Paul Glowaski

Garden Director, Homeless Garden Project

Paul Glowaski, Garden Director for the Homeless Garden Project in Santa Cruz, California, was born in 1979 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. During the summers, he helped on his grandfather's grain and cattle farm. Glowaski studied Latin American history at DePauw University in Indiana, and traveled to Mexico as part of a delegation of college students to Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Chiapas shortly after the Zapatista uprising. He was part of the Chiapas Media Project in the Mexico Solidarity Network. His experiences with farmers in Chiapas affected him deeply. After graduation, Glowaski joined Americorps' National Civilian Community Corps, and worked with people who are homeless.

He continued this work at the Committee on Temporary Shelter in Burlington, Vermont. Interested in urban agriculture because it offered self-sufficiency and food security to those in low-income communities, Glowaski decided to pursue training in organic farming, embarking on a path that led first to an organic farm in Kentucky, then to an apprenticeship at the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, and finally to his current position at the Homeless Garden Project.

The Homeless Garden Project runs a two-acre market farm in Santa Cruz that trains low-income and homeless community members in sustainable agriculture, also supporting a CSA that provides organic fruits and vegetables to Santa Cruz County residents. As farm manager of the Homeless Garden Project, Glowaski brings together his passions for economic, social, ecological, and food justice. With his friend Cooper Funk, Glowaski also runs Urban Eggs, a consulting business that teaches city residents how to raise chickens in their backyards. This interview with Paul Glowaski was conducted by Irene Reti on February 9, 2009 in the Regional History offices at McHenry Library, UC Santa Cruz.

Additional Resources

Homeless Garden Project: http://www.homelessgardenproject.org/

Paul Lee, *The Quality Of Mercy, Homelessness in Santa Cruz*, (Platonic Academy Press, 1992).

"Homeless Garden Project," videorecording produced by Arcane Light Productions, 1993.

"Growing Hope: the Homeless Garden Project Story" videorecording produced by Ric Howard, Len Borruso, Jered Lawson; director, Ric Howard; written by Jered Lawson. Santa Cruz, California. (Distributed by the Video Project], 1995.

Michael Vining, "Growing Alternatives and opportunity: Homelessness and Garden-Based Social Change in Santa Cruz," (1993 Senior Thesis, UC Santa Cruz) Available at UCSC Library Special Collections.

Jered Lawson, "Community-supported Agriculture: Farming that Works," (Senior Thesis, Community Studies, UC Santa Cruz, 1992). Available at the UCSC Library.

The Homeless Garden Project Reader: a Compilation of Media and Project-generated Resources (1991). Available at the UCSC Library.

Urban Eggs: http://urbaneggs.com/

Beginnings

Reti: Today is February 9th, 2009, and this is Irene Reti. I'm with Paul Glowaski. So, Paul, first of all: where and when were you born?

Glowaski: That's a good place to start. I just had my thirtieth birthday. I was born January 26th, 1979, in Fort Wayne, Indiana, in Parkview Hospital. I asked my mom, actually because that was just a week ago, about my birth story, and she said that the day I was born my Grandpa drove from northern Indiana, where he had a farm, and didn't even tell my Grandma he was coming down, and drove down to come visit me in the hospital right after I was born. I was actually named after him. His name was Paul Devine, Paul Gregory Devine, and so my name is Paul Gregory Glowaski. I think it was a bad snowstorm year in northern Indiana. We get the lake effect from Lake Michigan, and it can be kind of gnarly winters compared to here.

I grew up in Fort Wayne, and that's a city of about 300,000 people. I went to school there. But my grandfather and my mom grew up in northern Indiana, in New Paris, Indiana, right outside of Goshen. She grew up on a farm there, and my grandfather ran a dairy in northern Indiana called Berger Dairy, a regional little dairy, and he ran the creamery. He and my grandmother had moved from Canada to Michigan right after World War II. My grandfather moved here [to the U.S.] to find work. They moved to Detroit from—they were living outside of Toronto.

Reti: Had they been farmers?

Glowaski: My grandfather grew up on a farm. He had twelve brothers and sisters, and my grandmother grew up on a farm in Ontario also. My grandfather was middle-aged, but helped to raise a bunch of his younger brothers and sisters, and when he and my grandmother got married, they moved, like I said, to Detroit. My grandfather became a bus driver in Detroit in the fifties, I guess. He was a terrible bus driver.

Reti: [Laughs.]

Glowaski: He would go off his route, and he just wasn't a good bus driver. So he met someone, and they moved to rural Michigan, southern Michigan, and started farming. He was Catholic, and there was in southern Michigan, northern Indiana—in rural places there was an anti-Catholic sentiment in some of the population. But he met someone who owned Berger Dairy. They really liked my grandpa, and they went out on a limb and looked beyond his Catholicism. He was an Irish-Catholic—Paul Devine, you know, and my grandma's last name is Cummins. My mom's name is Mary Devine. It's a very Irish-Catholic family. But that's when he moved to northern Indiana, to Goshen, and started to run the creamery.

When I was growing up he didn't work at the creamery anymore, but he owned his own farm. He had 600 acres of corn and soybeans and winter wheat, and he had a herd of 140 or 150 certified Black Angus cattle. Devine Angus Farms is what his farm was called. I would spend my summers going up and being with him and felt a strong connection to him. We would go up for the 4-H fair. Elkhart County has this huge 4-H fair, the biggest one in Indiana. And Indiana has a

giant state fair. This is the biggest county fair. I always really wanted to have a pig, to be able to go up and raise a pig in 4-H. But because I lived in the city, I couldn't have a pig. I couldn't be in 4-H. In my urban high school we didn't have 4-H at all.

My grandpa died when I was a senior in high school. He died of pancreatic cancer. When he was farming in the seventies that's when you really started to see a lot more chemicals and pesticides used in agriculture. It was that green revolution. Former Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz is from Lafayette in southern Indiana, Purdue University. Indiana in many ways was ground zero for this green revolution that was happening in the farms in the Midwest. The family farm started to change. Back then they didn't know how bad these chemicals were. They didn't talk about it as much. My mom says she remembers stories of my grandpa stirring the pesticides with his hands.

Reti: Uh! Oh, God!

Glowaski: And what's really terrible is that now that these pesticides are illegal here, you hear about farmers in Mexico or India, or you go there, and you see the same things happening. The farmers don't know. They're stirring the pesticides with their hands. Pancreatic cancer is very much an environmentally-based cancer. There's no proof, but you've got to think that farming like that probably wasn't the healthiest thing for my grandpa.

He did pastured Angus cattle. They were out on the range. He didn't have the CAFO [concentrated animal feeding operation] type operation. But the way he

farmed grain was very much in this traditional type of agriculture, or non-traditional, what was being developed, the corn, soybean, winter wheat rotation.

So those were my earliest experiences of going up there and farming with him. The way I farm now—it's interesting. I'm very linear in the way I farm. Some people can be a little bit more—oh, confused—things kind of on top of each other. There's a lot of beauty in that, but the way I like to farm is, in a lot of ways, a pretty linear type of farming. I think some of that comes from him. I remember going out into the soybean fields and pulling weeds with my grandpa. I really like a weed-free type-ish environment on the farm. He liked a very clean type of farm. He liked very much organizing his tools, and making sure things look nice, and really trying to have a lot of pride in the way your farm [looks]—the environment that's out there. I think those are things that influenced me.

The other thing that I'll never forget is that he was just as willing to talk to the Amish folks as the immigrants in the area, to anybody. And when he would drive around in his truck he would give this little wave to everybody who went by, this little flick of his fingers. He was Citizen of the Year. You hear this so much from old-timers when they talk about farming, that it's all about relationships with the people around you, and community, both of the community of the people but also community of the land, too; it's all working together. Relationships are what my grandpa did best, and what I admired the most [about him]. If he saw something interesting at someone's farm, he would just stop and start walking around and didn't have a problem. If someone came up and said, "Hey," he just was the friendliest guy and would introduce himself and become friends. Very much it was about relationships. I think about him

often. I wear his jean jacket that my grandmother and mom gave me three years ago when they figured out that I really did want to be a farmer, that it wasn't just this phase or something of my life. It wasn't just a habit; it was going to become a way of life for me. So I think about him often. The family barn has been sold, and the land has all been sold, and the woods—but one of my dreams is to win the lottery and to go back and buy the barn, buy the family barn and to round up some Amish folk and we'll take down the barn, and I'll put it on a truck and I'll go rebuild it somewhere and make it into an educational type center.

Reti: Wow. So we're looking at a photograph of a beautiful white barn. It looks quite large.

Glowaski: It's a large barn. And these were his irrigators. I remember some of my real earliest memories—these would go into the corn fields, this irrigator, and there are these real large hoses that would pull out. I remember just being a little kid and having to move what felt like giant hoses onto the side of the path so this would be able to go through the field and irrigate the corn. So those were my earliest experiences.

Reti: So from there, did you go to college?

