

# Crossroads Farm Walking Tour Guide



## Where are you now?

You are in the **Farm Stand** at Crossroads Farm!

### What is it's purpose?

The Farm Stand is the first thing seen by visitors when they enter the farm. Crossroads Farm is a non-profit community farm, so selling farm grown organic produce is a main source of funding. The Farm Stand provides fresh produce to the community and is a place for growth, education in agriculture, and volunteer outreach.



### Personal Experience & Furthering the Mission

The Farm Stand is an opportunity for visitors to connect with the farm by asking questions. I learned so much about the farm's history and journey during this project just from talking with the farm stand clerks. The other benefit of course is the organic produce for sale from the farm's own fields and merchandise from other local vendors. This produce is the farm's way of sharing their hard work and knowledge about farming with the community.

### What experiences does it offer?

The Farm Stand is a point of contact for the community. It is a place to learn about the farm, its origins, its mission, and how to help preserve this open space. Clerks working at the farmstand are on hand to answer questions and help with your purchases. There are so many wonderful things to discover at Crossroads Farm, and the place to start is definitely the Farm Stand.

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## Where are you now?

You are in the **Hoop House** at Crossroads Farm!

### **What is it's purpose?**

The Hoop House is a type of solar greenhouse. Its framework of semi-hoops are covered in polythene plastic or "poly". The poly traps the sun's energy creating an increase in temperature. Seeds grow in the soil in trays and are protected until they get strong enough to be transplanted in the ground. Hoop houses extend the growing season for plants at the farm. .

Since the Hoop House provides protection from bad weather many events and workshops are held there.



### **Personal Experience & Furthering the Mission**

Hoop Houses promote family health and food security by providing the community with organic produce grown using sustainable and environmentally friendly practices. Families can bring the mission of this part of the farm into their own lives by doing daily activities that involve farming such as growing vegetables in their own yards and participating in events and workshops to learn more about gardening.

### **What experiences does it offer?**

The Hoop House is a busy place on the farm at any time of year.

Crossroads Farm hosts holiday craft markets, farmers markets, workshops and education programs that all use the Hoop House.

With its poly roof and sides which protects against bad weather and open garage doors it has a comfortable indoor/outdoor feel that invites people inside.

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## Where are you now?

You are in the **Orchard** at Crossroads Farm!

### **What is its purpose?**

The Orchard at the Farm consists of many varieties of apple, peach and pear trees. It helps promote organic farming by providing a local place to grow a fruit harvest without pesticides.

These trees provide fruit in late summer and fall which is sold in the market and used for cooking in the Education Programs.



### **Personal Experience & Furthering the Mission**

People can bring the mission of an orchard into their own lives by growing their own fruit trees and sharing their harvest. Not only can they harvest fruit for food but wildlife also feed on the excess. By doing this they are improving the environment.

### **What experiences does it offer?**

Children and students pick the fruit and prepare it for a warm snack or for sale. Volunteers learn how to prune the trees and care for them. The spring blossoms attract the bees and everyone can see pollination in action. Volunteers also care for the trees weekly with organic sprays for pests and for nutrition (composting and mulching).

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## Where are you now?

You are in the **Greenhouse** at Crossroads Farm!

### What is its purpose?

The greenhouse is like a nursery for new seedlings. Many plants grown in the fields were started in the greenhouse. In order for a seedling to grow healthy, it needs heat and water, with heat being provided through heated pipes that run under the seedling trays. Using a greenhouse enables the farm to continue producing produce throughout three seasons.



### Personal Experience & Furthering the Mission

The greenhouse is the perfect place to learn about caring for plants and our planet. The greenhouse offers an educational benefit to the community and an extraordinary benefit to the farm. My personal experience with the greenhouse has shown me that most everything grown, planted, and sold starts in the greenhouse, and this significance makes the greenhouse a huge part of the farm's past journey, present success and future mission.

### What experiences does it offer?

Because the greenhouse is all glass, the process of the plant cycle can easily be viewed by all the farm's visitors. The greenhouse is where most of Crossroads Farm's produce starts. From there it is transplanted into the fields until it is ready to be harvested and sold in the farm stand.

Education program participants and volunteers can help seed, water and transplant seedlings into larger containers or the field

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## Where are you now?

You are in the **Fields** at Crossroads Farm!

### What is it's purpose?

The Fields are used to plant, harvest, and provide space to grow the crops. The organic crops that are sold at Crossroad Farms come fresh from the fields.

