

HIDDEN VILLA



Hidden Villa strives to inspire a just and sustainable future through **outdoor education, responsible agriculture & community engagement.**



History

Hidden Villa is a nonprofit educational organization that uses its organic farm, wilderness and community to provide opportunities to learn about the environment and social justice.

Hidden Villa sits over 1600 acres of open space in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains forty miles south of San Francisco. It was originally the home of **Frank and Josephine Duveneck** who purchased the land in 1924 and offered it as a gathering place for discussion, reflection and incubation of social reform.

Over the following decades, the Duveneck family established the first American Youth Hostel on the Pacific Coast (1937), the first consciously multiracial summer camp in the United States (1945) and Hidden Villa's Outdoor Education Program (1970). The Trust for Hidden Villa was established as a nonprofit in 1960.

Philosophy

Hidden Villa remains true to the values and ideals modeled by the Duvenecks. **A commitment to inclusion, fairness and justice transcends across program areas while environmental stewardship preserves the farm and surrounding open space.**

Social justice and environmental sustainability are supported through Hidden Villa's work to:

- ☛ Ensure access to Outdoor Education through scholarships and school stipends
- ☛ Promote cultural understanding through educational experiences that teach respect for the environment and each other
- ☛ Provide healthy, organic, fruits and vegetables to surrounding communities in need
- ☛ Demonstrate environmental stewardship across all programs and experiences

Approach

Hidden Villa annually serves **over 26,000 children** with their programs across Santa Clara and San Mateo counties while engaging almost **1000 volunteers** across three focus areas:

Outdoor Education ☛ **Sustainable Agriculture** ☛ **Community Engagement**

Efforts are partially funded by income generating programs and services, with donations from individuals, corporations and foundations accounting for approximately **50%** of annual funding.

Hidden Villa continued...

Outdoor Education

The **goal** of the Outdoor Education strategy is for all children to recognize the interconnectedness and diversity within nature and understand the importance of these characteristics among themselves, society and their community.

Outcomes:

- Learning environments are diverse and inclusive across socio-economic groups
- Children learn scientific concepts from nature
- Children are environmental stewards in their community
- Children are curious, self-confident, critical thinkers who value collaboration and diversity
- Teachers understand how to use nature to teach Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in and out of the classroom

Sustainable Agriculture

The **goal** of the agriculture strategy is to demonstrate and sustain a transferable model of localized environmentally responsible food production through small-scale, organic farming while preserving the land and increasing access to healthy food in surrounding communities.

Outcomes:

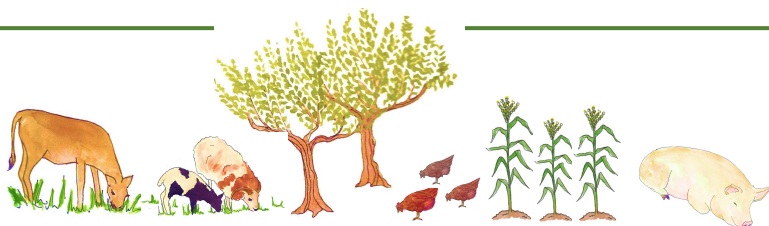
- Preservation of open space while demonstrating sustainable agriculture to the community
- Productive organic closed-loop farm which improves biodiversity and animal welfare while reducing carbon emissions and resource use
- Apprenticeship graduates replicate closed-loop, local farming beyond Hidden Villa
- Increased access to healthy food in surrounding communities through CSA membership, farmer's markets and donations to Community Services Agencies
- Visitors are inspired to replicate sustainable practices in their own gardens

Community Engagement

The **goal** of the community engagement strategy is to develop a highly engaged and inspired community who supports and advocates for the environment and humanity.

Outcomes:

- Community members **explore** and **learn** about environmental sustainability and social justice
- Community members **participate** in programs and help **educate** others
- Community members inspire others to **support** and **advocate** for Hidden Villa



Outdoor Education at Hidden Villa

The goal of the Outdoor Education strategy at Hidden Villa is for all children to recognize the interconnectedness and diversity within nature and understand the importance of these characteristics among themselves, society and their community.



Overview

Outdoor Education has been an integral part of Hidden Villa's history, legacy and focus since its inception in 1970 and has evolved into a comprehensive set of programming for children of all ages and backgrounds. Donations from grants and individuals ensure broad access from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

The education program begins with pre-school and continues through high school. Each experience transforms the natural environment into a classroom and nature's complex ecosystems into the basis of lessons. Programming during and after school hours provides a broad range of access across ages. Young adults often continue as interns during college years and beyond.

School Based

Students from Santa Clara and San Mateo counties experience unique outdoor and wilderness education at Hidden Villa. For some students it is the first time on a farm or near wilderness. For all students it is an opportunity learn from nature.

