Healthy food fairs engage new partners!
Public Health Student Organization sends volunteers

Healthy food fairs in partnership with two Detroit FRESH stores in May and early June set us off on yet another of our keystone summer activity this year. The fairs were organized by SEED Wayne in the Krainz Woods Neighborhood in northeast Detroit (May 19) and the Chandler Park neighborhood on Detroit’s Eastside (June 3). Corner stores Moore Market and Warren & Drexel Market, both long-time participants in Detroit FRESH, respectively partnered in the fairs. The May 19 fair was held at the Church of Our Father on 7 Mile while on June 3, the Warren & Drexel Market parking lot hosted tents that confronted stiff winds. The fairs averaged 55-60 participants each, with the vast majority at the second under 16 years of age.

Additionally, SEED Wayne participated in a health and wellness fair organized by Project Healthy Schools at the University Preparatory Academy on April 26. More fairs are scheduled for June and July in partnership with neighborhood organizations in Detroit, including Genesis Hope and Messiah Housing on Detroit’s Eastside.

The neighborhood fairs brought together students and staff from several units at WSU, including Detroit FRESH, Public Health Student Organization (PHSO), Nutrition and Food Science, and the Office of Campus Sustainability. Volunteers with the PHSO engaged neighborhood residents in conversations related to healthy eating, (Continued on page 2)

WSU Farmers Market starts June 6!
Get lunch, shop for dinner!

The Wayne State University Farmers Market kicks off its fifth season on June 6. All vendors from last year except two will return this year and there are also a few new faces. Favorites from past years, such as Vang Family Farm, whose cut flowers adorn many a campus office, Van Houtte Farm, Grown in Detroit Cooperative, Brother Nature Produce, D-Town Farm, Avalon Bakery, Sweet Potato Sensations, Holtz Family Farm, and Russell Street Deli will return.

Also back for the entire season are vendors who participated only occasionally last year, such as For Goodness’ Sake (flavored hummus) and Good Girls Go to Paris (crepes with sweet and savory fillings, made on the spot). Finally, be prepared to welcome a new vendor, Acre Farm from Detroit, and one or two other specialty food vendors with whom we’re still in negotiation! Community partner Eastern Market will manage a stall for part of the season, with produce from Ontario (Continued on page 3)

Left: Two students take a lunch break last fall, with salads-to-go from Brother Nature and soup from Russell Street Deli, both vendors at the WSU Farmers Market. The vendors are returning for the 2012 season.
Food Fairs, cont’d from p. 1

Simulated different combinations of the USDA-recommended “My Plate” diet, distributed tip-sheets and other resources, and offered blood pressure screenings and related dietary advice. Additionally, Detroit FRESH staff shared information related to the advantages of using SNAP (or food stamps) at area farmers markets, and the Double Up Food Program which provides extra dollars for Michigan-grown produce at farmers markets, and also distributed a variety of resources to support healthy eating. We also conducted brief surveys of participants’ grocery shopping practices to help shape the future direction of the Detroit FRESH program.

We are grateful to volunteers from outside WSU and for partnerships with participating community organizations, without which such events are impossible to pull off, let alone successfully! Gleaners Community Food Bank’s Board Member and Detroit FRESH volunteer Erica Peresman helped coordinate the fairs; Cooking Matters Coordinator Jake Williams led the cooking demonstration May 19, preparing tasty quesadillas with black beans, while GCFB volunteer and nutritionist Joyce Patterson engaged participants in conversations about reading labels on prepared food packages. She was ably replaced at the June 3 fair by Shaira Daya, SEED Wayne volunteer, who also conducted nutrition education tabling at the WSU Farmers Market in 2011. We are also grateful to the Michigan Nutrition Network for the supplies that were distributed to participants—tip sheets, refrigerator thermometers and magnets, kid-tested recipes, and other goodies distributed in tote bags they also sent.

In evaluations, almost all participants reported they were ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with the fair’s offerings. All, that is, except for one lady who came by with her shopping cart and was sorely disappointed that there was not more food given away at the event. In encounters such as this, we are reminded of the great needs that exist in our community and the lack of a comprehensive community response to address them.

