

# ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

---

## *Media Release*

Interchurch Center, Suite B ■ 0245 SW Bancroft Street ■ Portland, Oregon 97239  
*phone* (503) 221-1054 ■ *fax* (503) 223-7007 ■ *Web site* [www.emoregon.org](http://www.emoregon.org)

July 28, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jenny Holmes ,IFFP Project Director

Phone: (503) 221-1054, ext. 214

E-mail: [jholmes@emoregon.org](mailto:jholmes@emoregon.org)

### ***Everyone Eats!:* Community Food Assessment for north and inner northeast Portland is now available**

Access to fresh, healthy food is a serious concern for many low-income residents of north and inner northeast Portland. To identify local policy and community-based solutions to food insecurity, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership (IFFP) has released the report "Everyone Eats! A Community Food Assessment for Areas of North and Northeast Portland." The result of two years of collaborative, grassroots work, the report addresses issues of food insecurity in neighborhoods of north and northeast Portland. "Everyone Eats!" is being sent to local, state and national policy-makers and citizen groups, and is available to download at [www.emoregon.org/food\\_farms.php](http://www.emoregon.org/food_farms.php).

The assessment reveals that although three-quarters of the 200 low-income respondents use the Oregon Trail food stamp program, 71 percent have difficulty stretching their food budgets to the end of the month. Transportation to food outlets is a barrier for 43 percent of respondents, and a quarter of respondents travel 30 to 90 minutes each way to reach the outlet where they most frequently shop. While 36 percent of respondents utilize a household or community garden, just 12 percent shop at farmers' markets regularly during the season. Most of those who do not shop at farmers' markets did not know the locations of farmers' markets in their areas. Respondents were overwhelmingly interested in subsidized CSA shares, farmers' market vouchers and cooking with local food classes.

Key recommendations include:

- Increase communication and collaboration between local growers and emergency food providers to help people with low incomes better access fresh, nutritious foods. This could include connecting more small farms with Oregon Food Bank's Harvest Share or Farmers Ending Hunger programs.
- Create transportation options to address isolation from grocery stores, particularly bulk discount stores and stores carrying fresh, affordable produce.
- Support the establishment of a community food center in north or northeast Portland with a commercial kitchen and space for cooking classes, storage, canning and micro-enterprise development.
- Support the return of Multnomah County Extension Service by educating local residents and encouraging local government to reinstate funding.

-more-

#### MEMBER DENOMINATIONS

African Methodist Episcopal Church ■ African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church ■ American Baptist Churches ■ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ■ Christian Methodist Episcopal Church ■ Church of the Brethren  
Community of Christ ■ Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon ■ Episcopal Diocese of Oregon ■ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ■ Greek Orthodox Church ■ Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) ■ Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland ■ United Church of Christ ■ United Methodist Church ■ Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

- Use insights and findings of “Everyone Eats!” to inform the development of the Portland/Multnomah Food Policy Council’s Food Access Committee’s recommendations: encourage the development of food assessment standards to allow for comparisons over time and among different neighborhoods; integrate food access considerations into the revision of the Portland Plan; and secure the support of the Parks Bureau and City Council for the Portland Fruit Tree Project to include edibles on the list of acceptable street trees for planting and maintenance.

The report was sent to the Portland Bureau of Planning with comments focus on making food access a key consideration in the update of Portland’s Comprehensive Plan. “We plan for parks, housing and transportation, but the most basic of human needs—access to healthy food—is often left out the planning equation,” said IFFP project director Jenny Holmes.

Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership links farmers and congregations in creative partnerships that assist families with low incomes. Our food assessment sought to determine how closer collaboration, food education, direct marketing alliances and a commitment to buy locally produced food could improve food access and nutrition. As a result of the food assessment, IFFP has coordinated classes for people with low incomes in northeast and downtown Portland that teach participants to prepare healthy, affordable meals with seasonal foods. EMO’s Northeast Emergency Food Program, a partner in the assessment, has beefed up educational efforts on using food stamps at farmers’ markets, started nutrition and cooking classes, and distributed vegetable seeds and seedlings to help people grow their own. In addition, IFFP has strengthened its low-income voucher program at a church farm stand and partnered with Portland State University to conduct surveys of produce availability across Portland.

The food assessment was coordinated by Jocelyn Furbush and Sabrina Kosok, LINKS AmeriCorps volunteers. For more information, call (503) 221-1054, ext. 214, or e-mail [jholmes@emoregon.org](mailto:jholmes@emoregon.org).

*Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s (EMO) Oregon Interfaith Power and Light project engages the faith community to strive for accountability in our individual and collective energy decisions in an interdependent world. EMO is a statewide association of Christian denominations—including Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox bodies—congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, environmental ministry and public policy advocacy.*