Spending Time with Farmers in Mexico

Glowaski: Yes, I went to DePauw University in southern Indiana, Greencastle, Indiana. I studied Latin American history and spent a lot of my time with farmers in Mexico. I traveled to Mexico and on the border, and went on a delegation to Guerrero and Oaxaca and Chiapas. It was post the Zapatistas

uprising after NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement], but it was pre this kind of pan-indigenous movement that was happening. The Zapatistas were off doing their own deal and there was no real connection. We went with some women whose fathers were farmers in Oaxaca and had been arrested. Their moms were living in the Zócalo in Oaxaca City, trying to bring awareness to their situation. We went with these women to Guerrero and to Chiapas so they could communicate their story to the different indigenous groups who were all feeling the same effects of neo-liberalism in their very, very remote communities—desertification and highways being built and a lot of violence. People were feeling a lot of violence against them, but there was no real connection between the groups. We were part of the Chiapas Media Project in the Mexican Solidarity Network and trying to help bring communication. We didn't go there in the spirit of—we need to do something for these people; we have something to teach them—because really, they had everything to teach us. Of course, the Zapatistas—Emiliano Zapata is this farmer. He was my hero in college. (It kind of makes sense now.) He was my hero, and I was writing my thesis about the Zapatistas and [also about] resistance in Burma. He was this farmer who wasn't interested in power. He was interested in land for people to be able to farm and the breaking down of the hacienda system that was in place, and land rights for the people living there. The Zapatistas were born out of this very agrarian land and community rights [movement] and that's how they took their name.

We went there, and we stayed in an Aguas Calientes, one of their autonomous zones that they had set up in Chiapas. I stayed with this farmer. We stayed there

for three days, and we would go out and harvest beans for two of the days. We went out and harvested *frijoles* out in the field. You had to hike two miles through these mountains, and you get to these beautiful bean fields up in the mountains. We would harvest into burlap sacks, into baskets, and then put them into sacks. After my grandpa had died, this was the first time I had been involved in agriculture again, where we harvested the beans. I remember they had straps around your head, and you would carry the beans and hike the sacks down through the mountains back to the Aguas Calientes. And they'd put them out on a concrete pad to thresh and winnow. I remember we were about to leave, and I was feeling like, what the heck am I supposed to do now? I have nothing to do for these people. I want to do something. So I asked this farmer, "What can I do for you?" And he said, "Only when there's justice where you're from will there be justice where I'm from." This farmer out in the jungle ended up probably saying the most profound thing that anyone's ever said to me in my entire life. It really changed what I was doing. I was down there with the farmers and the Indians in Mexico, and I was like, well, I need to do something where I'm from in the States. He's right. I need to try and do something where I'm from.

I spent all this time talking about development, and I remember thinking, you can't just develop for the sake of developing, there's got to be some reason to it, and talking about world systems theory. It was all big stuff. It was college stuff, and I loved it. My mentor in college, Glen Kuecker—he informed us so much, but it was never: you want to change the world and you want to do something radical. You should actually be a farmer. If you want to talk about development, and if you want to put that into practice and you need something to do, you

should become a farmer. We never got there in college. Now when I see these young folks who come down from the university to the Homeless Garden Project, I think, wow, you are so far beyond where I was at! You're just light years—because you're talking about action now. The theory stuff was important, but I didn't really know what to do.

AmeriCorps

I ended up joining AmeriCorps when I graduated from college. I was part of the NCCC, which was the National Civilian Community Corps, this thing that President Bill Clinton—it was harkening back to the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps]. It was teams of young people based out of Charleston, South Carolina. We would go and do projects around the Southeast. We worked in a school, and we did Habitat for Humanity, and went to a swamp in Georgia. I taught kids how to ride horses in Tennessee. I'd never ridden a horse in my life. At Y-I Ranch. We did disaster relief in New York City after 9/11. We were one of the disaster relief teams. That was terrible. We went to New York City in January, so it was two or three months after September 11th, but it was still just devastating. We went door to door knocking on people's apartment doors, helping to distribute aid from the Red Cross. Just the stories, the families that were breaking apart, or there was one woman who was probably in her seventies and hadn't left her apartment since September 11th. That was a very hard few months. Even after coming back, it still felt pretty terrible.

The one thing I haven't talked about is that this desire to serve definitely came from my mom and dad. My mom has spent her whole life as a social worker and

caregiver, taking care of women after they've had abortions, or working with kids who've been abused, or helping people who are sick and dying, families after a family member has died. She's this really loving woman who is very much interested in serving the people around her in her community.

And my dad—he has Crohn's disease and has had Crohn's disease the longest anyone's ever had it, over thirty years, since before I was born. He's just this super stoic, courageous guy. He was laid off from his job this past year, of twenty-nine years. And even when he lost his job, trying to find something to do, he went and he started to tutor kids. He's tough as nails. In Catholicism right before you die, they give you anointing of the sick, like right before you're going to die. My dad's had that, like, five times. So he's a real tough guy. He worked at North American Van Lines in a corporate sort of environment. He worked at that job so my brother and I could go to college, and so he could provide for us. They laid him off after twenty-nine years. He would have been able to retire in three months. It was criminal, evil kind of stuff. And really at the beginning of this economic turmoil we've had right now, that a lot of people are feeling—even then, he was able to find a way to go and try and take care of the people around him, tutoring kids and helping them get their library cards. Now he runs a little food bank at a church. He essentially runs a low-income community supported agriculture project. He gets a budget each week and then he decides what to buy and tries to piecemeal a week's worth of food for people, healthy food. He bags it up into grocery bags, and then every Thursday from one to three, people come and pick it up, for free.

Reti: Oh, that's fantastic.

Glowaski: And I'm like, "Dad, you're running a CSA. You're going to do this for me one day." My parents have been heroes for me as far as shaping what I wanted to do and where I would go.

Working at a Shelter for Homeless People in Burlington, Vermont

So when I finished AmeriCorps, then I applied for another year. I moved to Vermont and worked in a homeless shelter. It was the Committee on Temporary Shelter in Burlington, Vermont. My interest in working with homeless folks came from—well, one, it just kind of felt like the right thing to do, but growing up, my uncle is, was, still a homeless Vietnam veteran from Fort Wayne or from northern Indiana, my mom's brother, my Uncle Mike. I remember being in high school, driving in Fort Wayne and seeing Mike walking around Fort Wayne in the snow and picking him up and giving him a ride. He definitely has some demons—alcohol, to be sure—and really remembering how hard it was that even our family member was just devastated, and we couldn't even help him. I think that's probably why I chose to do AmeriCorps at a homeless shelter. I had to apply and did AmeriCorps for a year, and then was hired on for another couple of years and stayed and did community outreach with homeless folks in Burlington. I would go to the soup kitchen in the mornings and eat breakfast with people and try and offer people services. I'd go and visit people at their camps, worked in the shelter, worked in the day station, trying to help provide people services, doing intakes, the whole range.

We got a grant to buy healthy food, and I would cook meals at lunchtime for all the people who were in the day station. I'd go to Healthy Living in Burlington

and buy all this food, and we'd make meals. Once a week, we'd make a big meal—guacamole and different types of healthy things. After a while, it started to become clear to me that if people didn't have healthy food in their bodies, then it was impossible for me or anyone to have expectations of them to do anything: to have a job, to have good interactions with the people around them, to take care of their health and wellness situation. If people were starving nutritionally, which homeless people and low-income people are, to be sure—there's plenty of food, but there's just no nutrition—then how could I have an expectation of anyone to follow these rules or whatever? But what does that mean? I didn't really know what to do about that.

It was in Burlington that I started to garden. I had my first garden with my partner at the time. We grew tomatoes and edamame. I was starting to think, wow, this is really cool! I loved growing edamame. I thought that was just the coolest thing.

Reti: [Laughs.]

Glowaski: I didn't have to buy it frozen from China. Mine was better than the stuff I could get frozen at the store. I started a little garden at COTS—right down by the day station. It was a terrible spot for a garden. I mean, you got some good sun, [but] . . .

Reti: What's COTS?

Glowaski: COTS was the Committee on Temporary Shelter, the homeless shelter I worked for. I started a little garden, and I remember it was so hard for me to get

anyone to do anything with it. It was pretty accessible to people. I think what most people don't understand and what I sort of understood was just how hard it is to be homeless, how much work it is to be homeless. Even if you might have a downtime or a down moment, your energy is kind of sapped. You and I know the benefits of gardening or the horticultural therapy that we can all get from it. But saying that to someone is different than actually being able to get them to come out and do it. And that's why things like the Homeless Garden are brilliant, and Food What?! and other programs that are paying people, youth or homeless folks to farm with us.[1] It makes people feel valued and gives them some incentive to be out there.

Urban Rooftop Farming

So I'm doing this gardening thing, and I'm still not really knowing what to do. I went to the Republican National Convention in New York City, in 2003, to protest. Things had been bad. Things were bad. I had been working with homeless folks and homeless vets. So we went to New York City, and my friend's band was playing in Brooklyn the night of the big marches and protests. They were playing in Brooklyn on a rooftop overlooking the city. It was this beautiful view. There was posters everywhere, and everyone's wearing political T-shirts, and it was very inspired. We were there to party and be with community of like-minded people. People were feeling like we've gotta do something here now. There was a lot of energy, and it felt very exciting.