Bees, cont’d from p. 4

University, we are always sad to see our more seasoned gardeners leave as they graduate and move on to the next phase of their lives! We hope that they will carry their gardening skills with them and create mini-Edens elsewhere, all the while staying in touch and sharing their news! Hopefully, as St. Andrew’s Garden alumni/ae, they will continue to support SEED Wayne in their own ways!

With a mild winter and a warmer spring than usual, gardeners are being cautioned about a higher pest burden than in previous years. We are also mindful of the losses that Michigan farmers—tree fruit growers especially—have suffered due to several hard frosts earlier this season after the thaw. Please keep them in your thoughts as you enjoy the season’s bounty!

SEED Wayne Partners

CALLING WSU STUDENTS!
SEED Wayne relies upon the leadership of students and staff who volunteer. If you would like to participate in SEED Wayne’s activities, please send an e-mail to k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu
Students Explore Detroit’s Food System

The Cities and Food Class offered during the winter semester concluded with student presentations of their course projects. Projects included investigations of the experiences of small- and micro-scale food processors in Detroit and challenges they had to overcome, the experiences of African-American owners of area supermarkets, and the use and satisfaction of Eastern Market by the area’s Arab and Chaldean community members.

Course projects, typically developed in consultation with course partners such as SEED Wayne, Eastern Market, and Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, are designed to address real problems in building a sustainable and just food system in Detroit. They are also designed to offer recommendations for policies and actions to bring about positive change.

The students, most of whom were in their first year of urban planning, implemented their projects while also taking other courses and working in part- and full-time jobs, and in one case, running a business of their own. Persuading community members to agree to take surveys, matching schedules with busy entrepreneurs, and overcoming language barriers are only some of the challenges that the students had to overcome. That said, all projects surfaced interesting findings and developed useful recommendations.

For example, Brittany Moore interviewed six entrepreneurs who started small food businesses, including a specialty sweet potato baker, a granola and hummus maker, a pickle fermenter; a chocolatier, and a ginger tea maker. From these interviews, it was clear that government policies and commercial practices for lending, facilities, etc., were blind to the needs of such producers. Producers’ biggest needs included capital, business mentoring, affordable community kitchen space and nutritional analysis for their products, distribution networks and collective marketing resources—including connections to area supermarkets, more tailored guidance on food safety and permitting rules and procedures, and better information on product suppliers and packaging options. Many desired to see a “one-stop shop” that provided assistance in several of these categories to help them focus their effort on developing their products rather than spending dozens of hours on the internet exploring options. These findings could form the basis of a more in-depth study by the Detroit Food Policy Council or the Detroit Economic Growth Corp., to create actions to support small and micro food producers.

Interviews by Pashon Murray and Sareen Papakhian of African-American supermarket owners highlighted the highly tenuous nature of the independent grocery model in an industry dominated by big-box, suburban, chain supermarkets, and the particular challenges of operating in inner-city neighborhoods that continue to lose population and wealth. While James Hooks, owner of the Metro Food Land, faces competition from a Meijer’s store planned nearby, he has also gained a great deal of support from food justice groups mobilized to support the city’s only black-owned supermarket.

Martha Potere and Deji Akinpelu found, from a small sample of Arab residents and food store owners in Dearborn, that use of Eastern Market, while existing, is far from prevalent in the community for a host of reasons. The students suggest that Eastern Market offer more foods and spices used by Arab and Chaldean consumers and advertise those offerings to both consumers and retailers in Arab-Chaldean community newspapers that are published in English and Arabic.

WSU Farmers Market, continued from p. 1

There are other changes as well: New campus partners have joined to support the market: WSU’s Office of Economic Development is helping find funding to increase sales through linkages between the farmers and campus dining halls, and bring new customers to the market through a shuttle program. The Office of Campus Sustainability is providing space to store tents, tables, and other supplies, and campus sustainability coordinator Daryl Pierson has already contributed much effort to get the market ready for the season.

Finally, the Dean of Libraries came through in our search for secure storage space close to the market, for staging our tents, tables, and other supplies. We will use the Purdy-Kresge Library, a stone’s throw from Prentis Hall, to store these supplies during the market season. We are grateful to these new and returning partners—including the School of Business Administration, Urban Studies and Planning, Public Safety, Business Operations, AVI Foodsystems, and others—and their staff who cheerfully help sustain the market.