Each program uses age appropriate activities to illustrate scientific concepts and promote environmental stewardship. The learning model and facilitated activities develop curiosity, critical thinking, self confidence and teamwork which is later exhibited in the classroom.

Teachers learn a unique way to teach the interconnected nature of science in the real world and are given a leverageable experience to take back into the classroom. Additional teacher training courses demonstrate in-depth approaches to make science tangible and exciting.

Young Children (Pre-school - 1st Grade)

Farm tours introduce children to the plants and animals of a working farm through hands-on exploration. As familiarity increases, the focus shifts to how plants, animals and humans interact with surroundings.



Older Children (2nd – 12th Grade)

The curriculum expands beyond the working farm to include the wilderness and related environmental issues. Programs introduce synergies between humanely-raised farm animals and sustainable agriculture as well as environmental concepts such as erosion, water consumption and conservation, and alternative energy sources.

Outdoor Education continued...

Out of School Time

Additional programming for school aged children is offered outside of school hours; after-school, school-break and weekend programs allow individuals to select a specific focus. Programs range from general farm-based learning to comprehensive animal husbandry.

Summer Camp (Kinder – High School)

Hidden Villa summer camp has brought diverse children together since 1945.

Broad access combined with a curriculum of inclusion & acceptance takes advantage of camper diversity. For older campers, social justice becomes a significant focus. All campers increase their sense of community empathy for others.

Youth Development (Middle & High School)

Young adult programs at Hidden Villa focus on creating environmental stewards with a deep empathy and appreciation for every individual.

Programs deepen focus to cover wilderness survival skills, complexities of soil ecology, benefits of local food, the living watershed, as well as essentials of social justice. Team building activities allow teens to challenge themselves in wilderness surroundings.

After School Programs

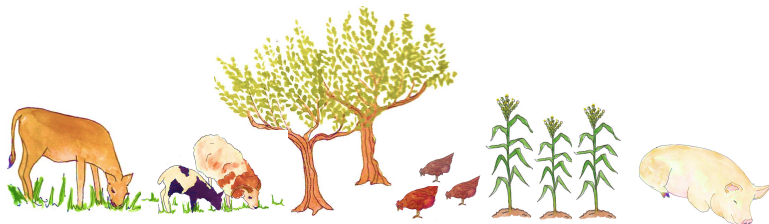
After-school programs offer children from kindergarten through high school an opportunity to spend a portion of their day in nature, outside of a classroom. Programs are theme based, allowing the curriculum to follow children's interests and leverage spontaneous teachable moments.

Next Generation Science Standards

The opportunity to explore connections across Physical, Life, Earth and Space Science and Engineering Design is core to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The programs at Hidden Villa provide natural examples of these connections; for example, a spider web or beaver dam bridges engineering and life science.

How Donations Make Outdoor Education Possible

Outdoor Education is essential to Hidden Villa's work towards a just and sustainable future. Scholarships provide access to children across the socioeconomic spectrum who otherwise could not participate; residential camp addresses transportation, housing and family constraints. This increased access brings broad diversity to Hidden Villa programs and is key to creating empathy and acceptance within young people.



Sustainable Agriculture at Hidden Villa

The goal of the agriculture strategy at Hidden Villa is to demonstrate and sustain a transferable model of localized environmentally responsible food production through small-scale, organic farming while increasing access to healthy food in surrounding communities.



Overview

Agricultural practices are dedicated to producing the best quality vegetables, fruits, meat and eggs while preserving the land. The model strives to minimize outside inputs, promote biodiversity, value animal welfare, and respect the capacity and wildness of the land.

While organic agriculture is becoming more common, truly closed loop sustainable farms are unique and demonstrate that there is significant environmental benefit beyond the absence of pesticides. Rotating animals through the fields allows animals to live well while leveraging their natural behaviors to do the work machines or humans regularly do. This rotational managed grazing deposits fertilizer in fields, uses animal foraging to turn soil, exposes animals to varied diets, and controls pests naturally. Carbon emissions are reduced as animal waste is immediately composted, tractor and field equipment use is curtailed. Required inputs and outputs are created, used and disposed of onsite.

Garden & Crops



Edibles at Hidden Villa take many forms. Small diverse gardens are used as educational tools for programs and visitors. These gardens demonstrate planting, irrigation and harvest practices and are used to introduce children to the diverse set of local fruits, vegetables, flowers and herbs. Larger row-planted fields efficiently deliver produce and flowers to local residents and serve as a training ground for farm interns.

Farm produce is sold through the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in weekly boxes and at the Los Altos farmer's market, while 25% is donated to the Mountain View Community Services Agency food bank. Flowers are available through the Hidden Villa CSA and are integral to organic pest management.

Animals



The farm animals at Hidden Villa serve farming, educational and nutritional purposes - animal husbandry strives to maintain all three in balance by prioritizing animal welfare and land stewardship. A single pig can turn soil in the fields, be an educational resource for program participants and visitors, and deliver the highest quality meat to the farmer's market.

