

# Interfaith Food & Farms Partnership

A Project of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon



## Spring 2007

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. It has been an exciting spring with much happening in both our Portland and Corvallis area locations. Please send us news of what your congregation is doing to promote connections to local food and increasing food access for low-income people no matter what part of Oregon or southwest Washington you are in. Send to [inec@emoregon.org](mailto:inec@emoregon.org). Our summer issue will share the creative ideas of many congregations on education and action. Please forward this newsletter to others you think may have an interest.

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## PORTLAND AREA UPDATES

### Portland Congregations Host Local Farmers this Summer

Building on last year's successes, five Portland area congregations will be hosting local farmers, including immigrant farmers, each Sunday throughout the summer. The participating congregations will partner with Meskhetian Turkish farmers who are part of the New Agriculture project of Mercy Corps Northwest, as well as several Hmong farming families, to provide fresh local produce to congregations and their communities. The farm stand program aims to provide new markets for small farmers, to raise awareness about local food and community food security within faith communities, and to increase access to fresh, local food by low-income people. The Meskhetian Turkish farmers will sell a variety of organic vegetables while the Hmong farmers will offer flowers, strawberries and some vegetables.

Farm stands in southwest Portland will be hosted First Presbyterian Church and First United Methodist Church who will each host two farmers. First Presbyterian Church plans to offer a coupon program, which will increase opportunities for low-income people in the area to access locally-grown produce. Redeemer Lutheran Church in northeast Portland is hosting a Hmong farming family and will publicize widely to local churches, businesses and door-to-door, in hopes of attracting widespread neighborhood participation. St. Philip Neri Catholic Church will host a Hmong flower farmer for the second year and is beginning a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) partnership with Bumblebee Farm. Local farmer David Shonk will be at the church weekly to distribute produce to 25 shareholders. Micah's Village—a congregation who meets at the Sunnyside Grange Hall at 132<sup>nd</sup> and Sunnyside Road in Clackamas County—will promote their "village farm stand at Sunnyside" to the local community and other area churches. For more information or to get involved, please call Jenny at (503) 221-1054, ext. 214.

### Lunch at Local Church Is "Simply in Season"

Why is choosing local, sustainably-produced and fairly-traded foods an important faith practice? And how can we find ways to practice it in every season? These were the questions posed at a March 11 Sunday Forum sponsored by Portland First United Methodist Church Hunger Task Force and Planet Church environmental concerns committee. The 60 people gathered at the Forum explored these questions with Cathleen Hockman-Wert, co-author of the Mennonite Central Committee's "Simply in Season" cookbook.

Mindfulness about eating has always been a part of spiritual reflection and practice, an embodiment of enacting love for our neighbors and care for God's creation. To put their faith into action, the Forum participants learned about ways to prepare fresh, local foods that can be found in every season of the year. As they enjoyed a lunch prepared from the Simply in Season Cookbook recipes, it became abundantly clear that acting on their faith through their choice of foods could be a most delicious and easy choice to make.

Download a free copy of the Simply in Season Study Guide at <http://www.worldcommunitycookbook.org/season/studyguide.html>. The book and study guide can be ordered from Herald Press or Mennonite Central Committee at <http://secure.mcc.org/mccstore/>.

### Everyone Eats! Surveyors Hit the Streets

The community food assessment project in north and northeast Portland, "Everybody Eats!" aims to empower residents to create a secure and sustainable local food system, with nutritious, culturally appropriate food for all. Having moved through the organizing,

planning and initial research phases, this community food assessment project is about to move into the data collection phase. Over the past several months, our leadership team has helped to develop a community food assessment survey.

### *Eating and learning together*

At the end of March, we held a community meal generously hosted by Redeemer Lutheran Church, next door to EMO's Northeast Emergency Food Program (NEFP) on NE Killingsworth. Members of Redeemer's new Sustainability Organizing Leaders (SOL) group prepared the food, and we invited guests from NEFP and the neighborhood. This event helped us to test some of the initial questions that were later incorporated into the written food assessment survey. The event also led toward identifying leadership team members and was a great chance to share a meal and conversation around food accessibility.

### *The leadership team*

The north and northeast Portland food assessment is community-driven, and we have prioritized engaging low-income residents in this project. Currently, there are six members on a leadership team who come from diverse walks of life, including natives of Somalia, Mexico, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and of course, north and northeast Portland. The members bring a variety of experience and ideas to the project. They are all looking forward to learning more about food issues in their communities, and eventually helping their neighbors to have increased access to fresh, healthy food. The leadership team has met several times this spring to develop the food assessment survey and practice it on each other. As one participant said, "I'm glad we tried out the survey, because this is what we're going to be doing soon!"

