

F.O.L.K. Foliage Festival held Green Mountain Farm-to-School programs to connect schools and farms

LOWELL — Fall is a time of change: Ski resorts prepare for the winter ski season; farmers harvest their crops, farmer's wives can and preserve; but for some K- to eighth-grade students throughout the NEK Fall is also a time of Festivals!

One of the grandest is the F.O.L.K. Foliage Festival that was held on Sept. 21, 2008. It is bringing students, parents, teachers, farmers and community members together. This year, for the first time ever, the festival began with a parade down Route 100! Loaded with horses, alpacas, old tractors, local political candidates, local business owners, floats and many community members, the parade proudly made its way to the Lowell Graded School where it kicked off the festivities at the school.

The festival included many fun activities. Kids Garden Olympic stations were set up, catching the eyes of both children and parents. Winners' of the potato sack race, gourd bowling, bean bag toss, or skeet ball got to choose from a large selection of prizes donated by the Community National Bank.

Vendors were also set up in the area, so as the children played, parents could browse through creations of local artisans; Natural Earth Farm, Gert Tetreault's farm stand, Pine Brook Bakery and Bloom, and Dick Snow Photography were just some of them.

Inside the gym was full of commotion over a chili contest, a community harvest dinner and a silent auction! The dinner was the delicious result of the collaborative efforts of F.O.L.K. festival volunteers, Debbie Merrill, and the students of the Planting Seeds of

Change Garden Program.

A smorgasbord of spaghetti, many salads, cakes, cookies, and muffins! Many of the dishes featured local food items and produce from the school garden! After dinner, an auction of donated items was held, with the proceeds going to the F.O.L.K. group.

F.O.L.K. is an acronym that stands for Friends of Lowell Kids. It is a parent group working to raise money to build a new playground for the school. The group has events throughout the year but only one Harvest Festival.

This year additional sponsors for the event were Green Mountain Farm to School (GMFTS), and the Lowell Historical Society. GMFTS is a non-profit partnering with the Lowell Graded School's Farm-to-School Program. GMFTS provides programs to connect schools and farms through food, education, and in this case FUN!

GMFTS runs the Planting Seeds of Change Program, which works with students to create and manage the Lowell school garden. Produce from the garden goes to the schools kitchen for daily school lunches, as well as for events like the F.O.L.K. Foliage Festival!

Watch out for upcoming F.O.L.K. or GMFTS events. Or to get more information contact Glo Breisach at 744-6109 for F.O.L.K. or Katherine Sims for GMFTS at ksims@gmfts.org.

(Submitted by Katherine Sims, Executive Director, Green Mountain Farm-to-School — Newport)



Pam Tetreault with her Farmall Tractor in the Community Parade. (Courtesy photo)