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FRESH IDEAS

Fresh Food for a Fresh Start

A Publication of the Fresh Food Partnership

Get Ready for Empty Bowls 2011 on Sunday, April 17

The **Fresh Food Partnership** is gearing up to host its ninth-annual Empty Bowls Benefit on **Sunday, April 17 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Hagerty Center** in Traverse City. Teaming up with our partners, **Great Lakes Culinary Institute, Artcenter Traverse City and Fox 32**, the event will follow the tradition of serving fabulous and delicious soups, breads and beverages from our area's finest restaurants, bakeries and beverage producers. Enjoy live music and take home a beautiful handmade bowl contributed by a local artist or student as a reminder of all the empty bowls in the world. Tickets for this fun and energetic event remain only \$15. All proceeds go to providing fresh and locally grown produce to those in need while supporting local agriculture. **We hope to see you there!**

Remembering the Symbol: Local Artists Help to Fill A Need

Winter months provide a window of time during the year for Elk Rapids resident and artist Tom Priest to have an opportunity to work with his first passion — pottery. "I used to do art shows," Priest explained, "but that is a hard way to go." Fortunately for Priest, he has been able to move his talent for three-dimensional design into landscapes and has found a niche with his gardening-landscaping business. Using reclaimed vegetable oil from a local restaurant to fuel three annual firings in his homemade kiln for his work, Priest follows his life's philosophy in lessening his impact on the planet while creating his art.



Tom Priest's natural flair for organic design and concern for the environment is embodied by his almost ancient-looking work in clay.



Putting the finishing touches on bisqueware, a YWFC member paints a bowl she will donate to this year's Empty Bowls event.

Susan Trout, owner of GoVanGogh's home pottery parties (www.govangoghtc.com), has teamed up with Megan Rafael and her *Young Women for Change (YWFC)* group for a second year of bowl painting for the **Fresh Food Partnership's** Empty Bowls event. Rafael's goal with the group is to have the girls recognize how valuable their voices are in creating social change and making a difference in the community. The event was held at the GT Governmental Center.

A staunch believer in getting our region's fresh food to pantry shelves, Julie Strong-Chai is among the original artists who became involved in the very first Empty Bowls Event nine years ago at Oryana. She is one of dozens of artists and students who will generously donate their talent, time, supplies and kiln firings for this year's event. Visit our website www.freshfoodpartnership.org for our complete list and links for contributing schools, ceramic artists and woodturners for both bowls and silent-auction gifts. Please remember to support these generous artists as they give so much to our community.



Artist Julie Strong-Chai will donate nearly 70 of her inspirationally painted bowls at this year's event.

Northern Michigan Grows Green In Winter

Currently most of the produce found in today's markets comes from Florida, California, or Washington State. Considering rising gas prices, growing populations, and water shortages in regions that provide the country with a majority of its produce, it is not surprising that communities around the country are starting to recognize the wisdom of being more self-sustaining by having localized food systems in place.

It's exciting to know that snowy Northern Michigan can grow healthy greens year round, hydroponically. Grown by the Zenner Hydroponic Farm in Kingsley and picked the day of distribution, the **Fresh Food Partnership** has been distributing the fresh bountiful greens this winter to the food pantries. Trudy Aardema of the Faith Reformed Community Meals Program loves the fresh green mix: "It is so much better than that stuff out of the bag!"

Although its exciting to know that the Zenners are able to grow a variety of greens, from arugula to spinach, in wintery Northern Michigan, it is ironic that finding a market in winter can be a challenge. One cancelled order this winter left them with a greenhouse half-filled with an array of greens and nowhere to sell them other than the **Fresh Food Partnership** and the Saturday Mercado Farmers Market at the GT Commons. This can happen to farmers a couple of times a year, costing the growers like the Zenners hundreds or even thousands of dollars for seeds, supplies, labor, and energy for heating the greenhouse to maintain it to the desired 85-degree temperature in the winter.

Continuing to raise awareness about the availability — and challenges — of locally grown food is an important part of the **Fresh Food Partnership**. Support local growers whenever you get the chance; it's a win-win situation for all of us. "We're not trying to get rich or own a big fancy house," the Zenners told us on our last visit. "We're just trying to make a living."



Rows of hydroponically grown greens inside one of the Zenner Farm greenhouses.

