

Interfaith Food & Farms Partnership

A Project of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon



Spring 2008

Welcome to the quarterly newsletter of the Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership (IFFP), a project of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns. We are very excited about the new projects taking root this spring with congregations including cooking classes for people with low-incomes and two new congregation-supported agriculture farms. Read more below.

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- Internship: Local Food Networks and the 100 Mile Diet

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PORTLAND UPDATES

Congregation-based CSAs form

IFFP is incredibly happy to announce the formation of two new community supported agriculture programs that will serve three congregations in Portland. Heather Burns, last year's IFFP Portland project coordinator, has started a one-acre organic farm on Sauvie Island. Little Frog Farm will provide eighteen produce shares at Redeemer Lutheran Church and St. Andrew's Catholic Church, both in inner-northeast Portland. The congregations have agreed to donate funds in addition to their share price to subsidize shares for low-income families (the number of which will be determined once payments are made). We are also welcoming Alexander Velikoretskikh, a Ukrainian farmer who will be providing shares for Lincoln Street United Methodist Church in southeast Portland. Alexander's Great River Farm is split between a plot on 39th St and Sauvie Island. He will be providing sixteen shares, with each family subsidizing one week's produce for a low-income family in southeast. We are thrilled to have these new partners involved in our work to provide fresh, local produce for Portland while increasing opportunities for small farmers and low-income families!

Chefs without Kitchens: Cooking Classes at First Presbyterian

The end of March brought the conclusion of our first series of low-income cooking classes at First Presbyterian Church in Portland. Over four weeks, twelve participants learned how to create healthy vegetarian meals with fresh produce and emergency food box items. All meals were prepared in the microwave, and each recipe was a hit! One participant even commented that if all vegetarian meals tasted as good as ours, he would remain a vegetarian for life! Lisa Bersani, cook at Sisters of the Road Café, and Gretchen Doering, cook at Camp Collins Retreat Center, highlighted relevant topics each week. Each week participants took home lots of leftovers and fresh fruit. Kiwis were particularly well received once everyone learned how to eat them. At the end of the series each participant went home with a kitchen kit comprised of utensils, tools, and some pantry items. All of the fresh, local produce used in the recipes was supplied by Food Front Coop (2375 NW Thurman St), to whom we owe many thanks for their weekly donation. We look forward to the next round of classes at Northeast Emergency Food Program which will take place Thursdays in May.

Outreach Efforts Continue at Northeast Emergency Food Program

Amanda Lawrence, a PSU Masters in Public Health candidate, has just joined the IFFP team as a volunteer to coordinate food literacy outreach this spring at the Northeast Emergency Food Program. Along with Gretchen Doering, she will help design the recipes and lessons for the cooking classes there in May. She also plans to develop farmers' market promotional tools in addition to organizing a farmers' market field trip with NEFP guests to introduce them to farmers' markets and encourage them to shop there. Her other objectives include developing low literacy nutrition materials for limited resource families and guidelines for grocery and farmers market shopping and meal preparation on a tight budget. In addition to Amanda's efforts, we plan to start distributing vegetable and herb seeds to guests to promote empowerment through growing food. We are excited to have Amanda's help with many new projects that we will be working on through the summer.

CORVALLIS UPDATES

Cooking Classes and Coupons

Intaba Liff-Anderson, chef/owner of FireWorks Restaurant in Corvallis, is teaching a series of cooking classes which educate low-income families about stretching their food dollar. Topics covered include how to incorporate basic staples, food box ingredients, and using locally grown fruits and vegetables, provided by local farms. As the summer progresses,

we will learning basic food preservation techniques in order to extend the bounty of the harvest. As our text, we are using *Simply in Season*, a wonderful book co-authored by Cathleen Hockman-Wert, a member of our community who is active in promoting local, sustainably grown food.

"That's My Farmer" is off and running for another year in Corvallis. All ten of last year's farmers are returning, and we have added three new farms based on their recommendations: Bina's Patchwork Garden, Turpen Family Farm, and Matt-Cyn Farms. All three grow many varieties of vegetables. Turpen also provides eggs, and Matt-Cyn grow specialty varieties of dried beans as well. We're thrilled to have them on board. Also, our dedicated and energetic volunteers from faith communities are hoping to sell coupon booklets outside of the Corvallis Saturday Farmers' Market this season. Keep an eye out for them!

See the article on the projects in Corvallis at

http://gazettetimes.com/articles/2008/03/28/news/community/3loc01_cooking.txt

NEWS

Farm-to-schools legislation? It's a win for everyone

Yakima Herald-Republic (Washington State), Friday, March 14, 2008

Washington Governor Chris Gregoire is expected to sign into law the "Local Farms – Healthy Kids Act," which will enable local schools to buy locally grown foods. It will make it possible for schools and farms to buy local meat and produce even if the commodities are not the cheapest available. The program would be administered by the state Department of Agriculture, and a grant would be handled by the office of state Superintendent of Public Instruction. Lawmakers approved spending \$1.5 million to implement the program. It is expected to be beneficial for Washington students and growers; students will get locally grown healthy food and the more than \$300 million that Washington schools spend on food annually would stay in the state. The measure is widely supported by Democrats, Republicans, farmers, and environmentalists. All nine of the Central Washington legislators in the 13th, 14th and 15th districts supported the bill.

