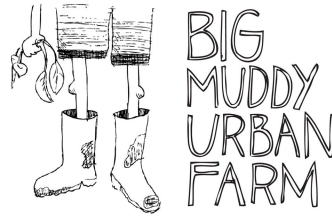


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(402) 213-9646
info@bigmuddyurbanfarm.org



Innovative program provides hands-on experience to aspiring farmers
Big Muddy Urban Farm opens application to Aspiring Farmer Residency

August 1st, 2016 Omaha, NE - Applications are now available for Big Muddy Urban Farm's inaugural Aspiring Farmer Residency program. The Aspiring Farmer Residency is a year-long program supporting five resident farmers with a place to live while they learn how to develop a sustainable market farm business plan and grow crops on several city plots of land.

Big Muddy sprouted the residency out of 4 years of growing for a community supported agriculture (CSA) program and seeing the success of former farmers go on to realize their own rural operations. The residency house, located at 3322 Burt Street, is within walking distance to all of the seven farm plots in the Gifford Park Neighborhood. Residents receive room and board for their performance of part-time fieldwork hours and educational requirements like record keeping and establish farmer mentorship experiences.

"The residency's focus on education is two-fold" says Brent Lubbert, Big Muddy Urban Farm Executive Director. "It provides a high-energy atmosphere where aspiring farmers can learn from shared experiences and make decisions on a small-scale farm operation allowing them to start realizing what kind of farm they could grow into and what kind of skills they should be focusing on to achieve their dreams. Consumers also receive educational benefits from the proximity of the farm close to their everyday activities, where they can ask questions about the food system, the work involved and begin to make more informed purchasing decisions."

Applications for the residency close October 1st, 2016 with a selection process concluding at a Big Muddy Urban Farm fundraising banquet in late fall. Residents will move into the house in January 2017 to begin farm planning for the season. For more information or to apply please visit www.bigmuddyurbanfarm.org.

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About.

Big Muddy Urban Farm is a non-profit educational farm located in the heart of Omaha that offers a year-long residency program for aspiring farmers and an in-depth academy series for gardeners. The farm started in winter of 2011 and now tend to 7 plots in the Gifford Park Neighborhood providing local and diverse fruits, vegetables and herbs as well as sharing skills and resources with our community.

Urban farm project heading for Midtown



By Collin Ruane

Published: Dec. 21, 2016 at 11:14 PM CST



Forget big fields and acres of land, this residency program is set in the heart of Omaha. The Big Muddy Urban Farm is fixed inside a Midtown neighborhood. It's an opportunity to learn about farming and the business behind it. Taylor Jespersen is one of a select few residents ready to take part in the aspiring farmer residency program.

"The urban farming thing is very new to me, but I'm excited to see what that looks like," said Jespersen.

For nearly an entire year, he'll be learning all about the business behind farming.

"The first few months will be just us building the business plan, the crop plan, what we want to grow. Then we'll move into the actual process of doing that," said Jespersen.

The transition to get Big Muddy Urban Farm program to where it is now didn't happen overnight. Brent Lubbert, director of the program, says it's evolved from its original plans.

"It was about an 11-mile radius when we started, but now it's about like less than half a mile," said Brent Lubbert.

All the farming can now be done within walking distance from the two homes.

Lubbert said residents will not only learn the importance of farming but help them develop the broader vision.

"You're deep into planning on what kind of seeds you will get, where are they going to get planted, who is the food going to get sold to," said Lubbert.

While Jespersen says he has a background in agriculture, he's also ready to learn a lot about what he calls a changing market.

"The more I've read, the more I've talked with other new farmers, I think this really is kind of the direction of the future for agriculture," Jespersen said.

With just a couple weeks until move-in day he's ready to seize every moment he can in this experience.

"This is kind of the only way a lot of us can get our feet under us and get that practical experience," he said.

