

NCF People: A Conversation with Intern Andy Miller



What did you do this summer? If the answer is “I picked jalapeño peppers, led other interns, and sold produce at a farm stand,” then you may be talking to Andy Miller, a summer intern and farm-stand attendant at Newton Community Farm. If you stopped by the farm this past summer, there is a good chance you met Andy, who was either working in the fields in the morning in his third year as an intern or was staffing the farm stand in the afternoons, quietly reading in the shade or selling farm-fresh produce to customers who came to shop.

Andy started volunteering at the farm after his parents gave him a bit of a push to find something to do as an alternative to day camp. He wanted something that was close to home, outside, and meaningful, so he applied and quickly became a regular at the farm. The second summer he became a paid attendant at the farm stand, and the third summer he took on the role of seasoned intern, which allowed him to develop his leadership skills. As his enthusiasm grew, Andy's family joined the summer CSA share program, and he became involved in the Newton South High School sustainable agriculture program.

Andy said his experience on the farm has been really fulfilling. He was struck by how much Greg, NCF's farm manager, and Dan, NCF's assistant grower, trust the interns to do responsible work, the tasks that translate into revenue for the farm by ensuring produce is available for sale. With supervision, interns are expected to “hit the ground running,” learn from their experiences, apply their growing knowledge, and take on more responsibility. Andy particularly enjoyed the interesting conversations he had with Greg and Dan during lunch and appreciated their knowledge and willingness to listen.



Andy also gained an appreciation for manual labor and the strain of working under the sun for four hours each morning. He described the experience as “almost cathartic, meditative, very relaxing.....clears your head.” He enjoyed the hard, dirty work of harvesting food and found the messy task of washing food in large bins rather refreshing. He said having the very active chickens nearby added a rustic touch to his work and offered some welcome entertainment.

So what's next for Andy? He hopes to apply the many lessons he learned at the farm as he pursues a degree in chemistry at Northeastern University and explores careers in alternative energy. We are grateful that Andy gave his time and talents to the farm for many years and really appreciate his contributions. We wish him tremendous success in his future and as with all the interns, we hope he stays connected to the farm.