

Trailside Organic Farm



In March 2021, Cornwall Manor announced their partnership with the Rodale Institute, a nonprofit research and education institution located in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, that has been leading the way in healing people and the planet since 1947. Focused on growing the regenerative organic agriculture movement through research, farmer training and consumer education, Rodale Institute currently operates eight campuses in the U.S. and one in Europe. Cornwall Manor is proud to be the first retirement community to partner with the Rodale Institute to feature *Trailside*, an onsite organic farm.

Much development has happened since our last *ManorLife* update. Site improvements were completed and we are in our first year as a functioning farm, using organic practices. Winter Ryegrass (cover crop) was planted last fall and winter to help build a healthy soil structure; the greenhouse season began in February and cold crops such as onions, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce and spinach were sown; a caterpillar tunnel (also known as a hoop house) was constructed, which is beneficial to extend the growing season and create a controlled growing environment; spring vegetables were planted – and lettuce grown on the farm was harvested and used in dining areas on campus; spring cover crops were planted to continue improvements of soil health; summer vegetables (tomatoes, eggplant, bell and sweet peppers, onions, scallions, leeks, cucumbers, squash, cantaloupe, watermelon, sweet corn, potatoes and sweet potatoes and fresh herbs) were planted as well as flowers. Flowers are beneficial to attract pollinators and add beauty to the *Trailside* site; an assistant farm manager was hired; information

sessions and workshops begun and a volunteer program was implemented for residents to assist at *Trailside*. All in a day's work, right?

While that is easier said than done, the progress and success at *Trailside* is contributed to Ian Frederick, Farm Manager and newly-hired Assistant Farm Manager, Katie Landis, who both oversee the day-to-day operations of our farm. Cornwall Manor's first growing year at *Trailside* is a trial period. As our farm managers continue soil improvement with cover crops and composting, plantings were done on one-acre to see what would grow successfully as well as tackling challenges – such as health of plants, managing insects, combating groundhog and rabbit issues, what pollinating flowers will be beneficial, etc.

“The greatest thing about farming is that every day is different,” shares Ian. “Our days include watering, weeding, maintenance of plants and fertilizing, just to name a few.” Formerly the Farm Operations Field Technician at Rodale Institute, Ian began working with our Cornwall Manor team in September 2021 as the Farm Manager. While in his position at Rodale, Ian helped with maintaining and designing the landscape. Ian has a work background in landscaping and ornamental gardening. In 2019, Ian received a Bachelor's degree in Sustainability from Messiah College. He prioritizes landscaping practices that provide ecological benefits as well as aesthetic value. Ian has experience with integrating pollinator habitats on Rodale's property. He recalls a high school community service project where he helped his environmental science teacher raise brook trout



from eggs to raise awareness about the quality of local streams. Ian knew that he needed a job where he could be outdoors and not at a desk.

Katie Landis joined Ian at *Trailside* in March 2022 as the Assistant Farm Manager. She recalls always having a garden as a child and likes to grow things. "It's a fun process with a lot of trial and error," Katie shares. "It's very rewarding to see the end result when growing food from seeds." Katie is a "local" and lives right around the corner from *Trailside*. She has been farming for a living since 2012, beginning as an intern growing herbs and cut flowers at Lancaster Farmacy. Her five years there taught her how to use high tunnels and greenhouses to extend the growing season, how to use irrigation to get the appropriate amount of water to the crops and how to manage weeds. After leaving the Farmacy, she worked at Homefields Care Farm where they grew a large variety of vegetables that were sold to the community through a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Working at Homefields taught her how to operate tractors and the different implements that could be attached to the front or back to make field work easier.

Ian and Katie also manage *Trailside* events. Residents had the opportunity to participate in the first onsite workshop on April 14 to transplant garlic from the hoop house into the ground. Our first farm market featuring lettuce was held on April 29. Produce from *Trailside* first fulfills the needs in all of our campus dining areas and additional supply is sold to residents and staff at farm markets. Residents have enjoyed purchasing fresh herbs, beautiful flower bouquets, sweet cherry tomatoes, colorful peppers, summer

squash, juicy cantaloupes and more right on our Buckingham Campus. Having hyper-local (items consumed where they are grown) produce/farm products is a benefit to our senior living community as well as the education component that our partnership offers. A variety of information sessions and workshops are offered to residents to expand their knowledge and get involved in the benefits of organic produce for people and the planet.

Additional plans for the remainder of this year include harvesting fall crops and produce, construction of a bank barn that will include a processing area, meeting space for seminars and workshops, electricity and water; incorporating irrigation lines and possibly constructing a second hoop house. We know that *Trailside* would not be possible without the hard work of farmers and we are grateful to Ian and Katie for their dedication to *Trailside* and our partnership with the Rodale Institute. We can already feel and see the positive impact!

Photos (previous page) - Ian Frederick and Katie Landis prune tomatoes at the farm; the first Farm Market featuring a variety of lettuces was held on April 29; flower bouquets are sold at weekly Farm Markets; residents had the opportunity to transplant garlic during the first resident event at *Trailside* on April 14.

Photos (this page) - colorful and sweet cherry tomatoes for sale at weekly Farm Markets; lettuces growing in the hoop house at the Farm; residents attending a Seed Potato workshop on May 3; aerial photograph of *Trailside* taken in July 2022.