Most of the people there were people my age, were white, kind of the standard crowd you'd see at a rock concert, and at a rooftop in Brooklyn. But there was an

older African-American guy there. I went up to talk to him. I'm feeling real excited and empowered. I said, "Hey, my name is Paul. What's your name?" He told me his name. I said, "So where are you from?" He said, "I'm from Chicago." And I said, "Oh, cool, I'm from by Chicago. I'm from Fort Wayne." So we started talking about Chicago and Indiana. I said, "So what do you do?" He goes, "Oh, well, I used to be homeless, but now I'm a beekeeper." I said, "You're a beekeeper?" He said, "Yeah, I keep bees in the city. Those kids over there," and he pointed to some young white, mid-twenty-something kids, and he said, "They taught me how to be a beekeeper. Now I'm doing pretty good." I thought, oh, my God! The whole world opened up to me. To have bees in Chicago? And this guy was homeless! This was another one of those times where it just really—that man changed my life, because I knew what I could do, that I could teach people how to grow food and to farm and that we could get self-sufficiency and food into our communities that way, and that working in the homeless shelter was just Band-Aiding the problem. Homeless shelters just mask what's really going on. I remember thinking, maybe we should just close all the homeless shelters for a week so people actually have to see how many people are homeless, and see what that's like.

So then I remember coming back and starting to research urban farming on the Internet—urban rooftop farming was what I was going to be into. I thought that's where it was at. I was going to farm on warehouses in Chicago. I had it all figured out. These buildings could withstand the wind in Chicago. They're built very strong because of the wind. These buildings can withstand huge loads of soil and snow on top. So I was thinking rooftop farming is what I was going to

do. I remember hearing about or researching and reading a paper about urban agriculture projects around the country, and one of them that I read about was the Homeless Garden Project. I never in a million years thought I'd end up in Santa Cruz, working at the Homeless Garden Project. Even then, when I heard about it, I thought, well, that's pretty cool! That's a great thing. But I'm going to move to Kentucky. I'm going to move to Kentucky to learn how to farm. And it was crazy—I think I just needed a change, something drastic at that point in my life. Vermont is this mecca for organic agriculture. I mean, there's tons of amazing farms. There's the Intervale [Center]. There were tons of people to learn from around me. But I thought, no, no, no, I need to move to Kentucky.

Apprenticing in Kentucky

Reti: Wait, I'm a little confused. You were talking about Chicago, going to Chicago.

Glowaski: Well, yes, this was what I wanted to learn, but I knew I needed the skills. I needed to learn before I could move to Chicago. I knew nothing about farming, really nothing. I knew that. But I didn't know what to do other than to go and work for someone. And my friend Jake Schmitz, who works for Organic Valley now—he was from Kentucky and said, "Oh, I've got these great farmers you should move to Kentucky with." He called them the Mickey Mantles of sustainable agriculture. So I left Vermont and my community and all my buddies and decided, I'm going to move to southern Kentucky, down by Bowling Green, to learn how to farm so I could move to Chicago and do this rooftop farming gig.

Paul and Alison Wiediger owned and still own Au Naturel Farm in Edmonson County, Kentucky. Smiths Grove is the name of the town. Edmonson County has no stoplights in the whole county and is a dry county. There's no booze. It's a very southern, rural sort of place. I went there to learn from them because they were using these high tunnels, these unheated greenhouses, and they were able to grow food twelve months out of the year, even though there was snow on the ground, which I thought was pretty cool stuff. I went there, and I knew nothing. I think now, looking back on it, I would have a totally different experience with them, working with them now. I think my ability to ask the right questions wasn't really there yet. I knew I wanted to do it, but I didn't know what I even needed to do.

I was with them for about two and a half months, and I worked very hard, sixty-hour-plus weeks. I thought that's what it was going to take. But I was very lonely. I felt very alone. I think Paul and Alison were going through some tough stuff personally, and I think they also needed—I don't know what they were going through, but I know that they needed probably someone different than me. They told me that. They told me they needed someone different. I had some regrets, but I didn't feel like I was a bad person. I definitely felt lost, because here I was, I had given up everything—my job, my community, my family, and I'd moved to Kentucky, and they were saying, "You know, this isn't going to work out." I think they didn't mean it, but they said, "I don't think you have what it takes to be a farmer."

Reti: Ouch.

Glowaski: I thought, Man! Who are you to tell me who I am? You've only known me for two months. I came and worked so hard for you, and even if you didn't think it was going to work out, you didn't need to say that to me. That really ended up being one of these things that I carried with me. I feel like I've moved beyond it. I don't do what I do to say, "I'll show you," because Paul Wiediger is a hero in the way that he farms, and I have the utmost respect for them. But I do think my role as an educator of young people is very important.

So here I was, I'm kind of out on the streets. I'm thinking, Man, what the heck have I done? And Jake says, "No, I got this other farm for you. I got this other farm." I ended up working at a farm near Georgetown, Kentucky, for the next five months and was their intern. I was not about to just give up and say, I can't do it, I'm not gonna do it, even though I was feeling—my spirit was—there was a definitely a piece of me—like, What have I done? But I was still was really dedicated to trying to learn. Even if it wasn't going to work out with them, I was still going to go for it.

I ended up at a farm [of] this older tobacco farmer in Kentucky, and they early on knew that tobacco's time was coming. It was really pretty savvy. So they used all of this government money that was being doled out to help farmers convert, and created probably the largest or one of the largest organic farms in Kentucky, this 300-acre-plus, at least 300-acre organic farm that does beef. Well, he started out doing beef, but then his son started getting into the vegetables, so they became a diversified market farm, but way bigger than Paul and Allison Wiediger's family farm. This was a giant, a pretty big thing, where they were selling at farmers' markets four or five days a week. They were starting their first CSA. They had

the mixed vegetable operation. They had the cattle. They did turkeys, chickens, lamb, egg layers, cane berries—you name it. They were starting to do a big composting operation with the big windrow machines. It was a big farm. I was to work for the couple who ran the poultry, lamb and the marketing operation. I spent that summer helping at the farmers' markets and helping to set up for the CSA each week, in their first year, their first year of a CSA, just trying to figure that out, and then being the assistant for the pastured poultry piece, taking care of 2,400 over the course of the season or 2,000 broiler chickens and the few hundred egg layers. And we had 150 turkeys that I cared for every day.

I worked with them for the year, and it was hard. It was hard. Again, I was there alone. I was working incredible—even more hours per week for them than I was for Paul and Allison. I was just starting to get a little tired, I think.

Reti: So you were one intern-apprentice, and there were 300 acres? It was just the farmers and you?

Glowaski: And they had a crew of Mexican migrant workers, because they were part of the H-2A migrant worker program, so those guys did all the harvesting and stuff. They were very smart. They broke up the farm into these different pieces, but they were all working together. The vegetable grower and his crew were growing all these vegetables, and then the couple I worked for were doing the marketing, this piece of it, and it was all working together.

Reti: But you were pretty isolated—

Glowaski: I was pretty isolated. Yes, and I mean, they worked their tushes off. I started working when I was eleven. I became a caddy at Orchard Ridge Country Club, and my dad would take me. I was eleven or twelve, a caddy, and then the next year I went out every single day of the summer and caddied every single day. I ended up being—in '92 I was Caddy of the Year at Orchard Ridge Country Club. They had 100-and-like-10 excellents and one very good, from Joe Finn. So I've been working my whole life, and worked very hard my whole life. My work ethic was definitely from my grandfather and my mom and dad. It was definitely an important piece of who I was. I sometimes think that the folks in Kentucky who I was working with thought that my inability to ask the right questions or to understand "the big" of what was going on wasn't reflective on my ability to work hard. I didn't know what was going on, but I wanted to, and had a thirst to. It didn't mean that I couldn't do the work. I remember really wanting someone to take the time to teach me, to teach me the questions to ask. This work was okay, but I was working seventy-five, eighty hours a week, and I was just like: I don't really know what I'm doing right now, and I've got no buddies around. I was again feeling like Mac didn't think that I had what it took to be a farmer. I really wanted someone to take the time to teach me.

I remember working at the farm late one night, and I got home. I got an e-mail each week from ATTRA [Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas], from their sustainable agriculture listservs. In their articles, they talked about this program at UCSC. It was some article from the [*San Francisco*] *Chronicle*—how great this apprenticeship was. It's $3,500 or $4,000, or whatever it was. And I thought, Man, this sounds great! It sounded like it was just everything that I

wanted and needed. I thought, this is my last chance. I was feeling kind of broken at this point. These messages, both subtly and not so subtly, were, like, Paul, you can't do it.