### *Coming up*

The members of the leadership team will be administering one-on-one surveys at food pantries, grocery stores, their own congregations and apartment buildings, or at other places where people gather in their neighborhoods starting the first week of June. By the end of the summer, we hope to have data from at least 200 respondents and will be compiling the information and learning what food security projects the community would like to see implemented. Community conversations about food will also be held. A Jesuit Volunteer Corps member will be joining us in the fall to work with north and northeast Portland residents to turn these projects into reality.

### *Looking for more leaders*

We are still looking for several people to serve on the leadership team and administer food assessment surveys. In particular, we are looking for someone who is bilingual in Russian and English, as well as someone who speaks an Asian language such as Hmong or Vietnamese. If you are interested in getting involved with the assessment or know of potential bilingual leadership team candidates, please contact Jocelyn at (503) 956-0672 or [jocelynf@portlandstate.org](mailto:jocelynf@portlandstate.org).

## **CORVALLIS AREA UPDATES**

### **"That's My Farmer" Program Expands**

This year, the "That's My Farmer" Coupon Program has reached its goal of expansion to include 10 congregations and 10 farms in the Corvallis area. The 10 congregations include Beit Am Jewish Community, Calvin Presbyterian Church, Corvallis Mennonite Fellowship, Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan, First Congregational United Church of Christ, First Presbyterian Church, First United Methodist Church, Grace Lutheran Church, St. Mary's

Catholic Church and Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. The participating farms include Deep Roots Farm, Denison Farms, Gathering Together Farm, Heavenly Harvest Farm, Kings Valley Gardens, La Mancha Ranch & Orchard, Midway Farms, My Pharm, Sunbow Farm and Wood Family Farm. Most congregations have already begun selling coupons, and many of them have invited the farmers to hold speaking engagements and sell their produce at periodic farm stands held after religious services. Once we receive coupon sales from the congregations, we will begin purchasing coupons for distribution to low-income recipients through three local organizations serving this population: the Gleaners, the South Corvallis Food Bank and St. Vincent de Paul. We anticipate that participation will double this year.

### **“Grub Club” Low-Income Cooking Series**

We recently completed our April “Grub Club,” a low-income cooking class series designed to teach participants how to cook nutritious meals on a tight budget using food from food boxes and incorporating locally produced fruits, vegetables, eggs and nuts. These classes were held on four Mondays in April at the First United Methodist Church kitchen in Corvallis, with support from Oregon State University Extension, South Corvallis Food Bank and St. Mary’s Catholic Parish. Each class reached up to 25 participants, who were clients of South Corvallis Food Bank and St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry. Many participants attended more than one class. Our efforts were greatly enhanced by the generous support of 13 volunteers from various congregations and local organizations who helped with cooking, childcare and clean up. We also received support from six of the participating farms in the coupon project. Each week a different farm contributed fresh produce and talked with us briefly about what they brought and their farming operation. Then we proceeded to cook six or more dishes, ending with a shared meal and reflection. Special thanks goes to Janice Gregg of Oregon State University Extension, who led all four of the April classes, and to First United Methodist Church for the use of their kitchen. We are now planning another “Grub Club” for the fall and look forward to another great series!

## **NEWS**

### **EMO gives Ecumenical Service Award to John Pitney**

“That’s My Farmer,” the innovative community supported agriculture program, and its founder the Rev. John Pitney were honored with an “Ecumenical Service Award” on May 10, 2007, at the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) Annual Community Awards & Celebration Dinner. The award was presented in recognition of special achievements in supporting ecumenical community ministries in Oregon.

“That’s My Farmer” is an effort of 17 Eugene faith communities supporting 12 local farms that practice Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). CSA is a model of food production, sales and distribution aimed at increasing the quality of food grown while enhancing the care given the land, plants and animals. It allows consumers to buy directly from local farms who don’t use synthetic pesticides or fertilizer. Consumers “invest” in the farm and help shoulder the risk of bad weather or poor crops.

Pitney is an associate pastor at First United Methodist Church of Eugene where his wife, Debbie, is lead pastor. Since 1987, Pitney has composed more than 50 songs, integrating issues of food security, social and environmental justice, and faith images from Judaism and Christianity. He has recorded three CDs of original songs, the latest of which is titled “Keeping the Garden.”