Crossroads Farms is a Certified Organic Farm by NOFA (Northeast Organic Farm Association). Organic Farming is a system of agricultural farming that's the healthiest type of food for you to eat. Crossroads Farms just celebrated its 10th year certified organic!

The mission of the fields is to grow organic food that is good for your body and teaches others about everything that goes into the farm.



### Personal Experience & Furthering the Mission

I think the farm is a great benefit to the community and everyone involved in it. One of the first people we met on the farm was the owner of a the company *Backyard Bees*. They immediately talked to us about their company and what it does in relation to Crossroads. Throughout my journey of working with Crossroads, I've learned so much about how everyone is connected with everything including the earth. This is my personal experience with Crossroads and what I have learned.

### What experiences does it offer?

Crossroad Farms offers a multitude of programs that give opportunities to serve the purpose of the fields. Your school can take a field trip to learn about the process of tending for the fields.

Many Girl Scouts come to Crossroads to receive awards. Some programs include "Gardener Badge", "Sow What Journey", and "Use Resources Wisely Petal Badge".

You can also volunteer at the farm. You can learn about biodynamic growing techniques, the importance of locally grown food, care for plants, benefits of organic growing methods, and what can harm the farms.

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## Where are you now?

You are in the **Herb Circle** at Crossroads Farm!

### **What is it's purpose?**

The Herb Circle is a place where Crossroads Farm's herbs are planted, grown, and harvested for sale in the Farm Stand. It also provides content for the farm's education programs. Sage, Lavender, Oregano, and Rosemary are some of the Herbs in the Herb Circle.

The Herb Circle was built by 8th graders from the Waldorf School of Garden City and was designed to allow visitors to explore its beauty. Herb Circles serve as sensory gardens allowing children to experience strong smells, tastes and textures. The Farm's Herb Circle has mostly perennials which means they don't need to be replanted every year.



### **Personal Experience & Furthering the Mission**

In my experience, everyone involved was so thoughtful and invited me into the farm as if we've been lifelong friends. Everyone was enthusiastic about teaching us about the farm and how everything in nature and life is connected. Crossroads really demonstrates the interconnectivity of the land and the surrounding community. Through my time at Crossroads, I've learned that all of our actions have a ripple effect.

### **What experiences does it offer?**

Crossroads offers a multitude of educational programs. The farm offers workshops and experiences that teach participants the unique properties of the herbs.

There are also Girl Scout Badge programs for troops to explore the farm and herb garden from different perspectives, like the "Eco Friend Badge," "The Gardener Badge," and the "Art Apprentice Badge."

Finally, there are many volunteer opportunities given to help upkeep the needs of the Herb Circle.

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## Where are you now?

You are in the **Teaching Garden** at Crossroads Farm!

### **What is it's purpose?**

The Teaching Garden is a model of the growing methods used in organic farming. It demonstrates sustainability by promoting local farming that uses energy and water wisely.

Farm-based education programs include *Sow to Grow*, *Seed Saving*, and *Composting*, *Tending*, and *Cultivating*, *Healthy Plants*.

These programs promote sustainability by showing the value of planting, growing, and harvesting locally grown produce rather than using energy to bring them from faraway places.



### **Personal Experience & Furthering the Mission**

When touring the farm, visitors use all of their senses. I touched the plants in the fields. I tasted the arugula and kale. I smelled the herbs. I listened to the quiet of the meadow where grains are grown. I could see how the harvest changes in during each season. Finally, I got to "meet" the Three Sisters of the Teaching Garden: corn, beans, and squash. These experiences further the mission of the farm by promoting how each season is celebrated year-round.

### **What experiences does it offer?**

The Teaching Garden attracts people of all ages including families, youth groups like scouts, and students of all levels.

Visitors engage with hands-on learning by planting, harvesting, and eating the vegetables that are grown. The educators at Crossroad Farm hope that when you leave the Teaching Garden, that you will have a new understanding of the full circle of growing food. With your new understanding of nature, you may get inspired to make your own garden!

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## Where are you now?

You are in the **Magic Fairy Garden** at Crossroads Farm!

### **What is it's purpose?**

The Magic Fairy Garden gives children the freedom to explore and use their imagination in a safe garden space. It can also bring adults back to nature as well. The native flowers, plants, and gourds at the Magic Fairy Garden are organic and safe to eat.

Children can play in the garden making them more comfortable with nature and being in the outdoors. The Magic Fairy Garden provides a safe place for bugs, bees, birds and other wildlife on the farm. Organic plants let bees pollinate in healthy flowers. They are also a haven for other wildlife.