So I applied. I'd asked the farmer I worked for to write me a letter of recommendation because I'd worked my butt off this summer, and just give me somewhere where I can learn. I asked him for a letter, and towards the end of my time, he gave it to me in an envelope to send out to UCSC with my application. And my mom, in her infinite years of wisdom, said, "Paul, you need to look at that letter. You need to look at that." "Mom, no, no, no. I don't." She said, "You need to." So I opened it up, and it said almost the same thing, just in a different way, "We taught Paul how to work hard, but really he doesn't probably have what it takes," to that effect. I'm thinking, No way! No way! Not again. I worked so hard! I felt betrayed. I thought, there's no way when I'm in a position of teaching others that I will ever do this to anyone. I wasn't from Kentucky. I was this kid moving from Vermont. I'm sure I was coming from a different place. My interest was coming from working in the homeless shelter. I think it didn't totally connect [with them]. I thought, no matter what you thought of me you could have said, "I can't write the letter." I think he thought, I'm just gonna help this kid. He's going to figure out farming's not his deal, and he'll go do something else, that maybe this wasn't for me. I told him that. I told him that and told him that I really had trusted him and looked up to him and that I wasn't going to let him decide what I was going to do with my future and that I looked forward to working with him professionally again. And I left.

Then I'm really thinking, damn, what have I done? This sucks. I was, like, knee deep in chicken shit the whole year.

Reti: Literally, yes.

Glowaski: Literally, and I'm no better off. I loved Vermont. Vermont is amazing. It's just so nice, and everybody is loving and cute.

Reti: [Laughs.]

Deemer's Flowers and Greenhouses

Glowaski: Oh, it just was a nice place. But I still applied to UCSC, to the Farm and Garden. I still applied. I started working for my friend's flower shop, or his mom's flower shop, Deemer's Florists & Greenhouses. I was living in Bowling Green. And I found out that I got into UCSC, to the apprenticeship, that somehow they thought, well, maybe this person does have what it takes to be a farmer. At least from my little experiences, they thought that.

So then for the next six months, I worked three jobs to try and save money to go to the apprenticeship, working at the flower shop by day and then working at the Mandolin (Bosnian-Italian) Restaurant by night as a server, and then doing side jobs for my friend's mom. But being a flower delivery boy, I was kind of in the flower industry. I thought, this seems semi-pertinent to what I want to do. There was a lot of joy and sorrow with flower delivery boys. You see the babies being born and you deliver flowers to people who are dying and to funeral homes. Flowers are—they say they're food for the soul. Even now, no matter how much I love growing food for people and how honorable I think it is, there's

still a big piece of me that loves growing flowers for people and what that can mean for folks.

Apprenticeship at the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, UCSC

So I got into the apprenticeship, and I drove cross-country to California to go to CASFS [The Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems]. That was amazing, being at the Farm and Garden, for so many reasons, to immerse yourself into that type of environment, where everyone is positive and excited and engaged. It was amazing for me, because in Kentucky it was very alone and isolated, and I felt like, what am I doing right now? Here, people thought what I wanted to do was great, and they thought that it was really admirable that I wanted to work with homeless people. It's such a positive environment. Really beyond the friendships that came out of the apprenticeship, just that idea of helping me to ask the right questions was so powerful.

Reti: Can you give me an example of that?

Glowaski: Now, when I walk onto a farm after being at CASFS at the Farm and Garden, I can almost immediately see what's different. I can see that a cultivator is set up a little bit differently, or maybe their bed shape is different, or maybe they're overhead-watering some dahlias, when I would think that at CASFS we would never do that. So seeing these things, I'm able to not waste my time with just what's normal but really when I go and talk to farmers or go onto someone's farm, that now what's different stands out to me, and then I can focus my energy and questions on that. And that's helped me immensely.

They give you the base and the tools to be able to farm. I don't think, unless you have a lot of experience and/or land, you are going to walk out of the apprenticeship thinking, all right, now I can go and run a 40-acre farm. I don't think anybody thinks that, but I did think that I could do it when I left, which was night and day than from what I felt after being in Kentucky.

Reti: Were there particular mentors that you had at CASFS?

Glowaski: Well, of course people like Orin Martin, and Christof Bernau, and Jim Leap[2] are such powerful teachers, just heroes. You would get affirmation. Whenever you got any affirmation from Orin, oh, this is the most amazing thing.

Reti: [Laughs.]

Glowaski: If he would tell you, "You did a good job on pruning an apple tree," you know, that was just the best, because everyone looks up to Orin. He has impacted so many people in his time. But ultimately, it was the peer support that ended up pushing me forward and making me believe that I could do whatever I wanted to do. It was really my peers, the talking about agriculture twenty-four hours a day, staying up late talking about food security with people and why it was important that we all had good food, and the speakers that would come. Vandana Shiva came and ate lunch with us, or dinner. I knew really very little about this woman at the time. Now have read a lot of her stuff. She comes on the farm, and she's very soft-spoken, an incredible listener—a very quiet woman. After dinner, we went to watch her speak up at the university, and she was railing against chemical companies, and was so loud and was a strong woman and was [pounds his fist] pounding her fist against the podium saying, "This is

wrong, what's happening to farmers and Indians." I thought, this is a different woman. This is a totally different lady. Meeting people like that and going up to People's Grocery, and when Bob Scowcroft[3] came and spoke to us, and Joy Moore, who started Fresh Farmer Choice up in Oakland—hearing people like this. I was so excited when I left. It gave me a context to my experiences in Kentucky. It helped me to understand what the heck I was actually doing there, how these farms were set up, and what were the questions I should have been asking. It helped me to have a lot of perspective.

While I was an apprentice, of course I'm in Santa Cruz, and there's the Homeless Garden Project right down the road. So that was one of the first places I went to when I came here. I thought, I can't believe I'm here, after hearing about it three years earlier. While I was an apprentice, I went and I taught a class on these high tunnels that I learned about from Paul and Allison. I would go and do work days at the Homeless Garden. And when the apprentices went to the Homeless Garden Project (they do a field trip every year to the Homeless Garden), I was the apprentice liaison to the Homeless Garden, and helped that coordination.

The woman who was working there, Vanessa, told me, at some point she's, like, "You'd be great for this job. I want to leave. I'm going to leave." I thought, Great! This is perfect! I finish the apprenticeship, and I'm going to start working at the Homeless Garden Project. I'm going to be assistant to Patrick Williams, who had worked at the Homeless Garden for twelve or thirteen years and is another one of these heroes of the sustainable agriculture movement—one of these folks who's impacted hundreds of people, hundreds of people's lives.

Pie Ranch

So I'm talking to Vanessa: "When are you going to leave your job? What's goin' on?" She said, "Well, I'm not ready yet. I'm not ready yet." The apprenticeship is coming to a close, and I got nothing. Here I am. I'm hoping for this job, and I have nothing to do, nothing to do. Pie Ranch was looking for apprentices. I didn't really want to apprentice at Pie Ranch, but I liked what they were doing. And I needed something to do and a place to live, to tide me over till Vanessa left her job. I went to Jered [Lawson] and Nancy [Vail] and proposed to them that I would start a pastured poultry operation at their farm, because with Mac I had done pastured poultry the whole time, and although I didn't do this at CASFS, I knew it. I thought Pie Ranch—"You guys need eggs. You need eggs for the pies. It was kind of like my "in." They were, like, "Well, that's great you say that because we wanted to get chickens. You can apprentice with us through the winter until this job opens up at the Homeless Garden. You can help us get started. You can stay down on the lower slice at Pie Ranch with Cooper."[4] Cooper Funk was in my group at the apprenticeship, and so Cooper and I had become real good buddies. I thought, This is great! I'm going to live with Coop, and we're gonna start a pastured poultry operation.

I stayed at Pie Ranch November to April—almost six months. In that time, Cooper and I were able to help Pie Ranch get their—I think we had 250 laying hens on pasture by the time I left Pie Ranch. We were able to accomplish this goal that we had set up when I had started, to start a pastured poultry operation there.

Cooper is a really good carpenter, and I'm more of, like, this big thinker kind of guy. So we were able to come together and put this project together with the help of Jered, where we did—what I did in Kentucky is we used a trailer for the egg layers, for the hens, and so we were going down to Eco-Farm [the Ecological Farming Association] in January, and I saw an artichoke wagon on the side of the road for sale. We got to Eco-Farm, and I said, "Jered, I found our trailer. We gotta go—we gotta get this trailer." He said, "Well, check it out." So he checked it out on his way home and thought it was pretty good. It was what we had envisioned and designed. So Jered and I went down to buy this trailer from this old artichoke farm.

Reti: And this is the trailer that chickens would live in and you would move it around?

Glowaski: Right. So when we first got to Pie Ranch, they had twelve chickens, and a very small, little coop that they would move around on pasture. This guy, Graydon Livingston, helped them to build it. It was his design. Graydon actually was a long-time supporter of the Farm and Garden, and built the arbors in the up garden and build the dibblers that you see at the Farm and Garden using this amazing woodwork. And so Graydon and Jered—right before [Graydon] passed away, they built this little coop for twelve chickens or something like that, fifteen or something.

