WSU Farmers Market Welcomes Students
Programs and partnerships benefit students, area seniors

As we start a new academic year, new and returning students find a Wayne State University Farmers Market bursting with fresh produce and other foods. Fourteen vendors are signed up to supply fruits, vegetables, flowers, herbs, berries, potted plants, honey, eggs, and prepared foods, including breads, other baked goods and desserts. They come from around the southeastern Michigan region, with one vendor—Burda’s Berries—driving in from the west side of the state.

Student Advantage Continues
The Student Advantage Project, a produce incentive program introduced last year, is going strong. It offers currently enrolled students $10 in vouchers in exchange for $5 in cash. Vouchers may be spent exclusively on fresh produce, including salad greens, at the market, until October 29. Vouchers can be purchased at the SEED Wayne tent at the market every Wednesday, until 1 pm.

The project’s purpose is two-fold: to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables by students and enhance revenues for produce growers who sell at the market. We also hope to attract new customers among students who will remain loyal to the market during their tenure on campus. Students tend to consume vegetables and fruits at lower rates than recommended—i.e., 5 cups a day. Tight schedules and budgets increase students’ reliance on highly processed foods, including fast food, which contain high levels of salt, sugar, and fat.

Farmers also struggle with a variety of uncertainties associated with changes in climate and the local economy. Student Advantage dollars increase their sales at the WSU Farmers Market at a time when Midtown customers have many more retail outlets from which to obtain fresh produce than seven years ago, when the market first opened.

Aramark Chef Demos
In addition to Student Advantage, the WSU Farmers Market is engaged in several partnerships to encourage healthy eating in general. Demonstrations by chefs from Aramark, the campus dining services contractor, are held the third Wednesday of every month. Demos to date featured a mixed green salad with balsamic macerated strawberries, asparagus and turnip slaw, a roasted beet summer salad, stir fry vegetables, and fresh cherry shortcake.

Gleaners Partnership for Seniors
Community in Season, a partnership program with Gleaners Community Food Bank, shuttles older adults from several Detroit neighborhoods and offers them $10 in “market bucks” to spend on fresh produce at the market. The program is designed to encourage seniors to (Continued on page 2)

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Editor’s note: Each fall, SEEDLING contains a supplement in which SEED Wayne volunteers tell us why they choose to give time to the program and what they get out of it. We hope that their stories will inspire more readers to volunteer for SEED Wayne and other sustainability initiatives on campus and in the city.

Left: Chef Mike Schram leads a demo for seniors in the Community in Season program sponsored by Gleaners Community Food Bank. Below: Diane of Van Houte Farm serves a customer.
Farmers Market, Cont’d from p. 1

eat healthfully, and reduce isolation and increase social cohesion, while also supporting growers.

Working with Henry Ford Healthy System’s Generation with Promise program, Community in Season also hosts chef demos that showcase convenient and affordable recipes made from seasonal products. Participants are residents from senior complexes, Harmony Manor in Northwest Detroit, Bethany Manor north of Midtown, and Woodbridge Manor in the Woodbridge neighborhood south of campus. Besides food demos, seniors also benefit from workshops related to healthy eating, physical activity, and shopping on a budget.

The market averaged just under 900 customers per day, consisting of university staff and students, employees from nearby offices, neighborhood residents, and occasionally, students from nearby middle and high schools. Each market day also receives more than 30 volunteer hours. Volunteers help with key market tasks such as set up and take down, counting and surveying customers, SEED Wayne tabling. Student Advantage outreach, and special events. Each market day, a volunteer also prepares and brings a vegetarian lunch for market volunteers. SEED Wayne is always on the lookout for people who can contribute, in a sustained way, a couple of hours each week during the growing season. Write k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu if you are interested in volunteering for SEED Wayne.

Campus Gardens, Cont’d from p. 6

Seventh Annual Harvest Dinner

We are preparing to host SEED Wayne’s Seventh Annual Harvest Dinner at St. Andrew’s Garden, September 26, 5 pm, with October 3 identified as an alternate, rain date. As was the case last year, it will be a potluck dinner. SEED Wayne friends and participants are invited. Please bring a dish to pass with at least 12 servings. RSVP to Susie Fenster at shfenster@gmail.com or director Kami Pothukuchi at k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu if you will attend.