### **Personal Experience & Furthering the Mission**

One of the intriguing aspects of the Magic Fairy Garden is that it is wild. Native flowers and plants are left to grow naturally. This mirrors a larger movement towards natural habitats and sustainable landscapes or "rewilding". I am planning to grow a pollinator garden. Other actions people can take are composting, replacing lawn areas with vegetables, and installing rain barrels.

### **What experiences does it offer?**

The Magic Fairy Garden is an important part of the education program at Crossroad Farm. Making bug hotels is a favorite! The garden lets people of all ages have a deeper understanding of nature and be comfortable in the outdoors.

The garden also helps everyone learn about how being organic is important and how good native plants are for our environment.

Volunteers can have opportunities to help plant flowers, and make paths so that kids can have fun in the garden.

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## Where are you now?

You are in the **Bee Hives** at Crossroad Farm!

### **What is it's purpose?**

Bees play a major role in pollinating the flowers and plants on Crossroads Farm. There are twelve beehives that protect the bees from the elements and give them a safe home. The farm is an organic place with natural plants where bees can safely pollinate. Bad chemicals like pesticides and herbicides can be brought back to hives causing bee colonies to collapse. Bee keepers volunteer their time to collect the honey that the bees produce. The honey is sold at the farm stand which helps Cross Road Farms to continue its efforts to protect the bee population.



### **Personal Experience & Furthering the Mission**

Working with Crossroad Farm has taught me a lot about how important the farm is to the community. We need to realize how everything is connected and how our individual actions impact the world around us. The educators at the farm have influenced me to be mindful about my family's personal choices like home planting and the impact of pesticides on the bee population. Each one of us can do our part to protect the bee population here on Long Island.

### **What experiences does it offer?**

While only beekeepers can volunteer at the hives, visitors can learn a lot about bees and how to make an impact on our local environment. The first way to make a difference is by having pesticide-free natural plants. Your home garden can be a safe place for bees so they don't have to travel so far to pollinate.

Another way to help is to create a fresh water source like a bird bath where they can sip water.

We hope that the farm can inspire people to make their own spot of natural plants in their own back yard and make a water bowl for the bees to relax in and take a break.

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## Where are you now?

You are at the Compost Area at Crossroads Farm!

### What is its purpose?

Compost is used at the farm in order to enrich soil to grow and feed plants and keep them healthy. Crossroads Farm's organic compost helps soil retain moisture and prevent disease. Compost is made with recycled food waste ("nitrogen-rich greens") and recycled paper, wood or leaves ("carbon-rich browns"). By decomposing a mixture of these greens and browns, with the help of air, water and beneficial bacteria, compost is made. Using compost instead of chemical fertilizers for plants is a much safer and healthier way to growing plants and vegetables.



### Personal Experience & Furthering the Mission

Compost is not only beneficial to the farm, but it can be beneficial for you too. Making compost at home is easy and will help reduce greenhouse gasses like carbon dioxide and landfill usage. The farm chose to use compost because of these benefits and how great it is for growing plants. You can further the farm's mission by creating compost at home, purchasing compost or even learning about it when visiting the farm and sharing what you learn with your friends and family.

### What experiences does it offer?

During the growing season, there is a supply of compost that is used to fertilize and grow plants. This compost is 'finished' and has transformed from what you may see as garbage into a complete and rich soil supplement that is extremely healthy for plants. Crossroads Farm has become greener than ever, using organic compost!

Composting is an important part of the farm's education programs.

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## Where are you now?

You are in the **Pantry** at Crossroad Farm!

### **What is it's purpose?**

Usually a pantry refers to a room where dried items are stored, but at Crossroads Farm the Pantry is actually a small kitchen with sinks, a refrigerator and flameless cooking. It is a homelike kitchen space for experiencing a true seed to plate experience, cooking the farm's organic produce and herbs.

The pantry stores dried herbs and other staples used for cooking as well as plates, utensils, serving trays, cutting boards and small appliances.



### **Personal Experience & Furthering the Mission**

The way in which the pantry fits into the farm's mission is to encourage and teach people about growing food and healthy eating using local food sources. Connecting people to each other and nature by growing, cooking and sharing a meal together.

### **What experiences does it offer?**

The education department relies on the pantry as a cozy space to teach how to prepare harvested produce for meals to share with each other. For example, the Farm makes applesauce in the Fall with the children by harvesting the farm's apples and cooking them in a quick cooker which is stored in the pantry.

Also, the pantry is used during events to prepare and serve the farm's guests.

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