

## **What is the Franciscan Farm Fellows Program?**

- Franciscan Farm Fellows is a new pilot program of the Office of Young Adults with the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Beginning August 1st and ending mid-December, Franciscan Farm Fellows will work at Red Hill Farm, a six-acre organic Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm, learning about sustainable agriculture from the ground up. Farm Fellows will work as a team alongside farmers, volunteers, and other participating fellows to cultivate a healthy farm and grow organic produce. This program thoughtfully intertwines the Franciscan Tradition into the farming experience. Franciscan Farm Fellows will be given ample opportunities for prayer, reflection, and deepening of faith through time spent with the director, attending retreats, workshops, and interactions with the Sisters of St. Francis. All Farm Fellows will live in community, supporting each other by sharing household responsibilities as well as supporting each other in their individual and collective spiritual journeys.

## **Mission Statement:**

- Franciscan Farm Fellows are lay women and men (aged 18-35) who commit to five months of farming and service sharing in the charism and mission of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Living simply and sustainably in community, with a focus on ecological justice, spirituality, and the Franciscan tradition, volunteers grow in the spirit of the Gospel as lived by St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi.

## **Vision Statement:**

- Motivated by the gospels we strive to deepen relationships through the promotion of the dignity and holiness of every person and all creation.

## **Core Values:**

- **Community:** Franciscan Farm Fellows live together in an intentional community where they give mutual support to one another and work toward building open and honest relationships. Franciscan Farm Fellows collaboratively set community goals and challenge one another to live simply in solidarity with those with whom they minister.
- **Ecological Justice:** Franciscan Farm Fellows have the opportunity to grow in understanding the need to care for creation through farming and communal commitment to living sustainably. Franciscan Farm Fellows will join the Sisters of St. Francis and the farmers of Red Hill Farm in the practice of becoming respectful stewards of the environment that sustains us all.
- **Contemplative Action:** Franciscan Farm Fellows challenge themselves and each other to put their faith, rooted in contemplation, into action. Enriched through personal and communal prayer within the Franciscan Farm Fellows community and in relationship with the Sisters of St. Francis, Franciscan Farm Fellows grow deeper in self-awareness and understanding of their personal call.
- **The Franciscan Tradition:** Franciscan Farm Fellows are immersed in the Franciscan Tradition through retreats, workshops, daily living, and interactions with the Sisters of St. Francis. The Franciscan Tradition focuses on teachings and examples of St. Francis of Assisi who desired to live as Jesus did. Franciscan Farm Fellows grow in understanding how we are called to live the Gospel Message in today's world.

## **Work Schedule:**

- From August until December, Franciscan Farm Fellows will work 32 hours each week with one week day and most weekends off, which will be determined with the Farm Manager. Typically,

the work day begins at 7 AM and ends at 3:30 PM. Lunch is provided at the convent from 12:00 PM to 12:45 PM.

- There will be shared watering duties on weekends during the earlier half of the program.
- Tuesdays and Fridays are Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) member pick up days. From 1:00 PM to 6:30 PM, CSA members pick up their weekly share of produce from the farm. All farmers are required to share the responsibility of working in the share room during these set times.

#### **Vacation:**

- Franciscan Farm Fellows are asked to commit to six weeks to focus on community. With the exception of previous commitments approved by the director and the farm manager, Franciscan Farm Fellows do not travel, have guests, or spend time outside of community during this period of time which facilitates the structures and bonding of community.
- Franciscan Farm Fellows are permitted two weeks of vacation time to be used at the individual's discretion but not during the first six weeks. Franciscan Farm Fellows are given holidays in conjunction with the farm schedule. All vacation time and holiday time spent away from community needs to be discussed in the local community and shared with both the director and farm manager.

#### **Room/Board:**

- Franciscan Farm Fellows are provided room and board at a just level for the Aston area in which they are serving during their term of farming. The household budget which covers food and household needs is managed by the director in communication with the Franciscan Farm Fellows.

#### **Monthly Stipend:**

- The program provides a monthly personal stipend during the Franciscan Farm Fellow's term of service. The amount of the stipend is \$125 a month. This covers the cost of personal and entertainment needs.

#### **Insurance:**

- The program agrees to provide medical benefits through the Catholic Volunteer Network for all Franciscan Farm Fellows who are unable to remain on his/her current policy without financial hardship. Dental and vision care is not provided. Benefits summary, eligibility, and how to use present coverage will be shared with individuals during orientation.

#### **Transportation:**

- Although the Franciscan Farm Fellows will live in community within walking distance to Red Hill Farm and will not need a vehicle to travel to work each day, the program provides transportation expenses from beginning to the conclusion of the farming experience. Franciscan Farm Fellows are provided with a community vehicle—to be shared among all Franciscan Farm Fellows—which is insured and maintained through the program and the congregation. However, Franciscan Farm Fellows are required to provide their own transportation to the program location at the start of their farming experience.

#### **Expectations:**

- Deciding to join the Franciscan Farm Fellows program will open up an intimate relationship with the land through farming. Franciscan Farm Fellows can expect days of hard work completing

tasks such as cultivating the fields, planting seeds, transplanting seedlings, harvesting, cleaning produce, and working in the share room when Red Hill Farm's CSA members pick up their farm shares.

- Working on a farm requires teamwork, dedication, endurance, and getting your hands dirty. Farmers work in all kinds of weather from the hot days in August to the chilly days in November. Come to the farm dressed for the day's weather, prepared with water and snacks, and ready to work with a positive attitude.
- During the early months of the Franciscan Farm Fellows program, there will be necessary watering duties in the greenhouse as well as on the farm. These watering responsibilities will be shared amongst all of the farmers.
- Each week on Tuesday and Friday from 1:00 PM to 6:30 PM CSA members come to the farm to pick up their weekly farm shares. All farmers are required to work during pick up time. These duties include restocking the produce shelves, sweeping the floors, greeting members, cleaning duties, and locking up the barn at closing time. The share room responsibilities will be fairly distributed amongst all of the farmers.

**About Red Hill Farm:**

- Red Hill Farm is a six-acre organic farm in Aston, PA. The farm, established in 2000, is one of the environmental initiatives of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. The farm grows a wide variety of vegetables, herbs, cut flowers, and fruit. It's a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm feeding about 100 families. Red Hill Farm believes in growing a healthy community just as much as it believes in growing nutritious produce. Red Hill Farm hosts monthly events and workshops, such as yoga sessions, cooking classes, and a farm-to-table dinner.