

"The significant problems we face cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them."  
- Albert Einstein



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## Volunteer Profile

### Sari Lindauer

By Betsy Garrold

Empowering children to take charge of their own educational experience seems to be the overarching theme of Sari Lindauer's professional life. From her work teaching science at the Breakwater School in Portland to her co-coordinating the Youth Enterprise Zone (YEZ) at the Common Ground Country Fair, Lindauer is constantly looking for ways to help kids experience the joys of being "makers."

Lindauer thinks of herself as a rule "stretcher." She takes this approach to making YEZ as kid-friendly as possible. She says, "The kids are so empowered in the YEZ tent. They know they are the directors of their own lives and their own enterprises at the Fair." She even provides a second tent where kids can store their stuff between the two days of activity in the YEZ area.

She started at the Fair selling children's batik clothing in the Maine Marketplace 25 years ago. Her daughters were so inspired by that experience that, 22 years ago, they wanted to have their own products in the YEZ tent. Ona started 22 years ago, and Gaelyn in 2006. They participated in YEZ for several years until they "aged out." Lindauer started volunteering at the Fair in the volunteer tent and then went from being a parent helper in YEZ to coordinator of the area over 14 years ago.

Anna Libby, MOFGA's former volunteer coordinator and now educational programs coordinator, says, "The YEZ tent is such a vibrant and cheerful part of the Fair. After not seeing it for a few years, I was able to take a walk through during this past year and found it to be such an inspiring break in the day! I am so thankful to Sari for all her work in organizing this integral part of the Fair! We're lucky to have her on the team."

When she is not at her 34-year teaching gig at Breakwater, Lindauer and her husband run Birch Ledge, a sustainable living center in Hollis. The goal of this family-run business is to be a community resource as well as a learning center for sustainable life skills, healing and the arts.

At Breakwater Lindauer teaches science and design engineering, so her classroom is a "maker space," Breakwater's new Curiosity Lab. She also teaches a course on youth enterprise at the school. This year eight students in her class plan to be young entrepreneurs in YEZ. Several years ago she wrote an article for The Maine Organic Farmer & Gardener about her sixth-grade class making focaccia and selling it in YEZ.

"The students made focaccia and documented the process in making their YEZ products. They learned about photojournalism from a local professional journalist and created panel displays showing their story from field to loaf using photographs and descriptions of the farmers and small businesses that helped along the way." This experience fulfills Lindauer's vision of the Fair as a giant classroom.

And she is back to doing batik for pleasure. She and a friend recently made scarves for each person in their meditation group.

