goals can become daunting. There are times we find our energy, commitment and spirit depleted. This Retreat offers a welcoming and trustworthy space for participants to pause, reflect, search and connect with a broad community of others working in the farm and food system. Through a curated arc of themes and conversations, we explore challenges, learn how to "live our questions", and uncover a sense of clarity and direction in our work and lives.

to step away from day-to-day work to pause, reflect, search and connect with a broad community of others working in the farm and food system. In this 2.5 day Retreat, facilitators foster a welcoming and

trustworthy space for participants to explore challenges, to "live their questions", and to uncover a sense of clarity and direction in their work and lives.

Facilitators (Subject to change)

Himaneer Gupta-Carlson, associate professor Empire State College, Squashville Farm

Bev Abplanalp, Circle of Friends Farm, Gayogohono Learning Project

Violet Stone, Cornell Small Farms Program, Northeast SARE

Cultivando Bienestar (Cultivating Wellness en español)

La salud física no existe aparte de la salud de otras cosas. La salud en última instancia involucra a la comunidad, y la comunidad en última instancia involucra el lugar y la vida natural de ese lugar, de modo que la verdadera salud es la armonía con el mundo. – Wendell Berry

¿Cómo nos alimentamos y nos cuidamos mientras alimentamos a los demás? ¿Qué tipos de prácticas y conexiones nos ayudan a ser lo mejor de nosotros mismos en el desafiante trabajo de administrar un negocio agrícola? En esta experiencia de retiro centrada en el agricultor, consideraremos cómo cultivamos el bienestar para nosotros y para aquellos con quienes trabajamos en la granja. La programación del retiro consistirá en una serie de conversaciones en grupos pequeños y completos, espacio para la reflexión personal, comidas comunitarias, caminatas por la naturaleza, yoga y meditación. Este retiro está destinado a agricultores comerciales y empleados agrícolas que tengan al menos tres años de experiencia en la gestión o trabajo en una cuadrilla en todo tipo de operaciones en el noreste.

Facilitators (Subject to change)

Mildred Avarado, Futuro en Ag Program Leader

Tim Shenk, Futuro en Ag's bilingual communications specialist