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Big Muddy offers agricultural opportunity with new program

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Updated: 5:14 PM CDT Sep 17, 2016

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 **Camila Orti**
Reporter



OMAHA, Neb. — A local nonprofit is bringing the farm to the city and is looking for aspiring farmers to join its effort.

On the Big Muddy Urban Farm, the farming itself is small but the mission is big.

“How do we go about (gaining) access to land for folks who want to get into local food, because we have nobody getting into farming?” Big Muddy Executive Director Brent Lubbert said.

Lubbert wants to spread interest in agriculture through the metro. The Aspiring Farmer Program would board five people in a home near 33rd and Burt streets, which is still under renovation, and guide them through a yearlong crash course in starting a farming business.

Those selected for the residency program will work and learn in urban plots of land to get a hands-on experience with farming.

“You are expected to work 20 hours of field work and there’s also educational requirements involved,” Lubbert said.



Besides doing the work, the program is free and Lubbert said applications are coming in from as far as New York.

“We’re getting applicants from across the states,” Lubbert said.

He hopes the applicants take the experience they gain and pursue a career in farming.

To learn more, there will be an open house Sunday from noon to 3 p.m. at 3320 Burt St.

Or visit <https://www.bigmuddyurbanfarm.org/>.

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LIVING

Omaha World-Herald
SATURDAY, APRIL 14, 2018
SECTION 4

REVIEW: 'SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE'

When: Now through May 6
Where: Omaha Community Playhouse, 1800 S. 16th St.
Showtimes: 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays
Tickets: \$22 adults, \$22 students (except for \$14 adults and \$12 students on Wednesdays). Prices subject to change based on dates, seat location and demand.
Information: 402-353-0800 or omahaplayhouse.com

Plenty to love about Playhouse production

From start to finish, 'Shakespeare in Love' is a charming, magical show

By Bruce Farnham
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

The first indication that you'll enjoy "Shakespeare in Love" at the Omaha Community Playhouse comes in its program, when you discover that a pop is credited with writing the director's notes.

In "A Sonnet From the Dog," Apollo the Puggie greets about his onstage experience and praises his costume. "They did a little bit of everything to help create magic for this play."

You'd have to be fairly humorless if you fail to find that charming. Much of the show is indeed magic. Several performers are both rars and, visually, it's a knockout.

The story — adapted from the 1998 film starring Joseph Fiennes and Gwyneth Paltrow — imagines what would happen if William Shakespeare had a dry spell. He needs inspiration. The beautiful and wealthy Viola inspires him to modify "Romeo and Ethel the Pirate's Daughter" into, well, you know what, and it gets a little tricky.

Like the screenplay by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard, Lee Hall's script employs several of Shakespeare's classic plot devices: cross-dressing, a whirlwind, a play within a play.

Jack Black, last seen in "Mamma Mia" at the Playhouse, is great

See Playhouse, Page 1

BENJAMIN MAHLER

What: Omaha Symphony Orchestra concert
When: 7:30 p.m. Saturday
Where: Holland Center, 1200 Douglas St.
Tickets: \$19 to \$72
Information: omahasymphony.org or 402-345-0008

Show delivers a symphonic celebration

By David Newman
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Music binds immigrants across space and time. At the Holland Center on Friday night, the immigrants of composer Gustav Mahler and Leonard Bernstein shared a symphonic moment they never could have in life. Their lifetimes spanned two centuries but were separated by just under a decade.

Music Director Thomas Wilkins conducted the second weekend of Bernstein at the Holland, programmed to celebrate Bernstein's 100th birthday.

"Sinfonia: A Political Overture" opened the concert. The piece recycles a healthy amount of material from Bernstein's musical "1900 Pennsylvania Avenue."

In addition to drawing from the presidential history-oriented musical and its instantly patriotic

See Symphony, Page 2



"It's all part of this bigger picture of making food, nutrition and knowledge accessible to people. To grow food on a plot where a house used to be in the middle of a city is exciting."