All of the animals Hidden Villa takes to market are raised on a pasture based system that excludes the use of antibiotics, hormones, or synthetic dewormers. All grain fed to feeder pigs, chickens and dairy animals is organic and sheep and goats are raised on a completely grass based diet. Breeds are chosen for their adaptability to a pasture based system and efficient use of the locally available forage.

Sustainable Agriculture continued...

Agricultural Education

Visitors across all ages learn from touring and interacting with the farm's fields and animals.

For those that want more education there are programs for school groups, for young people outside of school hours, families, adults, and those considering a career in sustainable agriculture.

Programs include:

- 🐾 Future Farmer Training
- 🐾 Cow Milking, Storage & Preparation
- 🐾 Cheese Making
- 🐾 Pickling, Canning & Jam Making
- 🐾 Sheep Shearing
- 🐾 Wildflower Hikes
- 🐾 Native Plants – planting & benefits
- 🐾 Organic, Sustainable Home Gardens

Agricultural Apprenticeships

Young adults focused on a career in organic sustainable agriculture come from all over the country to live and learn at Hidden Villa. Of those that come, one or two are selected each year to stay on, continue their learning, and become “journeymen” and “journeywomen”.

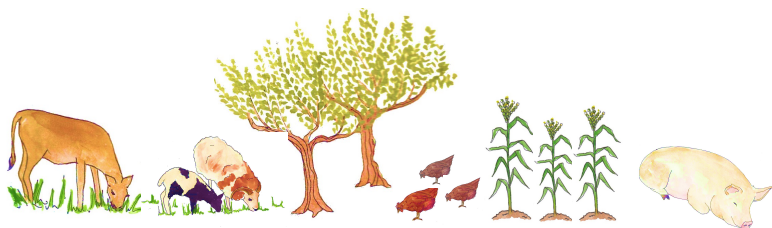
The intern program expands the benefits of sustainable agriculture far beyond the proximate surroundings; farm and animal husbandry interns leave their 1-2 year experience fully capable of running similar scale operations in other communities.

This diaspora of Hidden Villa agricultural apprentices is expanding the availability of sustainably farmed, organic food to communities outside of Los Altos and surrounding areas.

How Donations Make Agriculture at Hidden Villa Possible

Agriculture is essential to Hidden Villa's work towards a just and sustainable future. Access to organic, nutritionally dense food is a challenge for many families, especially those who struggle to put adequate food on the table. Mountain View's Community Services Agency distributes over 5 tons of food each week to low income individuals and families; over 3,500 Mountain View residents (about 1 in 30 residents) are registered with this food program.

Since 2006, Hidden Villa has been Mountain View's Community Services Agency single source of organic produce, delivering ~25% of a weekly harvest throughout the growing season; in 2014 this amounted to **over 21,000 servings** of fresh fruit and vegetables.



Community Engagement at Hidden Villa

The goal of the community engagement strategy at Hidden Villa is to develop a highly engaged and inspired society who supports and advocates for the environmental and social justice work at Hidden Villa and in their community.



Overview

The breadth of different ways that one can interact with Hidden Villa provides community members with a personal experience. For those that want to visit, the original farm buildings and surrounding wilderness have been preserved. The Duveneck house provides historic details of the family and their legacy. A myriad of programs for every age are available to those that want to learn.

The CSA program, farmer's market presence, and farm meat sales allow others to experience the agriculture. Volunteers are an integral part of Hidden Villa and provide a unique giving opportunity. Hidden Villa has a way for every individual to support environmental and social justice.

Explore & Learn

Fall through spring, Hidden Villa is open to the community 6 days a week.

- ☛ People visit with animals, hike, picnic and are inspired by nature

Offered year-round, community programming allows families, children and adults to learn about the environment and promote social justice.

- ☛ Programs include tours, hikes, lectures, hands-on workshops, classes, cultural events and community celebrations.

Participate & Educate

A wide range of community members enjoy the organic, seasonal and regionally appropriate fruits and vegetables grown at the farm.

- ☛ Farm produce serves the summer CSA, farmer's market & local food bank.

Local residents in Hidden Villa's volunteer corps are highly engaged; their experiences are rewarding, inspiring and constantly evolving.

- ☛ Over 1,000 volunteers each year teach Outdoor Education and Community Programs, host visitors, help farm crops & manage animals.

Support & Advocate

Individuals, corporations and foundations in the local community provide the donations, volunteers and support that sustain Hidden Villa.

- ☛ Beyond volunteering, individuals sit on the Board of Trustees, Strategic Advisory Committees and include Hidden Villa in their annual giving
- ☛ Corporations host meetings, events and volunteer service days
- ☛ Donations support property and trail upkeep & farm operations