



Dartmouth Week

Education is the name of the game at Round the Bend farm

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Hailey Hebert, a fieldworker at Round the Bend, lives in a "tiny house," which she said is "sort of like camping year round." Photos by: Sean Flannelly

The "Manifest Love" food truck is a new addition to the farm, but it should hit the road by the end of year.

Farm staff live in tiny houses on the property, which do not have running water inside.

The farm tries to embrace diversity in its crop selection instead of monoculture, or planting only one crop in a field.

Open Farm Days feature hot food in the kitchen using farm produce.

Farm staff donate clothing and items to give away free at Open Farm Days.

infolinks



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Round the Bend in South Dartmouth is an active farm, an event space, a field trip destination and an occasional marketplace. Most of all though, it's a place for education, according to the [infolinks](#)

"It's really about educating people on why we're here," said [Name]. "We just want to share the space, share the land and

Each month, the farm opens to the public for one day, where people can learn about the farm, eat homemade food and buy fresh produce. At each Open Farm Day, the whole Round the Bend crew also pitches in clothing and toys that the farm gives away for free to the public.

Amid heavy rain the morning of Saturday, June 17, the most recent Open Farm Day saw about 15 people attend the first tour of the day.

While Open Farm Days are the most public-facing event hosted by the non-profit organization, the farm runs a variety of programs throughout the year, all aimed at educating the public about sustainable agriculture.

For instance, the farm frequently hosts class field trips from local schools. Field trips typically feature a tour from Peter Zine, the farm's education manager, who teaches them about their sustainable farming practices.

"We try to incorporate a lot of gardening [on the field trips]," Zine said. "It allows them to get their hands in the soil, which a lot of kids are drawn to anyway."

Earlier in June, over 200 students from Westport came to Round the Bend for a field trip.

In the future, Zine hopes to incorporate some adult education programs into the schedule.

Over the summer, Round the Bend farm will be preparing for its second annual "Powwow," a Native American celebration hosted by Mashpee Wampanoag member Annawon Weeden, and will take place Sept. 30. Over 2000 people attended [last year's powwow](#), where Weeden also built a wetu — a traditional native home made of cedar bark and saplings — on the property.

Executive Director Desa Van Laarhoven said the farm decided to do the powwow last year after the town's 2022 arguments surrounding the High School logo and mascot — the Indians. [The debate](#) was part of a nationwide reconsideration of Native American mascots and iconography that tribes and activists have called harmful, leading states such as New York and Colorado to forbid the practice.

"What we heard from both sides is that people wanted more education," Van Laarhoven said. "And so [the powwow] was part of our answer."

The event features Native American vendors, workshops, dancers and cuisine.

The farm also lends land to Elements Learning Collaborative, a year-round adventure camp on the property. Zine said the camp is often used as a supplement for homeschooled children. While not part of Round the Bend, the camp uses the farm's outdoor spaces and infrastructure.

In addition to the farm's own programs, some community members use the space for their own events.

On June 24, New Bedford resident Iva Brito will host her second annual "Soul Calling" women's retreat. Brito runs a consultancy that hosts events for historically underserved populations, specifically women and women of color.

"This place is amazing, it's beautiful," Brito said. "Everytime I come here, I feel at peace."

Brito's retreat spans multiple generations, from college students to seniors, she said. Elements Learning is also able to provide childcare for the women while they are on the retreat. Last year's retreat featured various healing practices, including a dance therapist and a sound therapist.

During the pandemic, Round the Bend started a food insecurity project called Manifest Love, where the farm donates fruits and vegetables to local organizations that help distribute the food to families in New Bedford.

"I honestly thought [Manifest Love] was only going to go for a year or two," Van Laarhoven said. "This is our fourth year now."

Along with the food, the farm also passes along a trilingual recipe that uses the specific produce.

Out of the Manifest Love project came one of Round the Bend's newest purchases: a food truck.

"We want to be where the people are," Van Laarhoven said of the food truck, which will help Round the Bend bring their educational efforts and produce farther than Allens Neck Road.

She expects the truck to hit the road by the end of the year.

Round the Bend farm is funded by over 50 different organizations. [infolinks](#)
also owns the farm's land.

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