Kays Baker, a 2018 resident from Fargo, North Dakota



On urban farm, new bonds, ideas have space to flourish

Five or so something strange moves into a house for a year. They forge friendships, work through philosophical differences and, on occasion, have impromptu dance parties. They learn to work the earth, raise chickens and start up and run a business.

You could call it "The Road World Farmer Edition."

That's how the aspiring farmers jokingly refer to Big Muddy Urban Farms, 11-month residency program. From January through early December, they share a renovated 60,000-sq-ft house with the program's space

Big Muddy residency program offers young farmers a chance to gain real-world experience

By Chris Peters
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

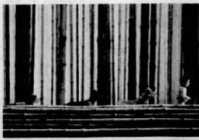
Urban director Steve Lohbert, who lives in the basement.

"I guide to make sure that everything is happening and there won't be a total failure, but in a certain respect, you learn from your failures, so I don't impose too much if I don't need to," Lohbert said.

They work a minimum of 20 hours a week tending five gardens on vacant plots and three chicken coops, all while taking over the \$10,000-a-year urban farm books and equipment.

creating a business from scratch. See Farmers, Page 3

At top, Big Muddy Urban Farm residents, from left, Kays Baker, Gavin Johnson, Laura Simpson and Jessa Diering work with tomato plants. Above left and right, Simpson gets tomato plants. The farmers work a minimum of 20 hours a week as part of the program, tending to five gardens on vacant plots and three chicken coops.



American Dream hard to attain on prairie of 'Proving Up' opera

By Bruce Farnham
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

"Proving Up" is an undaunting, 19-gem look at the possibility of attaining something that's been promised and deferred since this country was born.

The American Dream. Composer Minky Masek and librettist Bruce Vavrek set their story on the Nebraska prairie in 1901 for this new opera commissioned by Opera Omaha, the Washington National Opera and the Miller Theatre at Columbia University.

It premiered on Friday night at Kaskas as one of the main events in the inaugural Opera Omaha

See Opera, Page 2

COMPLETING A PET PROJECT

Title of Dog's designer discusses the joys and challenges of working on Wes Anderson's stop-motion film PAGE 5E

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Farmers: Program offers residents a chance to serve the community

Continued From Page 1

This is the second year of the program. By December, the residents also will develop and facilitate a lesson plan for the Gifford Park Youth Garden. Residents also will give a speech at the farm's annual gala.

"It's to provide education out of this, but you're also serving the community," Lubbert said. At the moment, residents are transplanting crops into beds around the neighborhood. Soon, they'll be harvesting spring crops for the first of three consecutive six-week community-supported agriculture, or CSA, subscription programs and selling at local farmers markets.

"It's all part of this bigger picture of making food, nutrition and knowledge accessible to people," said Kara Baker, a 2018 resident from Fargo, North Dakota. "To grow food on a plot where a house used to be in the middle of a city is exciting."

During the program's first year, the inaugural group of farmers set a target revenue of \$10,000. They battled soil fertility issues, insect infestations, shortages of volunteer staff and other unexpected obstacles, and wound up generating about \$7,000 in revenue. Those lessons, Lubbert said, will help future farmers succeed.

Terry Salem Jr. was a member of that inaugural group. After trying dozens of jobs, searching for the right fit — he worked as a salesman, a lumberman and custom ironing other things — Big Maddy's program helped require a childhood passion.

"When I was young, we had a small apartment off the sixth and Hamilton (Streets), Salem said. "I would literally save all my orange seeds, apple seeds, watermelon seeds ... I even tried to grow a mango seed in a blueberry ice cream bucket one time."

"Being in an apartment, I wanted to transplant them outside, but my dream of growing plants died with all my transplants I could grow in the ground."

Now, after a year with Big



In addition to their farmwork, the Big Maddy Urban Farm residents will also facilitate a lesson plan for the Gifford Park Youth Garden. Residents also will give a speech at the farm's annual gala in the time their residency ends in December.



"It's all part of this bigger picture of making food, nutrition and knowledge accessible to people," said Kara Baker, a 2018 Urban Farm resident from Fargo, North Dakota.

