Weekly Farmers Market is Coming!

Wednesdays, June 3—Oct. 28, 11 AM—4 PM, Cass Ave. In front of Prentis Hall.

Spring is around the corner, and the Wayne State Wednesday Farmers Market is not much further away! SEED Wayne is getting prepared for the market, checking in with vendors and on-and off-campus partners, drafting contracts, and ordering supplies.

As many SEEDLING readers will attest, last year’s two pilots in August and September were a runaway success! Based on demand expressed in customer surveys at those markets, this year’s market will be offered weekly beginning June 3, and will run from 11 AM – 4 PM, at the same location of 5201 Cass Ave., just across from the Detroit Public Library. The market will continue to feature growers from the region, with a particular focus on producers from within the city.

Farmers markets are essential to building sustainable food systems—SEED Wayne’s mission. City-dwellers often feel removed from the farmers who grow their food and from rural communities where food is grown. Many urban children believe that vegetables simply come from the grocery store. Farmers markets help us appreciate better the interconnectedness between urban and rural, between farm land and city neighborhoods.

We at SEED Wayne, along with many of our campus and community partners, believe that access to fresh and healthy food should be treated as a right of all people, regardless of their socioeconomic status or residential location. This is why we undertook the Wednesday Farmers Market, and also why we are working very hard for the university to be able to accept the Bridge Card (food stamps) at the farmers market. The Bridge Card is a swipe card, similar to a credit or debit card, and money is deposited into the account through electronic benefits transfer, or EBT. When farmers markets accept EBT, food stamp program participants can purchase food directly from the growers, thereby gaining greater access to fresh, local foods while also keeping a larger proportion of their federal nutrition dollars in the region.

Last year, many would-be shoppers asked us if WSU farmers market accepted the Bridge Card. These inquiries came from both campus members who were students and staff of the university, as well as off-campus shoppers, suggesting that opening up the market to food stamp participants would greatly increase access for many people as well provide farmers with additional income.

Please come by to buy your produce, talk to the farmers, and show your support for your farmers market at Wayne State University. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Kami Pothukuchi at k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu.

The WSU Farmers Market...

- Makes available fresh fruits and vegetables on campus
- Helps support local growers
- Circulates more dollars in the region’s economy
- Reduces food-miles and related health, energy, and environmental impacts
- Helps preserve farmland and farming in the Southeastern Michigan-Ontario regions
- Educates us about the sources of our food
- Creates a vibrant place for campus and community members to meet and socialize
Healthy Corner Stores: Fresh Produce in the Neighborhood

Many Detroit neighborhoods lack full service grocery stores that offer diverse and affordable options for healthy foods. Additionally, many households have no access to a personal vehicle, making it difficult to do grocery shopping on a regular basis. On the other hand, Detroit neighborhoods have an abundant supply of corner stores and fast food outlets which carry many types of foods that have low nutrition values and contain large amounts of fat, sugar, and salt. Unsurprisingly, Detroiter suffer from obesity and other diet-related illnesses at high rates.

The Healthy Corner Stores Initiative is a nationwide movement to increase low-income households’ access to healthy, affordable foods and fresh produce by increasing the availability of these foods in neighborhood corner stores. These stores enable children and adults to walk to the store and buy fresh fruits and vegetables for snacks or meals.

SEED Wayne is partnering with Earthworks Urban Farm to explore the feasibility of creating a “healthy corner store pilot program” in the near-Eastside neighborhood around the Capuchin Soup Kitchen.

Thus far, WSU students and CSK staff have analyzed census data, conducted surveys of corner store owners and neighborhood residents, and organized a community forum to learn more about the community and its views on the topic. These efforts have confirmed a paucity of healthy foods in corner stores, identified a need for both nutrition education and social marketing to support healthy food buying in the community, and also skepticism that corner stores would be willing and able to offer affordable options of fresh produce. Most corner stores currently make the majority of their profits from liquor, tobacco and lotto sales—not the most health-promoting options. Because most corner stores are operated by members of the Chaldean community, we also noted a degree of mutual inter-racial/ethnic antagonism in the neighborhood.

In the upcoming months, SEED Wayne and Earthworks Urban Farm will continue to assess store interest and develop more concrete proposals for designing the pilot program. At the same time, outreach will continue with neighborhood residents to learn more about effective social marketing techniques to increase knowledge of and demand for fresh produce. This initiative is still in a very exploratory stage, and both organizations are continually evaluating findings to ensure that time and resources are invested wisely.

Earthworks Urban Farm Honored in National Magazine

Earthworks Urban Farm, a program of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, and a partner of SEED Wayne, was chosen by Natural Home Magazine as one of the nation’s top ten urban farms. The magazine, which has a national circulation, cited the following reasons: that Earthworks provides fresh produce to the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, and that it runs youth development programs.

Earthworks currently manages two garden sites: one located just across the street from the soup kitchen at Meldrum and St. Paul on Detroit’s near-eastside, and the other, a block North. Harvests from both gardens end up in meals prepared for the soup kitchen’s guests, improving the nutritional content of the meals.

Earthworks also runs two youth program for neighborhood children and teenagers. Growing Healthy Kids teaches gardening and nutrition basics to children. The Youth Farm Stand cultivates among participating tweens in-depth gardening and marketing skills, while also developing leadership capacities. In 2008, five children graduated from Growing Healthy Kids, and are continuing on through the Youth Farm Stand. To learn more about Earthworks, browse: www.cskdetroit.org/EWG.

Readers are invited to submit news on teaching, research, engagement, or operations of interest to SEED Wayne. To learn more, write to Kami Pothukuchi at k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu

SEED Wayne Partners
Cooking with CSK’s Executive Chef Alison Costello

On January 21, Alison Costello, Executive Chef at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, offered a cooking workshop at Wayne State. The workshop was sponsored by SEED Wayne and offered in collaboration with the Food and Nutrition Club (FAN), a student group in the Nutrition and Dietetics Department at WSU.