We were going to take this up a notch, and this was going to be for 225 birds or so. The trailer has the nest boxes on it, has the roost bars, provides shelter and protection from predators, because the chickens at night go into the coop, into

the rolling, mobile unit, and they roost on the bars. Then in the morning you open up the door, and they all come out and can go in and out to lay in the nest boxes, and the waters hang off of it. You're able to move the coop through—and rotate it through the pastures, so constantly moving it on grass. This was part of the system that Pie Ranch was trying to develop—these different blocks on the farm, and the different blocks would go in and out from annual, vegetable, fruit rotation into pasture. The idea was the chickens are going to provide fertility to the soil. And there's tons of different reasons why people should be eating eggs, organic, ranged eggs: they're healthier, and they're healthier for the soil, and they also can be very expensive because of the cost of feed in California.

Coop and I that winter lived down in the Steele family ranch, which is this historic ranch on the coast of California. It was built in the 1870s. It's an old, old ranch. We lived in the ranch house for the winter. Winter in California, the one thing about it is that since I've lived in California, it's been a drought every winter. So that winter was thankfully very dry, because no one had lived in this house for twenty-five years or something, and when we got into it, there was no electricity, no water, and it was definitely a very primitive environment. Cooper was the full-year apprentice—helping to set up this preliminary infrastructure on the lower slice. It was a glorious day when the lights came on in the old Steele family ranch, because it hadn't had power in twenty years or something.

It was amazing to be able to work at Pie Ranch. Their idea is incredible, this idea of working with urban youth and trying to teach people about where their food's coming from. I thought it's such an innovative model as far as working with a pie shop in the city and growing pie ingredients. Jered had also worked at the

Homeless Garden Project. Jered was an intern at the Homeless Garden Project. So I think he kind of had a soft spot for me, in even just letting me come live on their farm and be a part of what they were doing.

It was awesome living out there with Cooper. It's a beautiful part of the world, living on the Central Coast of California. It's rural and, bobcats meandering through, and hawks, and you could hear the seals by the ocean. It's a pretty magical place. It was a beautiful winter. It was dry. We had a lot of fun. The friendship that I have with Cooper is now very strong because of that experience. Cooper and I now have a business together called Urban Eggs, where we teach backyard poultry to urban folk in San Francisco and the East Bay and Santa Cruz. We teach classes, and we'll go to people's houses. We still do the poultry thing. If I'm going to keep up this, I guess, farming habit, I'm going to need a side gig, to try and bring in a little income, and this is the best thing that we could come up with, backyard poultry. People seem to be really excited about it.

Reti: Great idea.

Glowaski: Yes, it's super fun.

Reti: And did you start the community supported eggriculture—

Glowaski: At Pie Ranch? Yes. Yes, that was sort of our deal. I'd like to say I thought of the CSE idea, but I don't know if Jered did or we all did or what, but it was a collective thing, we'll say, the CSE. It was really cool. Nancy, Jered's wife, who's this amazing farmer—she was working at CASFS while Cooper and I were apprentices, so we didn't get to see her a ton, but she's really schooled in

this CSA model. She spent years studying this stuff. Pie Ranch probably still today doesn't have two nickels to rub together, so we had to find people and ask them for money. We were going to do an "invest in this," and we had a business plan. We had this board with chickens on it. These are the breeds we're going to get, and this is what we're going to do. People didn't donate; they invested in the farm. They invested in the farm, and it helped to allow Pie Ranch to do that. I hadn't thought about that, the meeting, in a long time, but it was cool because it was in the roadside barn, and it's very much the way I think CSAs are supposed to go.

Jered started the CSA at the Homeless Garden Project in 1992, and that was the first CSA in Santa Cruz County. Now CSAs have become this huge thing here, where these farmers that I admire—some of their CSAs have 2,000 members in it, here in Santa Cruz County. But Jered helped to start it at the Homeless Garden, because he went up to Live Power [Community Farm], Steve and Gloria Decater, who own Live Power, these old movers and shakers in the ag community up in Northern California, who are farming with horses. They were the first CSA in California. They had brought this idea to California from I guess out East. I never asked them. Steve and Gloria Decater.

Jered knew someone that was an apprentice there or something. Went up there and saw this CSA thing going on and thought, well, this is really cool. He was interning at the Homeless Garden. So he took, I believe it was Jane Freedman, who was working at the garden, and they went up to Steve and Gloria's to go see what they were doing, to go check this thing out. And they thought, this is

perfect for the Homeless Garden Project. So that's how our Homeless Garden Project CSA at the garden started.

Farm Manager at the Homeless Garden Project

But I'm getting a little ahead of myself. That April, Vanessa finally decided to leave. She was going to quit. Patrick interviewed me, and I was hired almost immediately. I had been contacting Patrick a bunch. Everybody knew that I really wanted to work at the Homeless Garden Project. So I got the job, and I started April 12th, which was a month and a half before the CSA started.

Reti: Now, what year are we talking about?

Glowaski: April of 2007. This is my third season at the Homeless Garden. So I started a month and a half before the CSA, and we really had to hit the ground running. They had had a tough year in the greenhouse, a tough winter, and they didn't have many starts. We were not really in a good shape, and our CSA was supposed to be thirty-nine members that year.

Also, at that point, most of my experience then was with poultry, although I'd been at CASFS, so I knew I had the tools to be able to farm in that style, because at the Homeless Garden Project our farm was set up in this French-intensive, bio-intensive, labor-intensive type farm, the four-foot-wide beds, high levels of fertility, the same way that the down garden and the up garden [at UCSC] are set up. And really that's because Patrick had studied with [Alan] Chadwick up in Covelo, had gone up to Covelo. Patrick is another one of these Chadwickians that are running around, changing the world by starting gardens and farms. He's

gone all over the world, helping to start bio-intensive type farms and gardens, and had landed at the Homeless Garden.

It's really interesting. The Homeless Garden was started by Dr. Paul Lee, who helped, along with Page Smith, to bring Chadwick to the Farm and Garden. Page Smith[5] and Paul Lee[6] were professors at the time, and Page Smith somehow knew of Chadwick or knew that countess [Freya von Moltke].[7] At any rate, they were the ones who brought Chadwick over. And it's interesting because now these two people who helped start the Farm and Garden—the homeless shelter or the transitional shelter downtown is named the Page Smith House, and there's now the Paul Lee Annex. So these two people who helped in agriculture—just change agriculture in general—were also very much influenced by homelessness. The reason the transitional home is named after Page Smith is because in the eighties Page Smith helped to start the first homeless shelter in Santa Cruz. He was part of this group of community members who saw a need for homeless services where there had never been a need for homeless services in Santa Cruz. What's interesting is the homeless shelter in Santa Cruz started the same year as the homeless shelter that I worked for in Vermont. Across the country, at the same time, there was this need for homeless services in these two kind of like-style places, Santa Cruz and Burlington.

There always have been those people kind of riding on the rails—the guys with the sticks and the handkerchief, some folks who are homeless. But these homeless people on the streets, that was something new. That hadn't been there before. And there's a bunch of different reasons that happened. Homelessness is very much a product of my generation. I was born in 1979, and these huge

numbers—today there's three million homeless people. That wasn't the way it was before. Now there're a million homeless kids who leave school every day and go and live with their families in their cars. [Before] even if people didn't have money, people had a place to live. Now there's a huge number of working homeless people. Earlier, when I was talking about that shelters mask homelessness, also, people living in their vehicles mask homelessness. A huge population of people live out of their vehicles.

Reti: I didn't realize that that was new. I've lived in Santa Cruz for thirty years, and so the whole time I've been here, it's just been part of the landscape. The debates and anti-homeless rhetoric have been normalized for me.

Glowaski: And that's the thing, it's become this normal thing. So when I talk to kids especially, [I say that] it's so new that I think it can change, but the longer it goes on, where now that there's a million homeless kids—these kids are growing up homeless. They're dealing with a lot of barriers, and that cycle—once someone grows up in abuse, a lot of times they can either be abusive or just live in abuse. The cycle just continues. The same thing is with homelessness.

I think it was a combination of deinstitutionalization, the folks coming back from Vietnam, people's wages not going up relative to the cost of housing in our communities. All of these things came together in this perfect storm, where, again, there was a need for a homeless shelter in Santa Cruz at the same time there was one in Vermont. And the thing about homelessness is, like, who would be homeless in Vermont? It's freezing. You die in the wintertime. It was mostly

people from the community, people who, for whatever reason, had become homeless, and there was a need for services then.

So I guess it was in 1990 when Paul Lee had gotten ahold of a bunch of different herbs, these herbs. Somehow he got ahold of them, and he needed somewhere to plant them out. He called up Lynne Basehore, who had been at CASFS, who had been an apprentice, and said, "Do you want to go plant out these herbs at this spot with some homeless folks?" And she was, like, "Sure." It was before there was ever even a word like guerilla gardening. There was no guerilla gardening at that point. It just—they were going to start a garden right by these community gardens that were set up over on Pelton. Originally it was just a little herb thing. It wasn't quick that it got bigger, but community members came together and went into these meetings, and the relationship with homelessness and giving people opportunities to work or to eat good food started to develop over time. Originally, when the Homeless Garden started, they didn't pay people to be out there. It was like, you can come out and work, and we'll give you some food, and you can be a part of this cool thing.[8]

It started to kind of formalize, and it wasn't too soon thereafter—a couple, three years after that they're starting the CSA. They were running this large CSA off of Pelton, which was not a very big garden. They really got it going, and there was ton of enthusiasm and energy for the Homeless Garden Project. I think it was exciting for people. I don't know why. I think people thought that they were doing something different, something radical. It was. And it still is. I'm always trying to make sure that people realize the relevance of the Homeless Garden Project and how important it's been. It's been on the cutting edge of sustainable

agriculture for almost twenty years now. Well before I ever had the idea about the importance of food and nutrition in people's lives, some folks in Santa Cruz realized it, when I was still a young kid. They set up the Homeless Garden Project.