Maddy, he's working toward launching his own traveling educational farming program called Conscious Rebellion. The goal is to show people how to grow where they are.

"I want to begin to teach people how to grow their own food," Salem said. "I will teach them you don't have to be wealthy to eat healthy."

Lubbert said Big Maddy provided its model from a for-profit farm to a nonprofit educational one, in part after seeing some of its founders graduate, go to school, and create their own farms in Nebraska, Iowa and as far away as New Jersey.

He hopes that opening Big Maddy to new farmers, the little plots of land and renovated old houses in Gifford Park can serve as a catalyst for people like Salem and the residents who follow him.

Strawberries make for a sweet, easy garden addition

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Given how quickly strawberries begin to bear fruit and how easy they are to grow, it's a wonder that strawberry beds aren't a common in backyards as lawns are in front yards.

The most compelling reason to grow strawberries is, of course, flavor. Variety selection and pressure: harvest make proper berries large and firm, but usually not much else in your backyard. Though, you can grow the most flavorful varieties, and wait to pick them until they're sweet and oozing strawberry-ness.

KINDS OF STRAWBERRIES

Depending on how soon you want to start eating strawberries, choose between "everbearers" and "Junebearers."

Everbearers offer the quickest crops, less than three months after planting, and bear all season long. Their list is among the best of these types.

Junebearers come in greater variety and yield more, but wait to bear their first crop until the year after planting. Once started, they bear once per season, in spring or early summer. Planting two or more Junebearing varieties can extend the harvest.

GROWING STRAWBERRIES

Spring is a good time to plant strawberries, although they can also be planted in late summer or fall.

Your new plants may look forlorn, but don't worry. They must grow new roots and leaves. In fact, you can shear their roots back to 2



Trimming the roots and then setting a strawberry plant in the ground with just the upper part of its crown — the knob where leaves are attached — puts the plant off to a good start.

or 4 inches long with a scissor so you can more easily fan them out in the planting hole. Adjust the planting depth carefully, leaving only the top half each of the crown exposed so that it neither dries out from exposure nor suffocates from burial.

Ever wonder how such a backward fruit came to be called "strawberry"? The name might reflect the plant's habit of growing about with runners, which are horizontal stems propped along their length by daughter plants. The daughter plants eventually root and make their own runners.

ADOPT A PLANTING SYSTEM

Spacing for strawberry plants depends on your method of growing them.

inches, and periodically thin out crowded plants.

No matter which system you adopt, pinch off all flowers that appear during the month after planting in order to coax plants to put their energy into growing strong roots. One advantage of everbearers is that they continue to flower after that month of pinching, which means you get to pick fruit later this season from this year's planting.

THE "HILL" SYSTEM

With the "hill system," you plant them close together — 8 inches apart in a double row, with 9 inches between rows — and avoid future crowding by pinching off all runners. More plants are needed to get started, but initial yields are highest.

This system is especially suited to those Junebearing varieties that naturally develop fewer runners, and to everbearers.

With the "matted row system," you set plants at wide spacing — 24 inches apart in single rows, with 1 foot between rows — and allow plants to make runners like crazy. Fewer plants are needed to get started, but the first crop is smaller than with the hill system.

Never allow the mat of mother and daughter plants to spread wider than 18

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Full Cycle Supper: A Farm Fresh Meal Powered By The Bike Wheel

Omaha, NE, September 15th 2014 - Registration is now open for a progressive three-course, farm fresh meal that guides bicyclists through a tour of the five Big Muddy Urban Farm plots, enjoying a unique course at each plot. The 1-mile ride will take place on Sunday, September 28th at 5 p.m. Talented local chefs from Modern Love, Kitchen Table, and Cure are preparing the courses to feature ingredients grown where their course is served.

The ride will start with the first course at Big Muddy's 33rd and California St. plot. Tickets are \$35 for the meal or \$50 for a donor ticket, which includes a special gift. Funds raised from the Full Cycle Supper will go to support the neighborhood-based, community-building work of The Community Bike Project Omaha and Big Muddy Urban Farm.