Chef Alison prepared cauliflower steak with quinoa, whose ingredients can be grown locally. Quinoa, a grain native to Latin America, is one of the most nutritious grains available. Cauliflower also contains nutrients that help improve heart health, reduce the risk of strokes, maintain healthy cholesterol levels, and develop a healthy pregnancy. Equally importantly, the dish was delicious!

Seventeen students attended the workshop. In the workshop, Chef Alison also blended in a significant amount of wisdom and experiences as she discussed tips for cooking different vegetables and preparing infused oils. She also provided a glimpse of the workings of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, and its program, Earthworks Urban Farm. As a result, some participants expressed an interest in volunteering at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen.

Chef Alison interacted in personable ways with those attending the workshop and answered many questions. She also helped bridge the gap between students on campus and a community-based organization. In addition to the recipe for the cauliflower and quinoa dish, participants also received information about local food resources, including farmers markets and CSAs.

UP 5999, Cities and Food: Seminars with Local Experts

How are farmers markets, anti-hunger activities, urban agriculture, and community and federal food policy advocacy related? Can emergency food programs help resolve the underlying causes of hunger? How do we bridge long-term sustainability of food systems with more short term solutions for hunger and lack of access to healthy food? These are just a few of the questions discussed in Cities and Food, an urban planning course offered this Spring.

The course provides an overview of the health, economic, social, and environmental problems caused by the global industrial food system, and alternatives for building more sustainable food systems. Students in the class work on projects developed in partnership with community organizations that are also SEED Wayne partners. Projects include examining the feasibility of a methane digester at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, researching best practices for increasing participation in the (federal) Summer Food Service Program in Detroit, and looking into the use of the DDOT bus system by Eastern Market shoppers, among others.

In addition, the course will also offer seminars with local food advocates to discuss issues and activities as they relate to Detroit. These seminars are open to interested campus and community members. Topics include:

March 11: Eastern Market as a City Food Resource Center
March 25: The Henry Ford, Sourcing Locally
April 1: Urban Agriculture in Detroit
April 8: The Politics of Organics
April 15: Community Food Planning & Policy
April 22: Municipal Food Programs (Brazil)

All seminars meet at 5:30 PM in Rm. 3339 FAB. To reserve a seat, please email Kami Pothukuchi at k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu.

Mark Your Calendars and Spread the Word

Vegetarian Indian Meal: Every Friday, Student Center, 12 noon: The Mantra Yoga Club provides an Indian vegetarian meal for a suggested $4 donation every Friday at the Student Center. To reserve a space, contact mantrayoga@wayne.edu.

For more information, browse: www.mantrayoga.followinginthefootsteps.com

March

Wednesdays: UP 5999 Seminars (See above). http://www.clas.wayne.edu/seedwayne

April
April 18, 10 AM: St. Andrew’s Allotment Garden Build Day. Volunteers needed!


May, day and time TBD

Garden planting; for details, check www.clas.wayne.edu/seedwayne

Starting June 3

Every Wednesday, 11 AM—4 PM: Wayne State Wednesday Farmers Market, Cass Ave.
SEED Wayne is dedicated to building sustainable food systems on campus and in Detroit area communities through activities in teaching, research, engagement, and campus operations.

SEED Wayne works in partnership with community-based organizations engaged promoting food security, urban agriculture, farm-to-institution, and food planning and policy development.

SEED Wayne embraces core university functions in teaching, research, engagement and operations.

Student leadership is central to SEED Wayne’s success.

SEED Wayne projects include ‘Sustainable Cafeterias,’ ‘Warrior Gardens,’ ‘Recycle Food’ (Rescue and redistribution to food assistance sites of edible, excess foods and composting of food wastes), and ‘Policy-Making at the Soup Kitchen Table.’

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

In 2009, SEED Wayne will double the area on campus dedicated to vegetable and herb production. In addition to its flagship Warrior Demonstration Garden (located between the Warrior Grille and the Undergraduate Library), SEED Wayne will develop the St. Andrew’s Allotment Garden. This new garden will be built behind St. Andrew’s Church, just east of the Lodge Service Drive. St. Andrew’s Church is located between Manoogian Hall and Parking Structure 2. Sixteen beds, each 4 ft by 8 ft, will be planted with vegetables, herbs, and flowers, by student groups and volunteers. Four beds each will be maintained by the Student Environmental Action Leaders, Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity, and Mantra Yoga Club, while four will be maintained by SEED Wayne for activities related to education, engagement, and research.

The allotment garden will help foster active student participation in building a sustainable food system in Detroit. Several students who will be involved in the garden are already active members of SEED Wayne, and have some experience with growing food. SEED Wayne will provide materials for the beds, seedlings, and general oversight and assistance through the growing season, and will support peer education. In return, students agree to take good care of the garden, refrain from using chemical fertilizers or pesticides, participate in group activities, and bring problems to our attention. Participants are free to decide how to use the harvests in their beds, with some wishing to consume harvests, others to donate them, and yet others (such as members of the Mantra Yoga Club) planning to incorporate harvests in their weekly vegetarian Indian meal offerings on campus.

The wood for the garden beds will be prepared by members of partnering student organizations and volunteers throughout March and April at the Community Arts Woodshop. On Saturday, April 18, from 10 AM to 3 PM, the beds will be laid on the ground and filled with soil and compost, the latter provided by the Detroit Garden Resource Program Collaborative.

Interested in helping build the St. Andrews Allotment Garden? Please contact Will Ahee at w.ahee@wayne.edu.