

# Summer Newsletter

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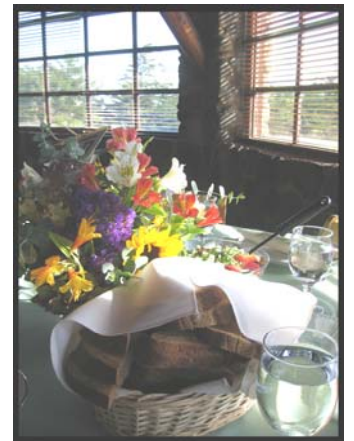
## Mark Your Calendars—December 9<sup>th</sup> V.V. Benefit!

Announcing our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Celebration and Fundraising Brunch!! You'll be electrified by this inspirational event that truly captures the spirit of Vida Verde. You'll be treated to a delicious, organic, and locally grown meal while you watch a beautifully made documentary about Vida Verde, listen to V.V. students and teachers share their experiences, and hear about the future of the organization from one of our visionary leaders. It's a perfect way to connect with other members of the V.V. community and feel appreciated for your part in making it all such a success.

**When:** Sunday, December 9, 10:30am-12pm  
**Where:** The Officer's Club, The Presidio, San Francisco



Last year's event was enormously successful and fun!



## Vida Verde Becomes Rite of Passage



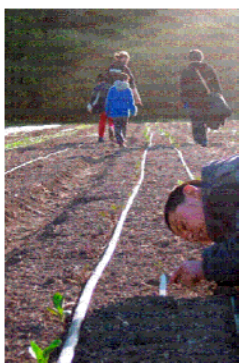
We are thrilled to report that during the 2006-2007 school year, 9 out of 14 schools that participated in

Vida Verde's programs committed to making the trip a rite of passage for an entire grade of students in their schools. That means that, for example, every student in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade from Cesar Chavez Elementary in Richmond came to Vida Verde, and every student in next year's 4<sup>th</sup> grade will come, and so on. The result is that every student passing through each of these 9 bay area schools will experience Vida Verde! It is simply an awesome feeling to know that a small program can have such a large affect.

In addition, 100% of the classes who came to Vida Verde last year came with returning schools or teachers. Both of these statistics speak to the value and quality that this program has come to represent in the minds of educators.

### New Neighbors!

You might be able to imagine us jumping for joy when we found out that a new organic farm was taking root just down the road from V.V.'s



site in Pescadero.

Blue House Farm, now in its second growing season, has invited Vida Verde to bring our students for farm tours each week during our program. Students get the chance to meet a farmer, taste lots of yummy things growing there, and even harvest some salad ingredients for dinner. It's a wonderful way to help the students make important connections to where their food comes from! You can learn more about Blue House at [www.BlueHousefarm.org](http://www.BlueHousefarm.org)

## What's New?



### New Trail!

This summer Vida Verde built a brand new trail on its site. This wide trail includes live oaks, enormous Douglas firs, a magical tunnel, and it provides access to gorgeous views from the highest point of the property (previously unreachable). The trail will be used for our night-time stargazing trust hikes, and for our now famous Extreme Hike, which is a fun, fast-paced afternoon "camper choice" activity for students who can't get enough hiking.

### New Improvements!

Thanks to our handy volunteers, we've made some great new site improvements this year.

In May, our annual group of volunteer Colorado College alumni stained and preserved our picnic tables and assembled all 600 wooden nametags that we'll use with students this school year.

In August, another group of volunteers came together to build a fenced-in maintenance yard at the site. It will keep the garbage shed, tool sheds, and any ongoing work projects safely out of sight!

Let us know if you'd like to be added to the volunteer list. We have a lot of fun swinging hammers outside!



