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### **Cooking classes teach kids healthy eating Bon Appetit chefs serve community through cooking classes**

During a time when many businesses are cutting back and feeling the effects of the bad economy, Bon Appetit Management Company is reaching out and giving back to the community. Three Bon Appetit chefs jumped on the opportunity to provide cooking classes for middle school students at the invitation Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership (IFFP), a program of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon that works to make nutritious, seasonal produce and food education accessible to all.

The middle school kids are part of Expresiones, a Hacienda CDC after school and summer enrichment program. Designed to increase family participation and school attendance and reduce youth risk factors such as gang involvement, dropping out of school and alcohol abuse, Hacienda CDC works with community organizations throughout the summer to provide activities for the kids.

As well as its teaching chefs, Bon Appetit has donated supplies and food for the classes to give back to the community and to empower youth to build a better food system. A parent himself, Chef Micah Cavolo recognizes that many kids don't understand how the food system works. "I feel that to have a successful sustainable future, you need to engage and nurture the future, and in my world I do that through food," Cavolo says. "The only thing more rewarding than being a chef is being a teacher also—lucky for me they are rolled up into one job."

The cooking classes use some of the vegetables the kids have been growing in a community garden, reinforcing the connection between the garden and their plate. Many studies have shown that kids involved in a gardening program are more likely to eat healthy and appreciate the natural processes that life depends on. Participation by the kids in the classes is also important, and the chefs work hard to find recipes that the kids are able to help with.

Since Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership has conducted a 2007 food assessment in areas of northeast Portland, including the Cully neighborhood where Hacienda CDC is based, IFFP has prioritized these areas in its projects to improve food access. The cooking classes are one of several such projects. They give kids a chance to learn new skills, eat healthy food, be inspired by people who love their work and take home recipes that they will hopefully try at home with their parents.

The classes are a four-week series held on Thursday afternoons at the Ortiz center, which is located at 6736 NE Killingsworth Ave. from 3 to 5 p.m. The last class is on Aug. 13. Pictures of the classes are also available from Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.

#### MEMBER DENOMINATIONS

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Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) » Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland » United Church of Christ » United Methodist Church » Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches