

My name is Ian Mungall and I have been a head staff member of Chagrin Valley School at Kelly's Working Well Farm for 3 of the school's 4 years of operation. I would first like to say thank you to the local businesses, organizations and community members who have reached out and shown us so much support. From those who were familiar with us, to those that have only recently learned about our one of a kind program and mission, your expressions of sympathy and advocacy on our behalf has been extremely encouraging. Thank you to all who recently attended our Holiday Craft Fair Fundraiser and the United Methodist Church for hosting us, and thank you to all the local businesses that generously donated to the event.

As reported in the CVT, recently our unique buildings were closed by the Fire & Zoning departments, which has prevented us from running any programming at our farm. Of course safety for our participants is our top priority. But the way that Bainbridge officials went about this course of action was completely uncalled for and overly aggressive. If we had directions from the fire department in September about what steps to take to improve our safety, those implementations could have been installed by now. Instead, two months later our day was interrupted without any warning by a dozen officials with an administrative search warrant, three ambulances and a school bus in an unprovoked show of force. Now the county prosecutor has summoned us to court, filed an injunction against us, and proposed penalties of several thousand dollars, per day! We are at a loss as to why we are being treated like this. We would love to be able to sit down and talk this through instead of going to court and costing the taxpayers money! Our mission from the beginning has been to build community centered around agriculture & education. We would hope that instead of prosecuting us, Bainbridge would value us as an asset to the community and be willing to work with us.

Please visit our website if you would like to learn more about this situation and how you can help (chagrinvalleyschool.org/support). We are currently raising money for our legal fees, a facility to rent in the interim for the school, and for infrastructure improvements. Thank you so much to everyone who has reached out, shared our story, and supported us, we are thrilled to continue building a resilient community with you.

Ian Mungall