Farmers Market a Potent Connector
New partnerships, activities, lessons in fifth season

The fifth season of the Wayne State University Farmers Market ended on a cold and wet October 31. Much warmth, however, exuded from interactions between market staff, customers, and vendors, who engaged in the usual activities of setting up and selling, teasing and sending snappy rejoinders, and conversing about and buying market products. They said their goodbyes, shared reflections on the season as well as their desires for the following year, and wished each other well for the months ahead.

A raffle giveaway celebrated the market’s close as fifteen books were given away to a crowd of customers and vendors who waited patiently as names of winner upon winner (most of whom were absent for the giveaway) were read out by William Ahee, volunteer and past SEED Wayne employee. The books included a farmers market recipe book assembled by the Madison (WI) Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition and books put out by WSU Press on Eastern Market and other Detroit topics. The raffle awards brought smiles to winners and bystanders alike.

This year, we offered five cooking demos, three performances by the Mosaic Youth Theater, and one-off performances by youth from Inside Out Literary Arts Project and the Coyote Monk Band. Additionally, customers took advantage of several hundred dollars worth of incentive coupons that helped them stretch their budgets at the farmers market. Bridge Card customers also had the benefit of their spending being matched, dollar for dollar (up to $20 per day per card) thanks to the Double Up Food Bucks program. More than 200 Bridge Card customers shopped at the market for the first time this year.

As SEEDLING readers know, the market is a complex and dynamic operation that comes together weekly thanks to the help of many partners. On campus, the WSU Libraries, Business School, Economic Development Office, Campus Sustainability, and AVI Foodsystems, Inc. offered much-needed support in staging, outreach, education, and storage. Community partners include Eastern Market, Fair Food Network, COLORS Detroit, and the WSU Community Garden.

Campus Gardens Close Productive Year
Conversations Explore Greater Student Leadership

The 2012 campus garden season experienced many successes this year. These include active participation by a majority of gardeners at St. Andrew’s Garden, significant volunteer contribution to the Warrior Garden (including the Winter Garden), three well-attended—and lip-smacking—potlucks, and a new (off-campus) bee hive. The Parking Structure 5 Experimental Garden was on sabbatical this season, due to construction and repair activities on the rooftop. (Did you know that sabbatical, a word commonly used at the university, has an agrarian origin?!) Despite many challenges this season—several frost and thaw cycles early in spring followed by extended dry periods, which also caused a higher-than-usual pest challenge—we were able to harvest nearly 250 lbs. from our Warrior Garden plots, including the Winter Garden (St. Andrews’ participants harvest their plots at will, which are not weighed and recorded as a result).

Campus gardens this season benefitted from the active involvement of several...
**Farmers Market, Cont’d from page 1**

Hannan House and midtown senior complexes, Peaches and Greens, and others.

This year, a grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation supported several new activities and purchase of market equipment that put the market in a good position for years to come. For example, new commercial-grade tents will help us save money for rentals. Additionally, partnerships with Midtown organizations serving senior citizens will help us raise funds to combine nutrition education with market outreach to advance the market’s goals of serving underserved populations in Midtown and elsewhere. Lessons from these activities will help us sharpen our healthy food fair nutrition outreach offerings in Detroit’s neighborhoods.

Fifteen vendors sold a variety of fruits, vegetables, cut flowers, herbs, potted plants, honey, eggs, and prepared hot and cold foods. Five stalls were run by businesses owned by people of color, and four, by women. Two businesses—Acre Farm and Detroit Bulk Company—got a start to their retail operations this year. We are proud to be able to support minority and women owned businesses and help get businesses off the ground by offering an attractive venue for them to sell their wares.

A few lessons this year were harder: The 2012 market saw about 15 percent fewer customers and lower sales than in previous years. We speculate that the paucity of tree fruits and delayed harvests due to weather disruptions in spring, a rebounding economy that is causing some people to cut back on shopping at day-time markets as well as cooking at home, the presence of more weekly farmers markets in our immediate neighborhood, and a lower ability on our part to send weekly email reminders to WSU participants, all had something to do with this outcome. We also believe that the disqualification from SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or food stamps) rolls of many students by the state also had an effect although we lack the data to quantify it.

Nonetheless, despite the lower level of sales, vendors indicated in surveys an interest in returning next year; customer surveys too serve to remind us of the importance of the WSU Farmers Market in the lives of people who shop for groceries and lunch here. We will review publicity and outreach methods to help us increase our reach on campus and in Midtown neighborhoods, and examine ways to send weekly reminders during the season to those who need an additional nudge to get down to the market. Readers are encouraged to volunteer to conduct market related outreach to their networks in 2013, and send other ideas to SEED Wayne at k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu. SEED Wayne wishes our partners and friends a Happy Holiday Season! Happy Hanukkah (belated), Kwanza, and Solstice, and Merry Christmas, to all who celebrate these holidays! And a relaxing break to all! We look forward to connecting with you in 2013!

SEED Wayne Partners

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**Gardens, Cont’d from p. 1**

students from the I. D. Reid Honors College, who volunteered for the Winter Garden as part of their first year service learning project. They also joined St. Andrews as allotees in April and volunteered for the WSU Farmers Market. It is exciting to see such enthusiastic participation by Honors students given the status of the College as a founding partner of SEED Wayne.