It Couldn't Happen Without You

The **Fresh Food Partnership** truly represents a program where a community comes together to address its own needs in combating poverty and food insecurity. From our farmers who work so hard to provide a healthy food supply for our region, to our generous supporters who provide the financial support to make fresh and nutritious food available to everyone, it couldn't happen without you! And none of this would be possible without the dedication of time, travel, heart and spirit by our Fresh Food Partnership volunteers:

Trudy Aardema
Jackie and David Adams
Florie Alandt
Bob and Yolanda Ayala
Dorothy Barker
Jo Anne Beare
Marcia and Liam Clone
Kathy Connor-Herrera
Janette Davis
Melissa Denton
Rosie and Ray Duell
Judy Dunmire

Stacey Eastway
Leslie Ettiene
Tom and Christine Gibson
Nadine Gilmer
Helen Glover
Kelly Guttenberg
Joe and Nancy Harris
Sharon and Dick Hill
Caroline Hirth
Richard Hitchingham
Melissa Johnson
Heather Karsten

Robert Kollin
Barbara Krause
Sharon McCue
The Payette Family
Kelly Perrin
Ann Price
Joni Robb
Claudia Schmidt
Kim Schneider
Nancy Shreve
Dylan Sundberg
Sandra Svec



Volunteer Sharon Hill ready for delivery of the Zenner Farm's lettuce to the pantries.

Pat and David VanDyke
Nancy Walker
Karl Walser
Bonnie Willings

The Not-So-Hidden Costs of Cheap Food

You don't need us to tell you that the topic of obesity and its accompanying diseases are frequently making the headlines these days. The message is pretty alarming. While we all wish for a better life for our children, some experts say this country is now raising a generation of kids who will have a lower life expectancy than their parents, the first time that has happened since the Civil War. In fact, the CDC now calls obesity and type 2 diabetes the "twin epidemics." In addition to type 2 diabetes, there are several other nutrition-related afflictions accompanying obesity: heart disease, vascular disease, certain types of cancer, orthopedic disease, and asthma, not to mention the toll it takes on self-esteem. A diet high in refined carbohydrates, added fats and sugars, and refined grains (as found in our processed foods) and low in fiber, fruits, whole grains and vegetables has been found to parallel the upward trend of obesity and type 2 diabetes. While the processed foods are generally less expensive at the cash register, the cost of cheap and processed food is weighing heavy on our healthcare system.

- Approximately two-thirds of U.S. adults are either overweight or obese (National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey).
- In Michigan in 2007, 14% of low-income children 2 to 4 years old were obese (Michigan Pediatric Surveillance).
- An overweight child at age 15 has an 80% chance of being obese at age 25 (CDC).
- The CDC currently estimates that nearly 1 in 10 people in the U.S. have diabetes, and if current trends continue, that number could grow to 1 in 5 or even to 1 in 3 by the year 2050.
- Michigan ranks 15th highest in the nation for diabetes prevalence (MI Dept. Community Health).
- The Northern Michigan Diabetes Initiative reports that 13.4% of adults in our region have been diagnosed with diabetes, higher than the estimated prevalence of 9% for Michigan.



While these statistics are not unique to people in poverty, those facing food insecurity are at higher risk for low-quality diets. This is why the **Fresh Food Partnership** is committed to helping reduce the risks of poor nutrition by providing healthful fresh foods to people who generally can't afford them.

Help Us Meet the Need While Supporting Local Agriculture . . .

Please help us feed the hungry and support local farming in Northwest Michigan. Consider making a tax-deductible donation today. To make your donation, please select the amount, fill out the form below, and send your check to: **Fresh Food Partnership, 324 Munson Avenue, Traverse City, MI 49686.**

\$10	\$25	\$50	\$75	(MICS #28868)
\$100	\$500	\$_____	(other amount)	SP2009

Name _____

Address _____

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Visit our website for online payment via PayPal or credit card

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*Purchasing locally grown fresh
foods to serve people in need
since 2003*

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Michigan State University—Extension
Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency
Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce
United Way of Northwest Michigan

EMPTY BOWLS™ Raising Funds and Awareness to Fight Hunger
Benefiting Fresh Food Partnership

Sunday, April 17

11am to 2pm, Hagerty Center, Traverse City, \$15 Per Person
Tickets are available at Oryana, Artcenter Traverse City, LIAA or at the door.
Call 231-929-3696 for more information.

Join us for live music and a delicious meal of bread and soups made by our area's finest bakeries and restaurants. Attendees also take home a handmade bowl made by a local artist or student as a reminder of all the empty bowls in the world.

Vegetarian and gluten-free soups and bread will be available.

To learn more about the national Empty Bowls program, visit: www.emptybowls.org