"It's motherhood and apple pie, supporting local farmers at the same time getting fresh fruits and vegetables, Washington-produced, on the table," said Rep. Bill Hinkle, R-Cle Elum.

Farm Bill Update

The countdown has begun to the April 18 deadline to extend the current farm bill or complete a new one. Negotiations continue among House, Senate, and administration to reach a compromise on how much farm bill spending will be allowed, how it will be paid for, and how it will be distributed among the titles. In order to enact a final farm bill, the House and Senate must pass identical versions of the bill, which the president must then sign.

Bread for the World urges Congress to approve, at a minimum, the spending increase for nutrition programs approved by the House last summer -- \$11.5 billion over 10 years. With so many families in the United States already struggling to put food on the table, and a looming economic recession that would hit low-income families hardest, Congress must ensure that this farm bill strengthens the safety net against hunger. Both the House and Senate bills are better than they would have been without our hard work. Also, nearly 300 newspapers have editorialized in favor of reform, and surveys show that most voters now understand that there are serious problems in the current farm bill. [Oregon doesn't have any members on the conference committee that is responsible for the negotiations.]

from Andrew Kang Bartlett, Presbyterian Hunger Program

RESOURCES

BOOKS

Are you shopping in the dark? *Your Right to Know: Genetic Engineering and the Secret Changes in Your Food* provides a comprehensive and up-to-the-minute guide on the very real dangers genetically engineered foods present to our health, the environment, and farm communities. Written by Andrew Kimbrell with a foreword by Nell Newman, this book provides you with all the necessary tools to understand this critical food issue, to choose to avoid GE foods and to become an active participant in the fight for an organic, environmentally sustainable and socially just food future. Order from our bookshelf at Powells and benefit us. <http://www.powells.com/ppbs/32752.html>

GARDENING RESOURCES

The Heirloom Vegetable Gardener's Assistant

<http://www.halcyon.com/tmend/heirloom.htm>. This website addresses the many questions around growing heirloom vegetables, including which ones to grow and where to get certain varieties. It includes an overview of heirloom traits and detailed information on nine easy-to-grow heirloom veggies, as well as lots of background information.

The Helpful Gardener

<http://www.helpfulgardener.com/>. This website is packed with helpful information for gardeners, both those starting out and those looking for help with particular issues. In addition to articles on a wide variety of garden topics, the website features tips for container, flower, vegetable, and organic gardening, in addition to garden design and specific flowers. It also includes a Q&A page.

WEBSITES

<http://www.culinate.com/home>. Created by several Food Front Coop owners and friends, this website seeks to help people develop good food sense. To do this, culinate.com incorporates tons of news and features, reviews, recipes, and interactive features. The website is fun and easy to browse and provides a great space to give and receive food-related news.

<http://www.ethicurean.com/calendar>. Features a calendar with nationwide food events.

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fcd/nutrition/ewfl/index.php>. Eat Well for Less, a program of OSU Extension, features three self-paced, web-learning modules designed to offer ideas about how to meet some of the challenges of running a household. The program's goal is to share useful information about how to plan healthful meals, prepare tasty, low-cost foods that are quick and easy, and make food dollars last through the month.

EVENTS

April 24, 7:30 p.m., "The Future of Food in Oregon," presented by Ken Meter, First Congregational Church (1126 S.W. Park Ave., Portland). Meter will present a picture of the food system in the Northwest to inspire people to take action to improve it. Meter's work has strengthened local food initiatives in 29 regions across 15 states including EMO's Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership in Corvallis. His groundbreaking studies, "Finding Food in Farm Country," document economic losses suffered in America's farm communities. Sponsored by Oregon Food Bank (OFB). OFB will accept food and cash donations at the door.

May 1, Screening of Renewal, Portland, Location, First Unitarian Church, SW 12th and Salmon in Portland. 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. RENEWAL is the first feature-length documentary to capture the breadth and vitality of America's religious-environmental movement. In rural communities, suburbs and cities, people of faith are rolling up their sleeves in practical and far-reaching ways. Offering a profound message of hope, RENEWAL shows individuals and communities driven by the deepest source of inspiration - their spiritual and religious convictions - being called to re-examine what it means to be human and how we live on this planet. One segment, "Food for Faith," shows how Muslim tradition and charity forge bonds between urban communities and sustainable farms. In Chicago, which has a growing and diverse Muslim community, the interfaith organization Faith in Place has supported the development of Taqwa. Taqwa supplies organic meat to the Muslim community and everyone else who wants to support sustainable farming. This chicken, beef, and lamb is "Eco-Halal." The animals are humanely raised, fed an organic diet, and slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law. Donations

