



Plowing Forward

Celebrating 20 Years!

January 2026



This year marks a meaningful milestone as The Lands at Hillside Farms celebrates its 20th Anniversary. The farm itself has deep roots, having been privately owned and lovingly stewarded by the Connyingham family since 1881. In 2005, a new chapter began with the formation of the nonprofit The Lands at Hillside Farms — created to teach life choices that are healthy, logical, and sustainable, so that those born 200 years from now will have access to the same or better opportunities and resources we enjoy today.

In 2009, the nonprofit officially purchased the farm from the Connyingham family, ensuring its future as a place of education, stewardship, and community connection. For two decades, Hillside has operated with a clear purpose: to use the 438-acre dairy farm as a living classroom where children and adults alike can learn through hands-on experiences that connect land, animals, food, and personal responsibility.

Over the next twelve months, we will proudly share stories from our journey—our trials, growth, achievements, and even temporary setbacks — all guided by a vision of meaningful, experiential learning. None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of our community. We are deeply grateful to everyone reading this and warmly invite you to join us as we celebrate the past and step together into a bright and healthy future.

Care Farming at Hillside Reaches an

International Stage

Care Farming Services are a complementary, evidence-based approach that intentionally integrates farm environments, animals, and nature into therapeutic and educational programming. Grounded in research from occupational therapy, psychology, public health, and animal-assisted interventions, care farming supports social-emotional regulation, skill development, resilience, and overall well-being. At Hillside Farms, these services are delivered within a working agricultural setting, allowing children of trauma to engage in purposeful, real-world activities alongside animals and the land. These activities also prelude on-farm sessions lead by mental health professionals and trauma therapists. Hillside was the first organization in our region to establish **Care Farming Services** and remains the only operational dairy farm in Pennsylvania offering this unique, research-informed model.

Recently, Hillside's Care Farming work was featured at three distinct professional gatherings, each representing a different sector of human services. Our program was highlighted at the **Pennsylvania Association of Occupational Therapists Annual Conference**, at the **District 7 of the Pennsylvania Courts Behavioral Health Symposium**, and at the **Human Animal Interactions Conference in Africa**. While diverse in focus, each conference provided an important platform to share Hillside's established care farming model with professionals working in healthcare, education, behavioral health, and justice systems.

Together, these presentations extended Hillside's reach from local practice to national and international dialogue, **reinforcing the growing body of evidence supporting farm-based and animal-inclusive therapies**. The conferences also underscored the measurable outcomes associated with thoughtfully integrating farm animals into therapeutic programs—highlighting improvements in engagement, regulation, and meaningful participation. As interest in Care Farming Services continues to grow, we are proud to contribute both practice-based experience and science-backed outcomes to a broader professional conversation.

Pictured below on the left is Suzanne Kapral, Director of Development & Marketing, Hillside Farms, and Dr. Jennifer Dessoie, Chair, Occupational Therapy, Associate Clinical Professor, King's College.



Your PA Tax Credit Can Change a Child's Future

Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program allows businesses to support education by redirecting their Pennsylvania tax dollars to qualified Scholarship Organizations or Educational Improvement Organizations (EIOs). Participants can receive tax credits equal to 75% of their contribution (or up to 90% with a two-year commitment) while directly funding scholarships and innovative educational programs to non-profit organizations. **Participation is simple:** eligible businesses apply through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), make a contribution to an approved organization once credits are awarded, and then claim the credit when filing their Pennsylvania taxes.

Hillside is deeply grateful to the businesses whose support makes this vital program possible, enabling us to provide meaningful farm-based educational services to vulnerable children through our Green Guides program. Investing in children today is an essential step toward building a stronger, more sustainable future for our region.

Recently, **First Keystone Community Bank** contributed \$7,000 to **Hillside's Green Guides Educational Services for Vulnerable Children** through the PA EITC program. **Pictured below from left to right: Todd Serafin, FKCB Commercial Services Officer, Jack W. Jones, FKCB President and CEO, Danielle McCormick, FKCB Dallas Community Office Manager, Chet Mozloom, Executive Director, The Lands at Hillside Farms, Frank McCloskey, Operations Director, The Lands at Hillside Farms, Martin Leandri, FKCB Financial Consultant.**



Green Guides: Expanding Young Minds Through Farm-Based Education

Green Guides is a welcoming farm-based educational program designed to support vulnerable and at-risk youth throughout Northeastern Pennsylvania. Offered in a safe, structured, and nurturing environment, the program uses the power of hands-on learning to engage participants in science, math, history, horticulture, animal care, and sustainable agriculture—turning the farm into a place where curiosity, confidence, and connection can grow.

Green Guides is available to organizations that serve children (and adults) with developmental, physical, or socio-economic challenges. Hillside Farms functions as an adjunct classroom, reinforcing lessons learned in traditional settings while supporting whole-child/person development. Activities are thoughtfully designed to encourage gross and fine motor skills, social interaction, healthy eating, physical activity, teamwork, emotional processing, and self-confidence.

For children with complex medical needs, Green Guides offers calm, sensory-rich experiences, including gentle, up-close interactions with carefully selected animals. The overarching goal is to strengthen physical and emotional well-being while helping students build life skills, make positive choices, and discover their individual strengths.

Westmoreland Club Women's Committee Acts of Kindness Luncheon

We were truly honored to have Hillside's Care Farming program recognized at this year's Acts of Kindness Luncheon, hosted by the Women's Committee of the **Westmoreland Club**. The event was a beautiful reflection of the committee's generosity and commitment to giving back, and we are deeply grateful to the committee members, luncheon attendees, silent auction donors, and the Westmoreland Club for creating such a warm, thoughtful, and inspiring gathering.

The \$5,230 raised through the luncheon will have a meaningful and lasting impact. These funds **will go directly toward providing farm-based trauma services for children** in our community—offering them a safe, nurturing space where healing, connection, and hope can take root. We are sincerely thankful to everyone who stood with us and believes in the power of compassionate, nature-based care. Your kindness is helping change lives, one child at a time.

Together, Hillside Farms staff and community leaders work in partnership to support and strengthen our Care Farming program and the children it serves. **Pictured clockwise are: Suzanne Kapral, Director Development & Marketing HSF, Abby Collins, Director, Education HSF, Dr. Jennifer Dessoie, Chair, Occupational Therapy, Associate Clinical Professor, King's College, Chet Mozloom, Executive Director, HSF, Clancy Harrison, Founder/President, Food Dignity Movement, Nancy Fera, Vice President, Intermetro, Matt Anderson, President/CEO Rising Light Ridge, a Ministry of the Tim Tebow Foundation, Frank McClosky, Director, Operations, HSF.**





**The Lands at Hillside Farms
is proud to earn
The Gold Standard in Animal
Welfare for Dairy Cattle**



agreenworld.org

The Lands at Hillside Farms is a historic, 434-acre, 501(c)(3) non-profit educational dairy farm EIN 20-2975553. Our mission is to teach life choices that are healthy, logical, and sustainable so those born 200 years from now will have access to the same or better resources and opportunities.

You can contribute to our non-profit mission by visiting
[our online donation page.](#)

We are grateful for your support.
TheLandsatHillsideFarms.org



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