Another important change is that, to keep costs manageable, SEED Wayne staff will implement market set up and take down ourselves. As a result, the market’s usual green canopy tents with WSU logos will be replaced by the more affordable white canopy tents purchased from area supermarkets—at least until we are able to buy more of the commercial-grade tents that market customers are so used to seeing. What we hope and expect has not changed is your support, dear readers! We look forward to welcoming you at the WSU Farmers Market, June 6.

Mark Your Calendars and Spread the Word

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<tr>
<th>June</th>
<th>June-July</th>
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<tr>
<td>6/6, 11 am to 4 pm, 5201 Cass Ave, Season Opening, Wayne State University Farmers Market. Market is open same time/place every week, until October 31. (7/4, Independence Day, Market is Closed.)</td>
<td>6/7, 6 pm: St. Andrew’s Garden, WSU campus. Workshop: Herb drying, organic pest control, trellising.</td>
<td>7/2, 7/3, 7/18, 7/26, Varying times and locations, Detroit Food Policy Work Groups. For info, call: 313.833.0396</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/4, 6/5, 6/20, 6/28, Varying times and locations, Detroit Food Policy Work Groups. For info, call: 313.833.0396</td>
<td>6/28, 6 pm: St. Andrew’s Garden, WSU campus. Workshop: Harvesting, irrigation</td>
<td>8/6, 8/7, 8/15, Varying times and locations, Detroit Food Policy Work Groups. For info, call: 313.833.0396</td>
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<td>6/28, 6 pm: St. Andrew’s Garden, WSU campus. Workshop: Harvesting, irrigation</td>
<td>7/9, 7/26, 6 pm: St. Andrew’s Garden, WSU campus. Workshops on medicinal uses of flowers/herbs; vermi-composting. For info, contact Charles Lisee, <a href="mailto:clisee@wayne.edu">clisee@wayne.edu</a>.</td>
<td>8/12, Details TBD. 4th Annual SEED Wayne Farm Tour</td>
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SEED Wayne’s campus gardens are now in full glory with cold crops planted and hot crops planted or being set down even as this column is written, and the winter garden continuing to bless us with its green bounty. Bees and other pollinators flit around, kiss the flowers and sing sweet melodies. What more could a gardener want!

Well, more bees! We are preparing to welcome our latest participants, our very own St. Andrews Garden bees! Charles Lisee, Garden Leader, is receiving bee-keeping training from Detroit’s honey guru and WSU Farmers Market vendor, Rich Wieske of Greentoe Gardens. He is building a hive to be located at the St. Andrew’s Allotment Garden.

Lisee is learning about bees’ needs in planning for the location of the hive, how to care for them and make them comfortable, how to extract excess honey for human consumption, and how to help them survive the winter. He even has his beekeeper’s ‘space suit,’ smoker, and other paraphernalia. Garden participant and volunteer extraordinaire Bette Huster will assist Lisee with the hives this season. Both will collaborate to offer workshops and demonstrations to campus garden participants this year.

We will start with one hive this year, and carefully track its progress before any expansions can be planned for future seasons. We are grateful to WSU Facilities staff for their embrace of the idea and active collaboration in the project’s decisions.

As many readers know, honeybees are indispensable to our food system. In fact, about one-third of the human diet comes from insect-pollinated plants, and the honeybee is responsible for 80 percent of that pollination, according to the US Department of Agriculture. For example, soybeans, nuts, apples, peaches, cherries, strawberries, blueberries, oranges, melons, and many others, all depend on bees for pollination.

Over the last few years, honeybees have been stricken by a scourge called the Colony Collapse Disorder, causing losses of a quarter to a third of a colony’s population. Data suggest that the problem seems to be greater in rural and agricultural areas—where large colonies of bees are kept—than in urban or wilderness areas. Our fingers are crossed for our friends at the St. Andrew’s Garden.

As for the garden’s human participants, we have had record numbers of applicants this season—students and employees—wanting to garden with us and have had to turn a few away after helping many join existing teams or form new ones. Although it is to be expected in a