Reti: So when you came into this, what kinds of challenges were facing the organization?

Glowaski: Well, I think that idea of staying relevant has been very challenging for us. We've talked about ourselves as the Homeless Garden Project for so long that I think people's understanding of the amount of people that we work with is skewed. People don't really understand that we're working with thousands of people each year. The most important group of people we work with are homeless trainees. That makes up a piece of what we're doing, but we're [also] working with youth from the university, kids from schools in the area; people come to do community service. Volunteers—on any given day at the Homeless Garden Project, you'll have the richest to the poorest in Santa Cruz working together, farming together. And we eat together every single day. We sit down over a meal, and it can be very powerful for people, in the best days, when the homeless are teaching the housed how to grow their own food, a real role reversal.

The more I work at the Homeless Garden Project, I'm finding that homelessness is a hard thing for people to talk about. Even I will walk by someone, and maybe you don't have change, or maybe you're just not in the space or whatever. You look away, and it's just so easy to do that. Homelessness is tough for people, and

our understanding of homelessness has for sure been skewed by the few, but very vocal homeless people we see, maybe on Pacific Avenue, for example. Really—they're a fraction, but [they've] somehow become indicative of what homelessness is.

Reti: I think that's right, yes.

Glowaski: Really it's the working poor and the people who, a couple of things have happened, and now they just need some help.

As far as the farm was concerned, I think it was time for some new energy. We had struggled because it's hard working at a nonprofit, and it can be very overt. It can start to be demoralizing and challenging, and you can feel unsupported. You're doing this really important work, but it can also feel very isolating. I think the [Homeless Garden Project's] farm was definitely not representative of that world-class status that I think we should have. I think we're relevant and cutting edge and really should be proud of what we're doing. We're an educational farm and a model farm, but some things had become overgrown. I didn't really feel like it was representing how important I thought we really were. So since I've been there, I've worked very hard to try and put in new life to the farm, and to make it a place so that when people come, they think: Wow, my God, this is the Homeless Garden Project? This is amazing. Not just that it looks amazing, but that it is a space that everyone feels welcome and can feel like they can be a part of, a place where anybody can come to learn and to have a meal. That's been very important to me.

Patrick for years did that, and he was such an inspiring person. But after I got there, it wasn't a month, maybe, two months I had been there, and here I'm thinking, I'm working with Patrick Williams. This is amazing. And he says to me, "I've been waiting for you. You're the one. I'm leaving." I thought: What? I started to cry, like, "No! You can't! No, I'm here to learn from *you*." And he was like, "I'm tired right now, and I need to do something different." I'm thinking, you are my hero. Where are you going? And, you know, we're like any nonprofit: we got no money, we're unsupported. I definitely had to hit the ground running.

As far as challenges that we were facing, I think now having a young farm director—I'm sure that was a challenge for us, because I still have no idea what I'm doing. It always feels new and fresh, and there's never a day goes by that I'm not in awe of where I'm at. Still, I definitely feel hardened after a few years at the Homeless Garden. It's a tough place. There's tons of beauty, but there's also a lot of tragedy that comes there and a lot of pain that people are bringing to the farm. That farm has become me, or I've become the farm. It so informs who I am. For me on a personal level, that is not always easy, that this energy that's so beautiful but also so tragic is making up who I am, and maybe my uncle's challenges with alcoholism—because a lot of the folks I deal with are alcoholics— That energy—being around it all the time can start to affect you, you know? It's like you can't go too far or let the farm totally take over, because there's a lot of pain.

This was really a tough year. We had a new executive director who ended up not working out. All of a sudden I was in charge, and I've got a crew of homeless folks. Patrick had been there for, like I said, twelve or thirteen years. I mean, of

course I'm not nearly as schooled, and I'm also coming from CASFS, and I'm going to do probably things sometimes a different way. It just wasn't always the easiest for transition, but the thing that I love about farming is the honor and integrity that comes with it. It feels very honest. We're growing food for people. You can't hardly fault us for that, and so I always tried that first year to remember that—to be honest and to have integrity. Those experiences that I had in Kentucky of course shaped how I manage people. Now someone can be, like, chopping down my most beloved tree at the garden, and I'll always say, "You're doing a good job, but you might want to try this. You might want to—" Working at the Homeless Garden, I can have no attachment to anything, because hundreds of people come out to the farm and are part of it, and are working, and sometimes [there is] miscommunication or whatever. I can have no attachment to anything out there. And that's sometimes been hard for me, because I sometimes get too attached. That first winter we were there, and November fifteenth of my first year, someone came and burned down the storage shed at the garden. They burned down the storage shed. That was terrible.

Reti: Devastating.

Glowaski: And then a month later, on December fifteenth, someone came—probably the same person came back and burned down the kitchen at the garden. So then January fifteenth comes, and it's, like, oh, God, what's gonna happen now? And here I am, a young farmer, now farm director. I had to take so much ownership very quickly after I started, after Patrick said he was going to take a sabbatical or whatever was going on, take a break. I had to take on just a ton of ownership. So when the fires happened, I was so upset because I didn't

feel like I could provide a safe place for people. The folks who I work with are dealing with so much tragedy outside. The farm is supposed to be this bastion and refuge and that I wasn't able to provide that for people. I interact with hundreds of people. Did I say the wrong thing to somebody? Was it about me? Did it have nothing to do with me? All of these unanswered questions. The trauma that my crew felt, who were all very vulnerable already, was really hard for us.

We rebuilt a beautiful kitchen, and we built it by hand. We used no power tools because we have no electricity at the garden. So we used hand saws and built this gorgeous kitchen that's now this communal space. Eating together is probably the most important thing we do, you know, just that idea of sitting down at a meal together, of honoring the food that we're growing, of celebrating the food that we're growing by eating it together. That's the most important thing we do.

And so the whole winter, Wayne and I, Lowell Wayne Fletcher, who's my farming partner, my assistant out there—he taught me a lot about building. Wayne was kind of the old-school homeless, you know, these kind of guys who are riding the rails for a long time. He's been at the project for a few years, and he has an incredible amount of knowledge. He's this master irrigator. He helped me do this crazy thing of rebuilding this kitchen by hand.

Reti: So you guys did it.

Glowaski: Wayne and I did it. It took us months, working often till dark, having the truck shine lights on it. I was thinking: I gotta get this done. I gotta get it

done. But we had no electricity, so it was taking forever, sawing plywood by hand. I really wanted to be done by the time the training program started at the beginning of April, but I wasn't able to do it. I remember at the beginning of last year it was hard because this communal space that we so needed, because it's our kitchen but it's also our classroom area and meeting area—just wasn't there. It wasn't there.

Reti: It's like you were missing your heart.

Glowaski: Yes, yes, totally. But we were able to finish, and we have a new, beautiful storage shed. When I started our CSA, [membership] was at thirty-nine, and then last year it was at sixty-five. This year our CSA is going to be eighty members, so it finally feels like the farm is whole again, that we have our kitchen and our storage shed where we can safely keep our tools and stuff. The Homeless Garden—it's like the Wild West out there. We're at the edge of town. We're at the very edge of town, and it's literally on the other side of the railroad tracks. It's a dead-end road, so I see some wild stuff out there. We do sometimes find needles on our perennial border, or bottles. And it's not from my crew. It's not. But people, when they come by the Homeless Garden, they'll see people doing weird stuff out on the road. They think, oh, they're the Homeless Garden. But it has nothing to do with us. Since we've been there, if anything, we've tried to clean up the road. I haven't run people out of there, but I've said, "If you're going to be parking next to our farm and using our things, you need to help out at the farm. You need to be a part of it." I'm not interested in just handing things out to people. This is a place where this idea of justice and reciprocity and working together is very important. So it's changed a lot.

Reti: Paul, let's back up a little bit.

Glowaski: Yes.

Reti: Because I'm realizing that although I'm familiar with what you do, to some extent, that the person reading this or listening to this might not be. So can you give me a sense of what is your job as farm manager, and what a typical day looks like for you.