Last year’s dinner (September 27) was attended by about 60 people, including market volunteers, gardeners, university and community partners, and friends. It was a beautiful fall day and, as usual, the food was delicious, sourced as much of it was from the WSU Farmers Market and many backyard and neighborhood gardens in the region. Browse the SEED Wayne website for images from that dinner. We look forward to celebrating this year’s harvests in food and friendship with you September 26!

Below Left: Volunteer Freya Kniaz, left, administers a market survey to Anita D’Souza, a long-time customer of the WSU Farmers Market. Below: 2013 SEED Wayne Harvest Dinner guests in the foreground, from left to right, long-time St. Andrew’s gardener Bette Huster with Luisa Quintero and Kevin Rashid.

SEED Wayne Partners
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I choose to give my time to SEED Wayne because I believe it is the responsibility of every Wayne State student to be a role model for sustainability within Detroit. Jason Lindy is getting a Master of Urban Planning degree.
I volunteer with the WSU Farmers Market because it is one great way to get locally produced food to local people and because it’s a really good time! Kathy Ralston is a Graduate Teaching Assistant in Political Science.

I help out with SEED Wayne as a volunteer because I want to support their ongoing effort to advance food sustainability on and around the Wayne State campus and throughout Detroit. Even a small amount of effort from individuals working collectively toward a common goal has a tremendous positive impact. We can already see results of the work of SEED Wayne and the organizations it partners with in changes like the growth of urban farming in Detroit and programs like Double Up Food Bucks that are increasing access to healthy and locally produced food. Sure, there is much work still to do to make sure everyone has the access they need to healthy sustainably produced food, but together, we will get there.

I volunteer at the Wayne State Farmers Market on Wednesdays because it is one great way to get locally produced food to local people and because it’s a really good time! We are fortunate to have an extremely culturally diverse community right here at Wayne State and right here in Detroit. The farmers market is an important meeting place where this diversity can be seen and celebrated. And, everyone gets great food too!

The market has given me the opportunity to merge my background (in business) and interests (in promoting healthy lifestyles). Susie Fenster is otherwise unaffiliated with WSU; she is committed to improving health and sustainability of Detroit area communities.

My name is Susie Fenster, and I began volunteering for SEED Wayne late in the 2013 market season. With no direct affiliation with Wayne State, I happened upon the market by accident, passing by one day. Coincidentally, I had been looking for a way expand my skill sets in promoting healthy lifestyles in the community. I have a business and marketing background, so volunteering at the market has given me the opportunity to merge my background and interests.

I have been fortunate to be involved in multiple aspects of the market, ranging from securing vendor applications, assisting with market operations, promoting nutrition information and recipes to customers, implementing Student Advantage Project outreach, and organizing special events such as cooking demonstrations and programs for seniors. I believe SEED Wayne serves a valuable mission in the community, by promoting sustainable living, educating the community and providing a means for them to buy locally produced food and incorporate more fresh produce into their diets. I enjoy the camaraderie among the vendors, volunteers, and customers; the diversity of people I have met; and the opportunity to provide nutrition outreach education/materials to a wide audience. Come check us out and join in the fun!

CALLING WAYNE STATE STUDENTS!
SEED Wayne relies upon the leadership of students and staff who volunteer. If you would like to participate in the gardens, market, or other activities, please write k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu

Mayor, Continued from page 5

management of vacant properties from the City Planning and Development Department to the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA). As of this writing, the DLBA is still awaiting the transfer of large numbers of parcels which cannot happen without City Council approval. Uncertainty prevails about next steps related to the urban agriculture lease proposal initiated by the mayor.

Longer term leases can help gardeners plan for their operations over multiple seasons, and make related investments to improve the soil, secure the garden from theft and vandalism, develop entrepreneurial components, and engage with neighborhood residents and organizations. Reliable access to land and secure tenure are critical to urban agriculture’s growth in the city.

Wayne SEEDLING, v7, issue 2
Mayor Mike Duggan Signals Support for Urban Agriculture

On a lazy mid-August afternoon, Detroit mayor Mike Duggan’s staff assembled a small group of urban agriculture leaders to explore possible elements of a framework for allocating leases to city-owned land to support urban agriculture in Detroit. SEED Wayne Director Kami Pothukuchi was among them.

The mayor fired questions at the group in what is now his familiar signature style. How long should the leases be for? At what cost? How to identify leased properties? Should some groups be given preferential treatment? What criteria should be used? Etc, etc. Although participants came in with only a vague sense of the agenda, they responded with alacrity, shared experiences and reiterated long-standing concerns related to gardeners’ access to and attempts to purchase land.

