

Highland Conservancy E-Newsletter - June 26, 2008

HIGHLAND COMMUNITY GARDENS

The ¼ acre community garden in front of the Highland United Methodist church is overflowing with family and community garden plots. On any given day you will find children hoeing between rows of green beans and tomato plants or volunteers tending the community share section of this sprawling new garden. If you want to try your hand at growing pumpkins or other vegetables, there are still one or two plots left. We can also use help with the vegetables that will be donated to local food banks. Call Katheryn Krupa 248-887-4643.

HIGHLAND MEADOWS NATURE PARK

There is a hidden jewel near the library – a nature park that we hope soon will be permanently protected for future generations to enjoy. The Highland Conservancy has been working with the township and Six Rivers Land Conservancy, to craft a conservation easement for this stunningly beautiful area. Though it is already designated a township “park”, we all know what almost happened to Proud Lake, so we are working hard to protect this area. This land has rolling upland meadows, dense pine forest, ponds and marshland, and pristine waterfront alongside part of Downy Lake. Many nearby residents already enjoy hiking, biking and walking their dogs throughout the dirt trails. Unfortunately some folks are using the meadows as a dumping area for trash and crisscrossing the rare wildflower and bluestem prairie meadows with dirt bike trails. Our goal is to continue to clean up the debris and provide ongoing stewardship for the entire park so people can continue to enjoy its natural beauty. On July 23rd at 6pm the Highland Conservancy will lead a hike through this park for all residents of Highland Township. We will meet outside the library at 6:00 and head out from there. The hike will be followed by an open forum at 7:30 at the township hall to address residents’ questions, issues and concerns about the protection of this park. We urge you to mark your calendar to attend this important event. For more information or to comment, visit our blog: www.HighlandConservancy.typepad.com

The Haunting by Katheryn Krupa

“I love this place too...”

Reaching the top of a gently sloping meadow
I thought I heard it again
a faint whisper floating on the wind.
I stepped under a canopy of white pine boughs
dancing and restless overhead.

“Teach them to see...”

There it was again.
Looking above me I saw clouds
streaked with deep rose and fiery gold
against a steady canvas of turquoise.

Someone once told me
that it was the honor of heaven's children
to paint the sunsets
with a riot of exploding fireworks one evening
or gentle Impressionist pastels on yet another.

“Teach them to smell...”
Entering a stand of evergreens
The rich scent of pine enveloped me
as I turned, half expecting to encounter
some strange, ethereal ghost.

“Teach them to hear...”
Looking over the hill toward a nearby marsh
The lilting song of a bird skipped lightly
over the steady chorus of spring peepers
as a red-tailed hawk flew slowly over
these rare golden fields.

I slipped through a dense curtain of pines
and was surprised by a hidden field
of copper colored prairie grass
proud and stubborn settlers standing together
against the onslaught of snow, wind and rain.

“Teach them to care...”
I thought about my children
Secreted away in the dark basement
Staring mesmerized at electronic games
oblivious to everything around them.
How would they learn to appreciate nature?

Driving here I noticed the dull faces
locked inside sleek metal cars
rushing by on the concrete highway
landscape spectators
intent only on getting from one place to the next.
Maybe it was better that they didn't know
of the secret beauty in this hidden place?

Later that night I slipped into my sons' room
and stood quietly watching them
Cami's arm curled around a new stuffed seal
his damp, tussled hair dark against its soft white innocence
and Connor buried deep beneath a warm cave of blankets
as if to stave off the incessant demands of a ten year old's day.

Can I leave them a legacy?
Can I teach them to care as passionately as I do?
When I stumble upon a hidden field of little bluestem
I long to protect the remnant prairie
bravely hanging on beside the railroad tracks
destined soon to be destroyed.
“Oh that? It’s zoned industrial.
They’ll put in an office complex or a manufacturing plant.
There’s no way you can make that part of a park.”
Such a small impossible struggle against the backdrop
of DNR park sales and huge new developments.

Returning again on a wet, drizzly morning
I pace the rolling hills with my black retriever
He races from pond to field and back again,
joyful and fairly laughing
such a contrast to the grey ominous clouds overhead.
My familiar ghost falls into step beside me
and I can almost hear the swish of her long skirts
as she turns toward me and smiles knowingly,
“I love this place too.”