## New and Expanded Team!

Each year, with the guidance of our business coach Eric Ryan, the Vida Verde administrative team sets important annual goals. One of our major goals for 2007 was to improve our hiring system. We did a lot of extra work toward this goal from January-May, and the work paid off! For the first year in the organization's history, V.V. will have an employee team that is six members strong. Three of these people are new to the program, and will be seasonal, part-time instructors who will work 2 or 3 days per week during the school year. During the first week of September, V.V. will hold staff training for these seasoned kid and nature lovers. The other three staff members, Shawn, Laura, and Tim, who have all been with Vida Verde for several years, welcome these fresh legs to the cause and look forward to the magic that we can create together for students this year. This should be an easily-attained goal since our new staff members bring an incredible wealth of experience. Here's a brief introduction to each:



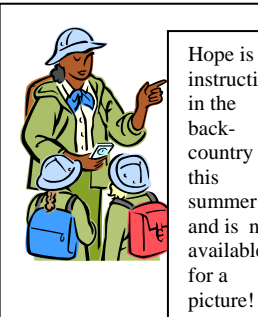
### Nate Hausman

Nate, a Colorado College graduate, comes to V.V. with experience as a classroom teacher, a summer camp director, a naturalist in the Pescadero Valley, an administrator at a Farm and Wilderness Program, and more! He is certified as a Wilderness First Responder and Lifeguard. One thing Nate believes is that "In learning about the natural world, we inevitably end up learning about the world around us and ourselves."



### Melissa Morris

Melissa, also a CC grad, has spent a lot of time in the classroom setting as a teacher's assistant in elementary classrooms, and a lot of time outdoors as a summer camp counselor, a naturalist in the Pescadero Valley, the director of a backpacking camp, a farm animal caretaker, and an organic farm intern. She's certified as a Wilderness First Responder and as a Project Wild instructor. Melissa believes that "it is essential that every child have the opportunity to be exposed to a connection with the natural environment."



Hope is instructing in the back-country this summer and is not available for a picture!

### Hope Swank

For the past 4 summers, Hope has been leading teen adventure backpacking trips that include hiking, whitewater canoeing, rock-climbing and community service. A graduate of St. Mary's College, Hope has worked as a Social Work Intern in Santiago, Chile, a youth Swim Coach, a camp counselor, and as a Naturalist here in the Pescadero Valley. Hope is fluent in Spanish, and is certified in Wilderness First Aid and Lifeguarding. She believes in "the importance of creating community within a group of children" and she "loves to make music, dance, and be silly with kids!"

## Donations Really Do Make the Difference!

This year at Vida Verde, your donations truly did make the difference. With your help, we had our most successful year of fundraising yet! In the past year, 142 generous individuals made donations to sponsor students, and an incredible 50% of these donors have pledged to donate for multiple years. These long-term pledges mean that V.V. can look forward several years into the future and plan ahead with financial stability.

Vida Verde was also awarded grants from 10 committed foundations, which are listed to the right.

With all of this support, we're super excited to begin our 7<sup>th</sup> year of programming this fall! There are 600 students already on the schedule, and 10 groups are signed up for our new 3-day programs. This year is going to be our best year yet!

We want to express our deepest appreciation to our growing community of supporters. You make it all possible!

Please don't forget to spread the word: One of the most valuable things you can do to help V.V. is to connect other people with the program and help our community to grow!

### '06-'07 Granting Foundations

Silicon Valley Community Foundation:  
Donor Advised: Hancock Family Fund  
The John and Marcia Goldman Foundation  
The David B. Gold Foundation  
The CLEO Foundation  
The Atkinson Foundation  
The Ten Times Ten Foundation  
The Katz Family Foundation  
The McCarthy Foundation  
The As You Sow Foundation  
The Van Loben/Sels Remberock Foundation

## THANK YOU DONORS!!



Who can resist student-made, hand-cranked, chocolate, goat milk ice cream?!

\*\*Note for computer savvy folks: As a life simplifier, you can now make **online donations**, automatically recurring, monthly, quarterly, annually, etc!

[www.Vveducation.org/donate](http://www.Vveducation.org/donate)