Glowaski: Yes. So I'm the farm director. I'm in charge of the farm, along with my partner, Karalee [Greenwald]; Karalee is the horticultural director. Karalee was also an apprentice at the Farm and Garden, and I hired her last year to run the greenhouse type area. She and I work together, and we are running a three-acre market farm. We're employing and training low-income and homeless individuals to be a part of that. Right now we have thirteen homeless or low-income folks—people who were homeless but have now been housed—working with us. We have classes each week, so we're in charge of the training program. The classes can range from plant pathology and irrigation and soils, to résumé building, or a job fair, or maybe we'll bring someone in to talk about addiction, or talk about meditation—a whole range. Our training program is a little more broad than maybe what you'd find at the Farm and Garden.

So we run the training program, and then we run a large CSA, an eighty-member CSA, and we wholesale fruits, mainly fruits, strawberries to folks in the area, and then we grow tons of flowers. Half the farm is in perennial and annual flowers.

Reti: Half the farm.

Glowaski: Half the farm. That's part of the three acres. One thing that makes our CSA a little different than others is that we give everyone a bouquet of flowers each week. So we harvest flowers every Thursday and make the bouquets, and then take them down to our cooler. That's kind of like our therapy, you know, the making of the bouquets and just the creative—because it's very much a communal thing, everybody getting together in the kitchen area and making bouquets together. And then we harvest our vegetables and fruits on Fridays.

Reti: Where are you selling the strawberries?

Glowaski: The strawberries, we put in our CSA, and then we sell them at the Food Bin and kind of different grocery stores around town.

The other kind of piece of the farm that we're running is the Women's Organic Flower Enterprise. That's where—it's kind of a bad name, but—women and men harvest flowers and herbs all year long, and we dry them in a drying shed that we have on the farm. Then we take them down to the office. And then in the fall, as the CSA is finishing, we make wreaths and dried arrangements and things like that, candles, other kind of kitschy stuff and sell them at our holiday store. That way we're able to employ people longer in the season.

Reti: I saw the article in the paper this morning on the Valentine's Day wreath sale.

Glowaski: Yes! We're already growing so many flowers, so it's kind of a value-added thing. It's our art therapy for people. You see these hardened guys making

these beautiful wreaths. When they start, "I'm not gonna touch a flower. I only grow vegetables."

Reti: [Chuckles.]

Glowaski: You see them over time, and they're making the most amazing stuff. It can be a very powerful experience for people. Like I say, we work with tons of youth from different schools coming on the farm, and people are always coming up to work with us, lots of interns from the university and volunteers from the community.

Reti: So a class of children shows up. They're there for the day. How do you fold them into the work that needs to be done?

Glowaski: Well, little kids are great weeders, right? And laying mulch. I guess it doesn't matter. It kind of depends on what's going on. There's a woman who works specifically with the school groups, and she'll check in with us about what we need done. We think about the age group. The most challenging thing is making everybody feel valued while also doing valuable work. Doing that with kids is just as hard as doing that if I saw you walking in off the street. I have to immediately assess: what is this person's ability, and what can I actually teach them right now, or have someone else teach them? The job is always like that. So whenever we come into work, I really don't know if I'm going to work with thirteen people or thirty people or fifty people. For the Martin Luther King Day of Service recently, there were 120 people. And we expected fifty. To have our job, you just have to be very—what was it [President Dwight D.] Eisenhower said? Something like, "Planning is essential. Plans are useless."

Reti: [Chuckles.]

Glowaski: So you always have an idea of what you want to do, but you can't be dedicated to that idea when you come in to work in the morning at the Homeless Garden. People sometimes might have a breakdown. Maybe someone has a personal thing that they're totally—you know, one day their ability is— Even what people are dealing with on a personal level changes their ability to do things on the farm from day-to-day. So being able to assess: how is this person feeling? I know they can do this, but maybe they're not in that space today, and maybe they need to be doing something different—you know, not selling them short or dehumanizing them. We're all about very much treating everyone like a human being out there. That's a very important piece of what we're doing.

That's why I love my job. We try to establish structure. We say the training program's every day, Tuesday through Friday from nine to two. Every Tuesday we have a circle meeting or a community meeting in the morning, and then we work together on the farm. Lunch every day at eleven thirty. Wednesdays we have our class, and then we work together on the farm. Thursdays we harvest flowers, and then we work together on the farm. Fridays, veggies, same thing. But within that, we're all over the map. Running a farm that in the summertime is growing 130 different things keeps me satiated. Our biggest crops are strawberries and lavender, dahlias, brassicas, you know, Brussels sprouts, collards, kale, kind of the cold crops, and then herbs. Those are the main bunches, but then we're growing tons of lettuces and spinach and chard and stuff like that. Like I was saying before, it never doesn't feel new or fresh.

The more I'm there, [the more I understand that] I'm not growing anything other than soil. That's the main thing that I'm doing out there, as far as the farming piece is concerned. I understood agronomy but as I'm developing, I'm really getting excited and reading more and learning more at night, and am spending my time now learning about soil, whereas before, when I started—you start with the soil, but then quickly you're moving into plants. Now it's back to the soil.

So we grow tons of different things. Last year we did the whole farm in hand cultivation. We cultivated three acres by hand. There's some path in there and stuff, but that kept us busy. And, of course, working on an organic farm, we can never weed enough. Sometimes people, when they come onto the farm, say, "I'm here to help." I'll say, "Okay, we'll have you weed this area," and show them. Maybe someone will do that for a couple of times. They'll think, oh, God, who wants to weed? I'm always walking around with the hula hoe. I'm always weeding, you know? That goes back to my grandpa and the soybean fields, but also it's an organic farm, and our choice is to not use herbicides. Since the very inception of the Homeless Garden Project we've been certified organic, so the amount of work, physical work, is limitless.

But really what keeps me going is the people. People afford me energy. Because I say I'm the farm director at the Homeless Garden Project, these people who are heroes, farmers, people on the streets, you name it, will listen to what I have to say or at least answer my questions. Just being able to talk to all of these amazing people has sustained me, because, you know, working in a nonprofit is not always all glory days. Especially with the economy it can be a little demoralizing

at times. We never know if we have money. Just working in that environment all the time and thinking, God, I'm working so hard.

For those young folks who want to be nonprofit farmers, working in a nonprofit farm, your dedication is to the idea. It can't be about money at all. I'm not in this to get rich. If you were on a regular farm, the harder you work, the more you hopefully will get paid. But at the Homeless Garden, the harder I work, I'm always going to get paid the same.

Reti: Have you seen an increase in the number of homeless people applying since the advent of this recession?

Glowaski: I don't see more people, but the stories are changing. The stories are changing, and I do have people coming who have lost their jobs in the most recent economic collapse. It's very heart-wrenching. We work with thirteen people, and there's always this debate of qualitative versus quantitative in our organization. Do we work with more people or do we work with less, pay them more, give people more value? And also, how stretched can we get? But then we get caught in this cycle of wanting to work with more people, one, because that's why we do what we do, and then also, just from a funding level, if we say we worked with thirteen homeless people for the year and we're not able to articulate these thousands of other people we touched over the course of the year, who's going to fund that?

We've been around for twenty years. As far as a challenge, I think that is our blessing and that's our curse. At times the Homeless Garden Project can be old news to people. It's not quite as sexy and young and hip. But it *is*. It is. These

ideas about the green economy and of local food—the Homeless Garden Project has got to be a part of that. You hear about Van Jones talking about green apartheid. We've been talking about green apartheid for twenty years, that the green economy can't just be for rich people, that the green economy has to be for all people. That's why we've been training homeless folks for so long. Over five hundred people have gone through the training program at the Homeless Garden since its inception, which is incredible. And I think there's that chunk of people, and then there's the Jered Lawsons, and Amy Courtney[9] from Freewheelin' Farm and Ken Dickerson from Eco-Farm. I mean, tons of people have had their first experiences farming at the Homeless Garden Project, their first opportunity to be involved with agriculture. Whenever a young person comes onto the farm now, I think, what farm are *you* going to start. What are *you* going to do one day? There are all these really bright kids who come from all over, who were like me. They don't know much about agriculture, but they come to the Homeless Garden to learn.

And so in the future, I think one of the things that's going to be important is for us—right now we lease our land, and so we are not permanent at all, and so the Homeless Garden Project is homeless still. And until we find the spot that we can be at for the next twenty, fifty, one hundred years, I think for us that's always going to be this thing that, you know, hangs over.

Reti: Because you've already had to move once, from the Pelton Street property.

Glowaski: We had to move once from Pelton. And where we're at now on Delaware, is not supposed to be permanent. A few weeks ago I asked, "Well, can

I plant out an orchard? Because, what the heck, you know? I don't see anything going on." And they said, "Well, you're really probably not going to be there for more than three years, so there's probably no point to plant out an orchard.

It's been that way forever at the Homeless Garden Project. Since we've been there it has been, like, oh, you're probably not going to be there for more than a couple, few years, so there's no point in getting bigger or putting in an orchard or buying a tractor. We never really have known. For years we've been working with that as the undercurrent. And there's a point in time where you, as the farm manager, whether it's myself, Patrick, anyone who's been there—you're like, well, we just have to act like we're going to be here forever, and [if] we're not, then we're not. Because in farming, of course I'm thinking about my daily goals, but you have one-year, five-year, ten-year—I have twenty-year goals for the farm, that I would want to set in place or at least get the ball rolling on now for twenty years later. But you're not able to because we really don't know.