### **Staff and Volunteer Updates**

We are pleased to announce that Liv Gifford, IFFP project coordinator, gave birth to a healthy baby boy, Lyle, on April 21. While Liv is on maternity leave, Katy Murray, an IFFP volunteer and a Masters student at Oregon State University who is completing her thesis on the Albany Farmers' Market, will be working in the Corvallis office part-time. In Portland, Heather Burns, a doctoral student in sustainability education at PSU and University of Portland instructor, will be heading up farm to congregation projects and education in Portland. L.I.N.K.S. AmeriCorp member Jocelyn Furbish, will receive assistance on the north and northeast Portland food assessment from another L.I.N.K.S. AmeriCorp member, Sabrina Kosok, and will work on the Rockwood Food Assessment. Her fluent Spanish and background working on a farm and with people with low-incomes are great assets. We are grateful for the help that Stacey Sowders, a student in PSU's Masters of Community Health, and Gretchen Doering, recent Lewis and Clark graduate, have provided in the winter and spring on the food assessment and farm to congregations projects. If you have any question or would like to volunteer, please call Jenny Holmes, project director, at (503) 221-1054, ext. 214.

### **Rep. Blumenauer Introduces Local Food and Farm Support Act**

On May 21, at Abernethy Elementary School in Portland, Rep. Earl Blumenauer introduced his Local Food and Farm Support Act. He was joined by School Principal Tammy Barron; farmer Dave Shonk of Troutdale Farm; Kristy Obbink, director of Nutrition Services for Portland Public Schools; Rachel Bristol, executive director of the Oregon Food Bank; and several Abernethy School students who participate in the school's gardening and nutrition education program. This legislation creates new local markets for farmers, supporting innovation in agriculture and using local farm produce to improve nutrition for school children, seniors and low income families. One new program helps enhance producers' share of the retail product price by providing \$5 million a year in grants for feasibility studies and \$25 million a year in loans and loan guarantees for infrastructure and equipment to improve farmer access to processing and distribution systems, which help deliver local foods to consumers and underserved communities. The direct to consumer marketing assistance program will help promote new market opportunities for farmers and ranchers by providing \$25 million a year in grants to establish and promote farmer's markets and other direct to consumer sales activities.

The Food Stamp Fruit and Vegetable Incentive Program will help promote child nutrition and increased market opportunities for farmers by assisting states to provide an incentive program for food stamp recipients to purchase additional fruits and vegetables. For more information, contact Judah Ariel in Congressman Blumenauer's DC office at (202) 225-4811 or Willie Smith in Congressman Blumenauer's Oregon office at (503) 231-2300.

### **Briefly**

- Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns (INEC) and its work in food and faith was featured in the "Making Other Arrangements" section of **Orion Magazine** <http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/303>
- Interfaith Faith Food and Farms Partnership (IFFP) was presented at a panel discussion at the **USDA Community Project Directors Meeting** in DC by Jenny Holmes. IFFP is in its second year of funding as a Community Food Security Projects grant recipient. The meeting provided an opportunity to share best practices and celebrate successes.
- **THANK YOU!** We are grateful those who have provided grants for IFFP so far in 2007: Presbyterian Hunger Fund, United Methodist General Board of Global

Ministries, Catholic Campaign for Human Development-Archdiocese of Portland and Jackson Foundation. A big thanks goes to St. Mary's Catholic Church in Corvallis, Oregon, for providing in-kind office and meeting space for our project coordinator as well as tremendous moral support.

- **Oregon's Farm Direct Nutrition Programs** (FDNP) has started again for Summer 2007. **If you work with seniors or low-income families, please spread the word.** Eligible families (WIC program participants Seniors on Medicare) can receive Vouchers (\$20 or more) for use at most Farmers Markets in the Portland area between June and Oct 30th. The state is sending a bright yellow application to eligible seniors who must return the bottom portion of the application to the state if they want to receive farmer market vouchers, (which are as good as cash)! If the bottom portion of the application is not returned, the senior will not receive the Farm Direct checks. Once the form is returned, checks for produce will be mailed to interested seniors starting in June. Supplies are limited, so send in those forms ASAP! For more information about these programs go to [http://www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org/cust/wic\\_senior.html](http://www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org/cust/wic_senior.html) Northwest Portland Ministries (NWPM) is organizing transportation to selected farmers' markets for seniors in the NW and downtown area who need a little help getting there, and in getting their locally grown produce home. If you want to express interest in the NWPM Farmers Market Transportation effort (as a rider, or to become a volunteer driver) contact Dave at 503-221-1224 or Kelly at 503-413-5530 or [Kelly@nwpm.org](mailto:Kelly@nwpm.org)

## RESOURCES

### Local Food in the 2007 Farm Bill

Do you want to show your support of policies that advance fresh, local, healthy foods in the 2007 Farm Bill? Now there's an easy way to do so. The Farm and Food Policy Project (FFPP) has launched a Web site, <http://healthyfarmbill.org/>, which e-mails letters to your Representatives and Senators based on your address information. The language of the letter is broad and is designed to show public support for: expanding initiatives to increase access to healthy affordable food, such as farmers markets and farm-to-school programs; helping build a new generation of entrepreneurial farmers serving local and regional markets; ensuring fair access to agriculture programs for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers; and expanding conservation and farmland protection programs to help farmers meet consumer demand for healthier, sustainably produced foods.