Farmer Ali Clark of Big Muddy Urban Farm says, "The Full Cycle Supper is a great way for our community to experience our farm and our food. It is a way to engage our community with the landscape we live and work in, by biking through the neighborhoods and seeing the diversity of environment, soil and people that we work with."

The Full Cycle Supper is limited to 30 riders. Riders are asked to bring their own well-adjusted bike and water bottle. To purchase tickets and to find out more, visit www.communitybikeproject.org/full-cycle/ or look for the event on Facebook.

ABOUT

The Community Bike Project Omaha is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving access to bicycles for everyone through open shop, earn-a-bike, and maintenance classes. In addition to serving as a hub for sustainable and equitable transportation, the Bike Project serves as a social learning space that promotes youth mentorship, community building, and mechanical intelligence.

Big Muddy Urban Farm is a collectively run urban farm providing local and diverse fruits, vegetables and herbs as well as sharing skills and resources with our community.

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If you would like an interview, high-quality images or want to register for the event under a press title please contact Brent Lubbert at (402) 213-9646 or brent.lubbert@gmail.com.

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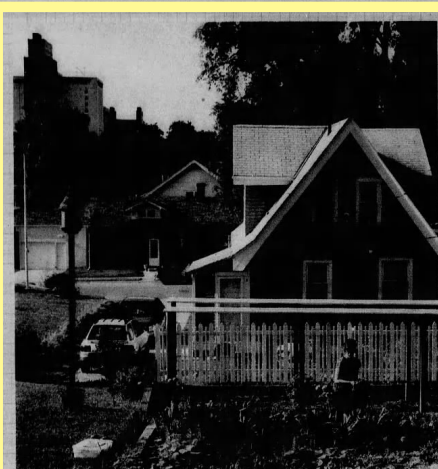
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DINING



RYAN SOBERLIN/THE WORLD-HERALD

Participants of the Full Cycle Supper will be able to enjoy courses prepared by Omaha chefs at each of the Big Muddy Urban Farm plots.

This weekend in Omaha, get ready to cycle for your supper

BICYCLISTS, FARMERS AND chefs are gearing up for the Full Cycle Supper, a three-course, farm-fresh meal eaten over a four-mile bike ride. The Sept. 28 supper will take bicyclists on a tour of each of the Big Muddy Urban Farm plots in Omaha, where chefs from Modern Love, Kitchen Table and Cure will prepare courses made of Big Muddy-grown ingredients. Big Muddy farmer All Clark said in a press release that the supper "is a great way for our community, that supports us throughout the season, to experience our farm and our food." The supper will be limited to 30 riders. Tickets are \$35 for the meal and \$50 for the donor ticket. Proceeds will go to support the Community Bike Project Omaha and Big Muddy Urban Farm. The ride will start at Big Muddy's 33rd and California Streets plot and run from 5 to 8 p.m. Riders can buy tickets and get more info at communitybikeproject.org/full-cycle

New food truck on the block

There's a new food truck on the block. It's named Hawk's Pizza. Hawk's Pizza will operate in the midtown and Benson areas from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m.ish Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The menu will offer, you guessed it, pizza — single-topping and specialty — as well as wraps and salads. Hawk's pizzas are all made on top of a spent beer grain crust, the spent grains provided by Infusion Brewing Co. in Benson. Hawk's owner Brandon Cicciulla, 29, said he hopes to keep the menu fairly simple, at least at first. Prior to starting Hawk's, Cicciulla worked at several restaurants in the Omaha area, including Old Chicago, Fox and Hound Bar & Grill and Crescent Moon. He will continue to work at Crescent Moon while running Hawk's. Search "Hawk's Pizzas" on Facebook to see the full menu. For more information, call 402-670-3969.

► BY MICAH MERTES

ON OMAHA.COM/DINING ► See more dining news and notes from food critic Sarah Baker Hansen, and read past restaurant reviews.