May 6 , EMO Annual Dinner & Silent Auction. 5:30 p.m. silent auction and reception, and 7 p.m. dinner and awards program, at the Governor Hotel, 614 SW 11th Ave., Portland. Every year EMO friends and supporters gather from around the state to celebrate and honor ecumenical partners who have accomplished extraordinary things in Oregon. The EMO Annual Celebration and Awards Dinner is a joyful and informative celebration of the work our churches and people of faith do together. This year's award recipients include Thomas O'Connor, Ph.D., administrator of Religious Services for the Oregon Department of Corrections; Mercy Corps; The Rev. Dr. William Apel, author and professor of Religious Studies at Linfield College; Oregon Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster (ORVOAD); and Saints Peter & Paul Episcopal Church in Portland. The cost is \$60 per person, or \$600 for a sponsorship of a table for 10. To register, download event response card, or call (503) 221-1054. If you are interested in volunteering for the event, contact Carla Starrett-Bigg at the same number or csbigg@emoregon.org.

May, Cooking Classes at EMO's Northeast Emergency Food, Thursdays in May, 10:00 – noon, NEFP (NE 72nd & Wygant, Portland). These free classes will help guests at NEFP create meals with local, seasonal fresh vegetables and food that they receive in emergency food boxes. Gretchen Doering, cook at Collins Retreat Center, will instruct classes using resources from OSU Extension. Participants will learn about nutrition and creative ways to stretch their food boxes. Childcare will be provided, and participants will receive fresh produce, pantry items, and some kitchen equipment in a reusable bag. If you are interested in volunteering or assisting us in any way, please contact Cristina Stella at 503.221.1054 or cstella@emoregon.org

May 16, Farms Feed Everyone Fundraising Dinner, 6:00-8:00pm, First United Methodist Church Community Center, Corvallis. Enjoy a dinner catered by Intaba Liff-Anderson of FireWorks Restaurant and IFFP Kitchen Coordinator and recent graduates of her low-income cooking class while listening to bluegrass music and learning about EMO/Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership's latest projects in Benton County. Funds raised by this event, titled "Farms Feed Everyone: Toward a Vibrant and Equitable Food System," will be used to support IFFP's cooking classes, start a community garden with a faith community, and support the "That's My Farmer" coupon program. Sliding scale \$12-49. A portion of the ticket is tax-deductible. For tickets and more information call 541.757.1988 x107 or email thatsmyfarmer@gmail.com by May 10.

May 17, Growing Gardens' 2nd Annual Veggie Ball, 5:30 – 10:00pm, Staver Locomotive (2537 NW 29th Ave, Portland). Dance for fruits and veggies! This costume ball and benefit will feature the sounds of Sneakin' Out, as well as sample fare from more

than a dozen of Portland's premier restaurants and wineries including: Fife, Fleur de Lis, Navarre, Nostrana, Vibrant Table, Casa Bruno and more. It includes a silent and live auction featuring Bid on getaways, unique items and packages such as: sailing Excursion, food and garden experiences, Meteorologist for a Day, Studio Session with Award-Winning Potter, Winery Grape Crush Immersion, Garden art, and more. Costumes are optional, and costume adornments will be on site to help you find your inner fruit or veggie. Tickets are \$75 or \$125/two, available through Growing Gardens at 503 284 8420, [online](#), or at Garden Fever (3433 NE 24th Ave, Portland). \$30 of every ticket is NOT tax-deductable.

OPPORTUNITIES

Help for farmers/ranchers looking for grant support

Do you work with farmers or ranchers who are minorities, Native Americans, women, or recent immigrants? Do they have project ideas for which a federal grant might help them get started? If so, please consider a new service that links experienced, grantwriting advisors with farmers and ranchers to help them submit a completed application or proposal to a federal agency. Farmers and ranchers may submit applications to *any* federal grant or cost-share program, not just the USDA. The project is also looking for experienced grantwriters. For more information, visit http://www.michaelfieldsagainst.org/programs/policy/producer_grantwriting_assistance.html

10th Annual Rooted In Community Conference, July 23-27, 2008. The RIC Conference is an opportunity for young people involved in agriculture and food justice to lead workshops and learn from others doing similar work across the country. The engaging youth leadership opportunity will be taking place in the San Francisco Bay Area where adults and youth from around the country gather for fun workshops, fieldtrips and community building activities. More information will be available in May at www.rootedincommunity.org.

Internship: September 1 to October 13, Local Food Networks and the 100 Mile Diet

Aprovecho, Cottage Grove. We intend to cover all aspects of food: from seed to composting to community. Four of the six weeks we will eat strictly from within 100-miles of the campus in Cottage Grove, Oregon. This will necessitate a trip to the coast, gardening, wildcrafting and more. We encourage interns to undertake research projects during this program that will be presented at our Local Harvest Celebration on October 13th to NGOs policymakers, and others involved with food issues. For info. go to www.Aprovecho.net.