

Twin Oaks

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In the relatively short time that I lived at Twin Oaks (1989-91), I was able to do an amazing variety of things! I happily scheduled myself a nice balance of indoor and outdoor work, physical labor and mental tasks, some things to do in a group, some things done alone. I was able to tinker with cars and small appliances. I learned to drive vehicles with standard transmission for the first time, as well as a fork lift. I cut boards, operated a gang drill, and participated in construction projects. I sensitized my palate to delicious food and seasonings. I learned about growing, processing and cooking some foods that I'd never been exposed to in my suburban Midwest upbringing. I had the chance to work with and befriend people of all ages and backgrounds. I benefited from having people older than myself listen to me with an interest and sense of respect that I hadn't been given elsewhere. I loved doing all my work on the farm as well as doing a regular Louisa trip once a week. I also enjoyed opportunities to travel regularly for conferences, FEC meetings and labor exchange. I learned some about Southern culture.

I moved to Twin Oaks mostly because I was a political organizer and wanted to test my theories and personal skills in a setting most like the utopia of which I dreamed. While part of me wanted to make Twin Oaks a lifelong home, I could not set roots down physically there at the time. I discovered that my natural inclination to do outreach, and my allegiance to the values of the Federation drew me to ever-expanding roles on the outside. I moved to Seattle in late 1991 largely because I wanted to help organize the 1993 Celebration of Communities sponsored by the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC). This conference planning turned out to be a wonderful learning experience for me as well as culminating in a powerful event, one of the peak experiences of my life. I was lucky enough to have landed at a group house in Seattle that was ripe for creating a name and articulating a vision for itself. With two years in the city under my belt, I decided to stay and help form a growing group that now calls itself Orca Landing. The facilitation skills and experience in organizing events I had gained by this time led me to choose a path as an educator, hoping to translate the relevance of my community experience to young people and other educators. I returned to graduate school for a degree in Education and secondary teaching certificate. I continue to facilitate and lend support to community groups in and around Seattle, and do workshops and event organizing where I continually am informed by, and am honored to be able to include experiences from Twin Oaks. In every way that I think, work, cook, make friends and choose my words, I am affected by my days at Twin Oaks. What I have found, after returning several times to visit, is that Twin Oaks is a spiritual home for me now. It's a place where I laid a foundation for my adult life, where I continue to learn valuable lessons, and benefit from friendships with people who have my utmost respect. It is an inspiration to me that Twin Oaks continues, and I continue to love it with all my heart.