We have found the spot at the Pogonip. Ten years ago we were supposed to move there. It's a little bit of a white elephant because it's, like, here it is; come take it. But, oh, by the way, you just need two or three million to move on up there—because with all of the infrastructure, the impact statements, all of the consulting fees, figuring out the water, all of these things, it's like this pie-in-the-sky thing. We're struggling as an organization just day-to-day. Not that we're struggling to stay afloat, but it can feel like a struggle sometimes, economically, budgetarily. I'm thinking, How are we ever going to move up to the Pogonip. How can we ever—

Reti: So, wait, let's back up on that one a little bit.

Glowaski: Yes.

Reti: So what is this land in the Pogonip, and what would be the arrangement that you would make to use it?

Glowaski: So the Pogonip by UCSC is this beautiful park that used to be owned by the state and then was given to the city. The city owned this property, and it was kind of, like, what are we going do with this property? And a big debate raged in Santa Cruz based on ecology and environmentalism. There were environmentalists who were just pure environmentalists [claps hands]: open space, don't touch it, don't do anything. And then there were environmentalists who said, "This needs to be a place for people and it needs to be open. We need to find ways to use it and share it." This was a debate that happened in Santa Cruz early in the nineties, and the social folks won. They won, and they said the Homeless Garden Project can move up to this twelve-acre field right next to the university, and there's the old clubhouse, and we'll be able to run a large farm, and we could be there forever.

Reti: It would be fabulous!

Glowaski: That was the dream. So for over twelve years we've thought we were moving to the Pogonip, but we've never been able to get through whatever hurdles are constantly in front of us to be able to get up there. Again, it feels like a white elephant. Right now, our offices and the farm are at two different places. As an organization, we're split. There's only four or five of us in the organization

other than the trainees right now, so we're not big, but even being a mile and a half away from each other— And the farm doesn't have electricity, so we don't have computers. I mean, we're kind of out there in La-la Land and we're not together—the administration and the social side of it. We're just not all together.

Reti: So the offices are down on West Cliff Drive.

Glowaski: By the boardwalk. We have a store and office right by the boardwalk. That's where we do the flower arrangements and everything. But there's still this disconnect. So the idea has been that when we move to the Pogonip the offices and the store and the farm were all going to be together, and that all of our communication problems will be solved because we'll be able to shout across the field to each other.

There's never been a nonprofit, or none that I know of, involved in sustainable agriculture that was able to break the ceiling of being self-sustaining, self-funded. There's a lot of nonprofit-type farming entities, but we're all reliant on outside monies. In an environment like this economy the dangers in that are all too clear. The way we're set up, to pay so many people to farm with us—we'll never be able to pay for that many people the way we farm now. Now, if we were farming ten acres and were row cropping and we had some gardens and we still did our flowers, I am confident I'd be able to figure out a way to make enough money to pay for ten or twelve, fifteen, twenty trainees. But right now, we farm three acres by hand.

One of my goals has been—and the ED who hired me told me this was going to be my mission—to bring more money in from the farm. That's why the CSA has

gotten so much bigger since I've been there, because that was what I was charged with when I started. We now use a 14-horsepower BCS rototiller that we had always had, but it sat out in the rain for four years. So I took it up to Mr. Webb, who lives up in Soquel—he's this BCS dealer, small farm supply guy—

Reti: He's still there. Wow.

Glowaski: Yes, Lowell Webb. He has totally taken me on and taught me how to work on small engines and taught me how to work on this rototiller. I still go up and work with him now, not for money, just to go up and be with this guy, because he teaches me so much, you know?

When I started, we were probably only farming about an acre and a half, so we've gotten bigger (with three acres). We've tried to bring in more money and tried to farm more efficiently so I can run a large CSA and at least bring in more from the farm. But really, for us to be able to really crack that bubble will be to farm at the Pogonip and to farm on a much larger scale with tools—tractors and implements and things like that, that will allow us to grow enough to generate income for the project. Right now with the CSA, we're going to bringing in forty or fifty grand this year. That is, I'd say, pretty good.

Reti: Yes.

Glowaski: But the dream is to do three times that much. One of my goals while I'm at the project is to implement systems that will allow us to do that, so that no matter what, when I leave, someone will be able to come in and be able to take over a smooth, well-oiled, functioning farm.

Reti: Even if you're expanding to a larger site.

Glowaski: Even if we're expanding, yes. I don't know if I'll be at the Homeless Garden when we move or not. I would love to be a part of creating that space and that farm, but I also think I came to the project at a time when Patrick needed someone. We needed to talk about ourselves in that relevant way again. Since I've been there, I've really tried to do that, just to be proud of who we are. Whenever someone says, "Oh, the Homeless Garden Project. You should change the name. It's a terrible name: 'homeless'"—I say, "You know, I'm just about over people telling us that we can't be who we are, that we have to act like we're anything different than"— Well, really what we are is people. Maybe we should be the People Garden Project or something. But I don't think we have anything to be ashamed of. I think that we actually have a lot to teach people.

Reti: What kind of impact has the Homeless Garden Project had across the country? Are there other projects across the country modeled on yours?

Glowaski: Yes, there're tons. We were recognized years ago as a model project by World Hunger Year. And there's a group in Chicago called Growing Home. I think that guy who I met in New York City [the beekeeper] must have worked for Growing Home. There's Growing Home, and the Kensington Institute in Philadelphia works with homeless individuals. There's a group in Indiana who's trying to work with homeless youth. People come to the Homeless Garden all the time and say, "We want to learn from you about what you're doing. A few months ago a woman from San Francisco came down and said, "We're doing a homeless garden project in San Francisco. Will you advise us on what to do?"

And that's what I want us as an organization to start doing more of, is starting to write down what we do: our curriculum, what we do in our training program, how we work with youth when they come onto the farm, all of these things into a package so that it can be a tool for people. As it is, people come and they glean knowledge off of us, any info they can get. They'll probably come and work on the farm, see how it's set up. There's a lot more going on than that, and so I would love to see us formalize our ability to teach others.

Reti: That would be fabulous.

Glowaski: I think that's a natural progression. Again, that's something that solidifies the idea of the Homeless Garden Project. We've been around for almost twenty years. I mean, we have staying power. We're not going to give up at this point. I don't think there is any danger of us not being around. But it's, like, when do we say we're going to be here forever? You know, instead of just kind of hanging around, hanging around. It's really not like that.

Probably one of our big goals this year is to start formalizing some of that stuff, some of these tools that we can teach others with. The Homeless Garden Project couldn't exist without the community. It very much was a community-based type project, people getting together and throwing ideas around. The CSA was the same way. The community of Santa Cruz has been incredibly supportive of us over the years, but I think what's in your back door you kind of forget about sometimes, you know? Everybody says, "Oh, I've been to the Homeless Garden Project." Anybody I talk to, I say—(and I'll say it to you when we finish), "You should come down and visit us." I say it to everybody. So many people say, "Oh,

yeah, yeah. I was at the beginning of the Homeless Garden Project over by the Lighthouse Field." Well, we haven't been there for, like fourteen years or something.

Reti: [Laughs.]

Glowaski: That's cool, you know, but come out and be a part of it again because it's still a great idea, and it's still just as important. I think probably considering food and oil and water [resource limitations]—I mean, even today, more than ever, the Homeless Garden Project is needed. There are not many farms that are less than a mile from downtown Santa Cruz that are growing food. Our CSA [share] is supposed to feed four members of a family for a week. Ideally we're feeding over three hundred people every single week, and we're a mile from downtown. So how do we find ways to make sure that things like the Homeless Garden Project are going to stick around? Because I think more and more in the future that we're going to be needed.

There's a farmer, Lynn [R.] Miller, who's the editor of the *Small Farm Journal* up in Oregon. I heard him speak, and he said, "There's never been a better time to be a small farmer." I repeat: There's never been a better time to be a small farmer. I really believe that. I think people are turning around. Like I said, we've been very supported over the years, but hopefully we can figure out a way to stick around for a long time and be solid.

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[1] See the oral history with Gail Harlamoff for more about Food What?! and also http://gardenclassroom.googlepages.com/home
[2] See the oral histories with Orin Martin and Jim Leap in this series.
[3]See the oral history with Bob Scowcroft in this series.
[4]See the oral history with Jered Lawson and Nancy Vail of Pie Ranch in this series.

[5]See the oral history with Page Smith, Randall Jarrell, ed. *Page Smith: Founding Cowell College and UCSC, 1964-1973, (*Regional History Project, University Library, UCSC, 1996.) http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/smith.html

[6] See the oral history with Paul Lee in Maya Hegege and Randall Jarrell, *The Early History of UCSC's Farm and Garden Project*, (Regional History Project, University Library, 2003) http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/farmgarden.html

[7] See the oral history with Jim Nelson for more on Freya von Moltke.

[8] See the oral history with Darrie Ganzhorn in this series for more on the early history of the Homeless Garden Project.

[9]See the oral history with Amy Courtney in this series.