### Organic Education Center (OEC) at Luscher Farm

The OEC in Lake Oswego teaches youth and adults the values of organic agriculture through classes, workshops and service learning. Through classroom and hands-on instruction, activities explore the principles and practices of organic farming, gardening, permaculture and community-based food systems. In addition, participants gain exposure to the social, economic, and ecological implications of food; fundamentals of whole-foods nutrition; and the role of farms in our regional food economy and conservation of natural resources. The combination of these programs helps encourage an informed and engaged community of gardeners, eaters and organic advocates.

OEC offers FREE Saturday garden workshops covering a variety of topics related to organic gardening. Garden work parties are held on the first Saturday of the month (May through October) from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and are followed by a potluck lunch from 12 to 1 p.m.

There is NO FEE to attend the garden work parties. Topics and dates: May 5 - Organic fertilization, soil amendments and compost; July 7 - Getting Acquainted with Your Food Source; August 4 - Biointensive Growing and Companion Planting; September 15 - Fall/Winter Gardening; October 6 - Cover Crops and Garden Dormancy. OEC also offers tours, workshops, special events and activities for groups and individuals and garden areas for seniors, adults, children and people with disabilities. Every Friday is an open work day. It is a great resource for summer kids and youth programs at your congregation. The Organic Education Center is a place for us to come together and share our resources in teaching and showcasing organic agriculture. For more information, or to get involved, contact the Organic Education Center at (503) 638-0735 or e-mail [marci@tilth.org](mailto:marci@tilth.org)

**Book—Grub: Ideas for an Urban Organic Kitchen.** Anna Lappé and Bryant Terry. A savvy and practical guide to organic eating for urban dwellers. Combining a straight-to-the-point exposé about organic foods (organic doesn't mean fresh, natural or independently produced) and the how-to's of creating an affordable, easy-to-use organic kitchen, Grub brings organics home to urban dwellers. It gives the reader compelling arguments for buying organic food, revealing the pesticide industry's influence on government regulation and the extent of its pollution in our waterways and bodies. With an inviting recipe section, Grub also offers the millions of people who buy organics fresh ideas and easy ways to cook with them. Grub's recipes, 24 meals oriented around the seasons, appeal to 18- to 40-year-olds who are looking for fun and simple meals. In addition, the book features resource lists (including music playlists to cook by), unusual and illuminating graphics, and every variety of do-it yourself tip sheets, charts and checklists. 335 pages, printed on acid-free recycled paper (Description from Alternatives for Simple Living where book can be purchased. Go to <http://simpleliving.org>).

## EVENTS

**May 31, Oregon Hunger Conference,** 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, SW 18<sup>th</sup> and Jefferson, Portland. Sponsored by the Oregon Faith Roundtable Against Hunger. Keynote speakers include Rev. James McDonald, the vice president for Policy and Program at Bread for the World, and Eric Schockman, president of Mazon: A Jewish response to hunger. Admission for the Conference is \$15, which includes continental breakfast and lunch. To register call (503) 295-6761 or e-mail [portland@ajc.org](mailto:portland@ajc.org).

**June 3, Essential Fall-Winter Organic Gardening. Corvallis, 10 a.m. to 3p.m.,** Sponsored by Institute of Biowisdom at Sunbow Farm in Corvallis and taught by Harry MacCormack. Along with a select few other growers in the Corvallis area, Harry and others at Sunbow Farm have for 35 years worked out ways to grow foods throughout the "off season." He has shared much of this knowledge through articles and in lectures throughout this and other countries. This workshop is both a goad and a revelation of secrets. You will leave the session knowing what seems simple but requires discipline, awareness and daily practice. Cost: \$25/each, \$40/couple, bring lunch. Please pre-register: [sunbow@peak.org](mailto:sunbow@peak.org) or (541) 929 5782. For more information, go to [www.sunbowfarm.org](http://www.sunbowfarm.org).

**October 25-27, Earth Justice, Earth Sabbath: Protecting God's Gifts of Food and Fuel,** Mo Ranch Presbyterian Center, Hunt, TX. Sponsored by Presbyterians for Restoring Creation and Texas Interfaith Power and Light. Join together with people of faith across the nation and from all walks of life—pastors, educators, students, lay leaders, activists and scientists—for this national eco-justice conference. Through worship, workshops, plenaries, field trips and more we will explore our theme of just and sustainable food and energy

source for all of God's Creation in a time of global climate change. Keynote speakers include Anna Moore Lappe, co-author with Frances Moore Lappe of "Hope's Edge," and Dr. Fred Kirshenmann, director of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. Field trips on October 25 will focus on sustainable local food systems and renewable energy. For more information go to [www.prc.org](http://www.prc.org).