The meeting was significant because city leaders typically are reluctant to come out in vocal support of agriculture, and especially of the disposition of city-owned land to small scale growers to facilitate their agricultural operations. (Readers may recall the sale of 1,500 city-owned lots—about 140 acres—to Hantz Woodlands in 2012 for $520,000. The Fall 2012 SEEDLING issue also covered a community listening session in which Detroit gardeners recounted a multitude of challenges and failures in their attempts to purchase small numbers of city-owned lots.)

Pointing to the success of his side-lot program in which residents can conveniently apply online to purchase (for $100) available city-owned lots adjacent to their property, the mayor signaled a desire to use it as a model for a potential lease program to support urban agriculture.

Readers are invited to submit news on teaching, research, engagement, or operations of interest to SEED Wayne. Write k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu

Mark Your Calendars and Spread the Word

September

Sept 17, 12 noon: Chef Demo, WSU Farmers Market.

September 20-21, noon to 6 PM: Detroit Black Community Food Security Network Harvest Festival. At D-Town Farm. www.detroitblackfoodsecurity.org

September-October-November

September 26, 5:30 PM: 7th Annual SEED Wayne Harvest Dinner (Potluck). All SEED Wayne participants welcome. St. Andrew’s Garden. Please RSVP shfenster@gmail.com.

October 17, 12 noon: Chef Demo, WSU Farmers Market

October 24-26: Great Lakes Bioneers Conference. Marygrove College, browse www.glbd.org

October 29: Last day of the 2013 WSU Farmers Market.

November, Date TBD: Putting the gardens to bed, St. Andrew’s Allotment Garden. Details will be available at www.clas.wayne.edu/seedwayne

Keep Growing Detroit offers a variety of workshops related to agriculture, Sept-Dec. Browse www.detroitagriculture.org

Below: Tanya Troy, along with other Public Health Student Organization (PHSO) members, offered a Healthy Eats Workshop to high school participants in the Go-Girls program, July 1. The PHSO partners with SEED Wayne to increase awareness of nutrition issues in Detroit.
A newsletter of SEED Wayne,
Sustainable Food Systems Education &
Engagement in Detroit & Wayne State University

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SEED Wayne
is dedicated to collaboratively building sustainable food systems on campus and in Detroit neighborhoods through activities in teaching, research, engagement, and campus operations.

SEED Wayne seeks to leverage university resources to create food system benefits for the university and the larger Detroit community.

SEED Wayne works in partnership with community-based organizations to increase access to healthy food, enhance food security, and support community nutrition, urban agriculture, food-related economic development, and food system planning and policy development.

Student leadership is central to SEED Wayne’s success.

SEED Wayne projects include campus gardens, the WSU Farmers Market, Healthy Eats, Detroit FRESH, farm-to-cafeteria, and cafeteria composting

SEED Wayne is housed in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning.

Campus Gardens Going Strong in Seventh Year

St. Andrew’s gardeners know how to have fun! Led by Hope Morrow, they got together at a couple of potlucks, played fun team games, and joined in a yoga session, all since the garden kicked off at the end of April. They also gardened, led and attended workshops, and some also pitched in at the rooftop garden on Parking Structure 5.

Workshops explored many basic and advanced topics, including techniques for irrigation, trellising, pest-control without the use of harmful chemicals, and herb preservation. With fairly regular rainfall, harvests also have been abundant, as unfortunately, have been the weeds.

With school back in session, Warrior Garden is also thriving, albeit not without a significant transition. Kat Krupsky, the SLUGS (Student Leaders of Urban Gardening and Sustainability) group’s outreach coordinator has graduated and taken on a Vista Volunteer position with Growing Hope, an urban agriculture resource organization in Ypsilanti. Anita Vasudevan, a WSU kinesiology major, has taken over this function. Leader Jake Grobbel, a mechanical engineering major, continues to lead garden operations.

The rooftop garden beds, which experienced extensive wear during the harsh winter earlier this year, have been repaired. Market leader Matt Glaab replaced and secured the polycarbonate roofs on two beds and supplemented drip irrigation on one. The beds have since been planted (and harvested).

Speaking of repair, both Warrior and St. Andrew’s Garden beds will need to be replaced next year, already long overdue for Warrior Garden. We will post plans for their replacement next Spring and hope that readers will join us in this significant effort.

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