

ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES of OREGON

Interfaith Food & Farms Partnership

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CSA Member Profile: Becky Perreaulx, St. Andrews, Holy Redeemer

By Sarah Pruett



As a nurse, Becky Perreaulx feels it's important to treat her body as a gift, and that involves eating local, sustainable food which has not been treated with chemicals. She also wants to care for other people through her food choices and that means eating food which has been grown and harvested by people earning a fair wage for their work. As well as being a CSA member, Becky has been involved with St. Andrews parish this year as a gardener in their community garden. She heard about the CSA from a friend.

Becky lives on N. Williams avenue, about 10 blocks away from the CSA drop-off location at enterbeing on 16th and Alberta in northeast Portland, and rides her bike to collect her share on Wednesday afternoons. Becky's CSA share, which she paid for by herself, feeds her and three housemates for a week. They all nosh on the fresh carrots, chard, kale and lettuce and it is plenty for everyone. Becky says she really enjoys having food for her housemates as it gives everyone an opportunity to share. Because she is receiving a portion of fresh produce every week, Becky says that she spends much less on produce, and that when she does

go to the store she can much more easily identify and choose produce that is local and seasonal. "The CSA is a great way to learn about local food...and Heather [the farmer] really involves us with her email every week inviting us to the farm for work parties, updates about how everything is looking, recipes, and what we'll be getting in our next box."

Becky definitely feels a connection between her faith and the CSA membership, as it helps solidify and embody the way she wants to live her life in harmony with nature and her body, not causing harm to the planet or other people. "Knowing where my food is coming from—eating food from *right here*," Becky says with a smile, "I'm treating my body like the gift that it is." She adds that when it comes to participation in the IFFP CSA, her values are what inspire her to do it.

The Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership (IFFP) strives to increase access to fresh, local food for all—especially people with low incomes—and encourages congregations to support small, new and immigrant farmers through innovative market relationships. In the process, we are developing and sharing models for congregations across Oregon and beyond. For more information about IFFP, go to www.emoregon.org/food_and_farms.php.

In 2007, IFFP begin exploring possibilities for establishing a pilot Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs based in a congregation to provide marketing opportunities for new and immigrant farmers while creating avenues to affordable fresh produce for people with low-incomes. We were delighted to be able to connect long-time collaborators, Redeemer Lutheran and St. Andrew Catholic Parish in northeast Portland with Heather Burns, former IFFP summer staff, in the new venture of farming.