To build on these contributions and deepen the partnership, SEED Wayne is engaged in conversations with students and staff at Honors about if and how a group of interested Honors students could play an ongoing leadership role at Warrior Garden. This leadership could take any of several potential forms, ranging from the full and independent management of Warrior Garden by a student garden club, to their self-organizing teams of volunteers to maintain the garden with SEED Wayne’s support in return for a share of the harvests.

Whatever form the leadership takes, we anticipate many mutual benefits to emerge. One, student leadership is central to SEED Wayne’s definition of success. What could be a greater sign of leadership than a group of students managing a garden on their own (with support as needed from both SEED Wayne and Honors)? Two, garden management helps build knowledge and skills on a variety of topics: horticultural, organizational, and community and food systems-related. It also promises social and character-building experiences that enrich students’ lives in many ways. Stay tuned for updates on these conversations!
Harvest Dinner Celebrates SEED Wayne’s Fifth Birthday!

On September 28, SEED Wayne celebrated five years of harvests in food, partnerships, and successes, along with about 100 friends at our annual Harvest Dinner. Appropriately, we also returned to the same venue as our very first Harvest Dinner in 2008—MacGregor Center—although it was a tighter squeeze to fit everyone in, this time around!

Just as in previous years, AVI chefs put out a delicious spread prepared from SEED Wayne’s campus garden harvests. The menu consisted of roasted butternut squash bisque, brined pickles and onions, beet salad, house baked Calamata olive bread, cornmeal dusted tofu, quinoa yam cakes, parsnip potato puree, sautéed green beans and carrots, and cranberry cookies and apple pumpkin cake for dessert. Participants gave high marks to the meal in their feedback following the dinner.

SEED Wayne’s Kami Pothukuchi opened the program with a welcome, introduced staff, and went on to recognize two individuals who made an extraordinary contribution to the program this year: John Kotarski, SEED Wayne videographer and graduate student of educational technology, and Daryl Pierson, coordinator of the Office for Campus Sustainability and urban planning alumnus. Kotarski unveiled a 5-minute video celebrating the program’s history with highlights from interviews with campus and community partners. Pierson walked us through a Powerpoint presentation of SEED Wayne’s activities and accomplishments for the year. The program concluded with the usual recognition of and thank you’s to our inveterate volunteers and partners, some of whom have journeyed with us for all or most of the last five years.

In addition to SEED Wayne’s ongoing and new activities reported on pages 1-2 of this issue, we are proud of our new partnerships related to Detroit FRESH and Healthy Food Fairs. In addition to five healthy food fairs in Midtown and on the eastside in collaboration with several neighborhood organizations, we also partnered with Arts Corps Detroit in a mural project at the A&W Market at Mack and Dickerson. Our plan for 2013 is to both expand and intensify healthy eating outreach partnerships in these and other neighborhoods. Stay tuned for updates on these and other activities!

Mark Your Calendars and Spread the Word

Dec 2012—Jan 2013
12/10-14, 11 am to 7 pm, Earthworks Holiday Farm Open House. Many items for sale, (313)-579-2100 x 204.

Urban Roots Community Gardening Training Program in community organizing and horticulture. For application forms and information, contact Tee Rushdan, Greening of Detroit, 285-2300.

Jan —March 2013
4th Monday, 6:30-8:30 pm, Free Movie Night, MSU Center, 3408 Woodward. For information, call 578-9701.

March. SEED Wayne St. Andrews Allotment Garden applications out. For application forms and information, contact Charles Lisee at ctlisee@wayne.edu.

Readers are invited to submit news on teaching, research, engagement, or operations of interest to SEED Wayne. Contact k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu
2012 will be remembered as the year when two big land-related processes brewing over the last three years came to a head. These include the urban agriculture ordinance developed by the urban agriculture work group led by Kathryn Underwood of the City Planning Commission, and the proposed sale of more than 1,500 parcels of land on the eastside to Hantz Woodlands. In November, the two processes intertwined when City Council met to consider the Hantz land sale despite the pending approval of the urban agriculture ordinance. If the sale happens, it will be the largest transfer of publicly owned land to a private entity in the city’s history. Findings from another important process—Detroit Works—are also slated to be unveiled soon, potentially offering more grist for debate about city land use issues.

The City Council’s decision to move ahead on the Hantz proposal was highly controversial because of a commitment made at the August 22 Listening Session by Rob Anderson, director of the City’s Planning and Development Department, to oppose the sale of huge tracts of city-owned land prior to the adoption of an urban agriculture ordinance. SEEDLING readers will recall a report in the September issue on the listening session convened by the Detroit Food Policy Council to hear from the city’s residents about their experiences and opinions related to purchase of land from the city. More than 250 people attended that meeting.

In response to much community opposition—nearly 150 residents packed the City Council hearing November 20—the Council tabled the decision until December 11. The urban ag. ordinance was approved by the City Planning Commission December 6, with the date as yet pending for City Council to take it up. The ordinance is an important first step in the city’s recognition of urban agriculture as an allowable land use in almost all land use categories and in delineating where related activities and structures may be allowed “by right” or by obtaining special approvals, and which activities are prohibited. An ordinance paves the way for regulating agricultural activities thereby balancing the

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