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Glynwood Center in Cold Spring holds its spring open house

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The Journal News*

COLD SPRING - There was sheep shearing and wool spinning, a horse-drawn plow in the vegetable patch and a lecture on beekeeping near the apple orchard where the trees were in full bloom.

The Glynwood Center, a nonprofit land-use think tank, held its annual spring open house yesterday, drawing supporters from across the region.

Judith LaBelle, president of the center established in 1995, said Glynwood's mission is to help communities understand the value of local agriculture and come up with strategies that encourage farmers to stay on the land.

Fifty local residents pay \$700 a year in exchange for a weekly allotment of seasonal fruit and vegetables grown at Glynwood. They also get eggs and about half a dozen free-range chickens per year.

"We come every week to get an assortment of vegetables," said Charlotte Palmer of Cold Spring, who attended the spring celebration at Glynwood yesterday with her daughter and several of her friends. "It's an opportunity to spend time looking at the animals. And we can pick raspberries and strawberries when they're in season."

Many communities don't realize how much their farmers contribute to the local economy but once they do, they are much more likely to take steps to help them remain, said Virginia Kasinki, Glynwood's director of community based programs. Many farmers lease the land they work and could be forced off it if the land is sold, Kasinki said.

Glynwood offers workshops to encourage collaboration among farmers and local officials, and to persuade property owners to keep their land in production.

The center also helps more modest gardeners learn new techniques. A plastic-enclosed greenhouse with an under-bed heating system that runs off a water heater is now being tested at Glynwood.



Lucy Austin, 9, left; Jocelyn Lane, 8; and Clara Thompson, 9, all of Cold Spring, run back to feed the pigs with handfuls of grass as they enjoy a day on the farm during the spring celebration at the Glynwood Center. (Dave Kennedy/The Journal News)

Dan Fillius, a Glynwood intern, said the energy-saving system is expected to save thousands of dollars compared with traditional glass greenhouses kept warm throughout with propane space heaters.

Over at the sheep barn, Ken Kleinpeter, director of Farm and Facilities at Glynwood, was taking a rest after shearing "Butch," a 12-year-old sheep. Glynwood's livestock includes 30 goats, 18 sheep, 300 laying hens and a herd of Black Angus cattle that graze near the 1840s-era dairy barn that once supplied milk to the cadets at West Point. Glynwood also raises some heritage breeds of livestock, such as white park cattle, milking shorthorn cattle and a small herd of old spot pigs. The heritage breeds maintain genetic diversity and they taste much better, Kleinpeter said.

Clara Thompson, 9; Lucy Austin, 9; and Jocelyn Lane, 8, three friends from Cold Spring, said the high point of their visit to Glynwood was petting the baby goats and pigs.

"I never knew pigs liked grass," Austin said. "I thought they ate rotten stuff."