



Blue Lotus Farm & Retreat Center

"Serving those with special needs, located in the countryside of Newburg, Wisconsin"

Summer 2015

SUCCESS ALL AROUND!

Our annual "Farm Party" fundraiser took place on June 13th and was a great success! Featuring a Frankie & Annette beach theme, guests noshed on some of summer's favorite foods (burgers, kabobs and corn, oh my!), while Freddy Bliffert and the Surf Dudes put on a fun assortment of beach tunes. Guests were able to "Hang Ten" and were on the hunt for the elusive yellow-polka dot bikini (did you find it!). Thank you to everyone who attended the event, participated in the auction and raffle, and continue to support us year after year... **Where would we be without you?!**



The 10th Annual Blue Lotus Golf Outing took place on Monday July 13th and was also a great success. Guests enjoyed a sunny day while making their way around the beautifully kept course of Hidden Glen in Cedarburg. Following golf, guests enjoyed a delicious dinner, and participated in a raffle, silent auction and live auction, where the highest bidders went home with fabulous trips and items. Thank you to everyone who supported this event! And special thanks to Sharon & Bill La Macchia, Mike Going and all the staff at Hidden Glen for their tremendous hospitality.



And finally...**WE DID IT!** We are happy to report that thanks to all of YOU, we successfully reached our \$10,000 match goal! This is an amazing accomplishment, and we are grateful to our wonderful supporters, and the generous donor who proposed this match challenge. All funds raised this summer will go towards programming and facility improvements.



In the Blue Lotus Spotlight: Community Projects for Seniors

Blue Lotus has the privilege of hosting many different types of groups each year. Community Projects for Seniors is one of our long time friends with over 10 summers of visiting. Their days at Blue Lotus are filled with fishing, boating, music, and lots of laughter. They began the mission by serving 100 meals on Christmas day in 1986. Currently, they serve more than 15,000 meals every year. Community Projects visits Blue Lotus many times throughout the



summer offering city-bound seniors the opportunity to enjoy a day in the country. If you would like to learn more about Community Projects visit their website at <http://cpforseniors.org>



We are still open when the leaves start to fall...

Fall is a wonderful time to visit Blue Lotus! We still host our Special Needs Groups, but also host Staff retreats and workshops as well as Caregiver retreats and workshops. Our indoor pavilion space expands our program offerings by enabling an extensive array of educational and recreational opportunities geared more for an indoor setting. The space includes a spacious common and dining area, full service kitchen, handicapped accessible restrooms, and a projection system.

Call us at
262.675.2473
to set up
your outing!



For more information on programs & events, please visit www.bluelotusfarm.org

Blue Lotus Farm & Retreat Center is a 501c3 tax exempt charitable organization

A CONVERSATION WITH SUSAN BLIFFERT

by Chris Miota | Blue Lotus Volunteer



On a warm and rainy afternoon recently, I had the pleasure of chatting with Susan Bliffert about the Blue Lotus Farm & Retreat Center. Susan serves as Staff Advisor in the Blue Lotus office, and also acts as Treasurer of the Blue Lotus Board of Trustees. In addition, she has a private practice as an Occupational Therapist, with a focus on working with people who have chronic or life-altering conditions, incorporating the emotional and spiritual work that is so connected to living well with these challenges. What follows is a brief synopsis of our wide-ranging conversation, one filled with thoughtfulness and laughter and the real sense of a woman who is passionately committed to the mission of Blue Lotus, now and in the future.

How did Blue Lotus get its start?

Fred (Bliffert) and I were kind of dating when he took me to the property owned by his father in Newburg. "I just want to show you this," he said, after we hiked the long trail into a farm field with cows and corn and lots of barren land. We were sitting up in a tree, a couple of young kids, dreaming. "Wouldn't it be great to have some sort of camp out here someday?" I said, and Fred, being the kind of guy he is, said "Yeah, and wouldn't it be great to bring a bunch of kids out here?" Then we kind of forgot about it for 20 years or so. After Fred's father passed on, we spent a lot of time getting the place cleaned up from years of neglect, and we could see the beauty of the place. All of a sudden, the memory of Fred and I sitting up in a tree, dreaming, came back—and Blue Lotus was born.

What is the significance of the name "Blue Lotus"?

We wanted to find a name that would reflect qualities that were important to our work. According to myth, the lotus flower has a thousand petals, and as it opens it reminds us of the different aspects of people, of their spirit and their uniqueness as individuals. The blue lotus is quite unique—like our visitors. Many people who come to Blue Lotus day camps live with physical or other disabilities, or their day-to-day environment is largely one of concrete and city noise and stress. Right from the beginning, we saw nature as a potent healer. We wanted to provide green spaces, with trees and trails and many-colored gardens, and fresh air and a sense of peace—a real escape, a retreat from the everyday. "Blue Lotus" references all of that.

What do you like best about your work with Blue Lotus? What's most challenging?

The best thing is being part of a mission that allows for people with diverse challenges to be free—even for a day—using nature as a healing force. People are helped out of their wheelchairs and into canoes to cruise the quiet waters of our lake. Or walk the labyrinth and embrace silence. Or visit with friends, old and new. Or just sit on the grass, and relax, and breathe. Blue Lotus is a place to be free, to be who you are, with no outside expectations to be one way or another. One of our visitors, a young girl, said "Blue Lotus is my favorite place to go. Nobody makes fun of me here." Most challenging thing? Probably fund-raising and grant writing. It never stops; it's vital to our work here. We are so very grateful to our volunteers and those good people who support our mission.

So, if someone were to give Blue Lotus a million dollars?

I'd probably hire lots of great people to keep this going . . . and then stand back!

What do you like to do for fun when you aren't working your regular job or working with Blue Lotus?

I'm a very busy grandma to four darling girls (two 3-year olds and two 7-month olds). I love to garden and bike and cook really good food. I love to travel; I'm learning French! I belong to a writing group with good friends; we meet regularly, and I really like keeping that part of my life alive.

Final thoughts?

The biggest thing is that Blue Lotus is a community-building endeavor. The mission is for the community to build an ever-stronger community, and bring more people into that. It's a networking project. It's not just for the groups that visit here, but also for the community of volunteers and the important idea of volunteerism. As one of them said recently while planting flowers and getting ready for our groups, "This is so much fun to be out here . . . and doing good!" Blue Lotus is meant to continue. We're just supposed to do it, that's all.

Like us on Facebook!



CONTACT US:

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 211
Mequon, WI 53092

Email: info@bluelotusfarm.org

Phone: 262-675-2473

STAFF:

Becca Stringer, Executive Director
Michelle Spettel, Office Administrator
Susan Bliffert, Staff Advisor
& Volunteers Galore!

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Fred Bliffert, President
President & Owner, Bliffert Lumber

David Lemke, Vice President
Owner, KingsHead Hair Salon

Mark McHale, Secretary
Materials Manager, ACS Group

Susan Bliffert, Treasurer
Owner, Reflections in Health

Charlie Stevens, Trustee
Attorney—Michael Best & Friedrich, LLP

Dan Miota, Trustee
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

David Slinde, Trustee
Community Development

For more information on programs & events, please visit www.bluelotusfarm.org

Blue Lotus Farm & Retreat Center is a 501c3 tax exempt charitable organization