

FRESH IDEAS

Fresh Food for a Fresh Start

A Publication of the Fresh Food Partnership

4th Annual Empty Bowls™ Event Starts the Season Off with a Bowlful Bang!

The smell of delicious soup, the sound of great music, and some of the finest pottery to be found anywhere, brought in the crowds as more than 540 people came out to participate in the **4th Annual Empty Bowls™ Event**. Most importantly, everyone joined together as a community in the fight against hunger and to improve nutrition throughout our region.

The event would not be possible without the driving force of the *Northern Michigan Potters and Sculptors Guild*. The Guild brings artisans, musicians, restaurants, businesses, students, and volunteers of all sorts together to raise funds to support the efforts of the **Fresh Food Partnership**.

Event coordinator Robin Nance, and Guild President, Pamela Dueweke were thrilled with the outpouring of stunning ceramic bowls donated by Guild members and area art students. "The event was a joyous demonstration of caring for those in need," stated Nance. "We hope this marks the beginning of the giving for this year's growing season."



Browsing the bowl selections.

Those attending selected one of the stunning hand-made ceramic bowl to keep as a symbol of all of the empty bowls in the world. The hearty soups generously donate by area restaurants were simple, warming, and delicious. Our appreciation goes to TC Celtic and Cabin Fever for providing the foot stomping music. Please remember to support those businesses and thank volunteers that kindly supported the **Empty Bowls™ Event**. For a complete listing of the business sponsors, food and beverage donors, and volunteers, visit the Fresh Food Partnership web site at www.freshfoodpartnership.org.

Freshen Up! Become a Fresh Food Volunteer.

Healthy fresh fruits, salad fixings, and early vegetables are being harvested by local farmers and the **Fresh Food Partnership (FFP)** is in full swing! Our goal is to provide over 50,000 pounds of fresh produce to help feed thousands of needy people throughout the Grand Traverse Region during the 20-week harvest season.



To be successful, we will need lots of community support. In fact, dozens of **FFP** volunteers will help transport food from area farms and move it to over 30 pantries and community meals programs across the six-county region. We hope you will consider becoming a

volunteer. The hours are flexible, it feels great and you will be contributing a critical service. **FFP** volunteers will visit local farms and farm markets as they transport fresh produce to area pantries, and shelters and community meals programs.

You may volunteer once a week, or once a month, whatever your schedule allows. You will receive training on our user friendly **Internet website** specially designed to help us keep track of product availability, volunteers, and food demands on a weekly basis. The web site enables us to efficiently coordinate timely pick-ups of produce from dozens of sites, for delivery by volunteers, to many area food pantries. This is the easiest and fastest way for **FFP** to purchase fresh food from producers and coordinate deliveries. Please e-mail us at coordinator@freshfoodpartnership.org or call Laura at (231) 929-3696.

Kellogg Foundation Challenges Grand Traverse Region

In February, *Fresh Food Partnership (FFP)* received a generous grant from the *W.K. Kellogg Foundation* of Battle Creek to help pay operational and development costs. In making the grant to help improve fund-raising and raise visibility, the Kellogg Foundation has challenged people and organizations throughout the Grand Traverse Region to help assure that people with emergency needs receive high-quality fresh food.



Let everyone taste the difference

The grant will allow *FFP* to expand programming to provide educational and community service opportunities. One such program will be one-day educational workshops held at area churches to focus on preparing and preserving the bounty of the growing season. These workshops will be offered to pantry clients and others and will be led by local culinary chef, Robert George. Mr. George will teach preserving techniques along with quick and easy ways to incorporate herbs to enhance foods. The workshop will culminate with a celebratory meal for all those attending.

Another grant-supported program will give area students an

opportunity to be involved in a community service and educational farm related project. In the "Farm to Market Project" students will develop a local food product such as applesauce. They will be involved in the peeling, coring and canning of the product with the help of a local canning facility, *Food for Thought*. They will then market the product that



they helped produce as a fundraiser for *FFP*. The fruits of their labor will then be used to purchase more fresh produce.

According to Joe VanderMeulen, Land Information Access Association (LIAA) Executive Director, "This grant will allow us to make the most of every dollar given locally. Thanks to Kellogg, the costs of running the program will be covered this year. That means, nearly every penny donated by area residents this year will go to buying nutritious fresh food for people in need, while helping to support local farmers." The challenge is on and we are looking to the generosity of the people of our community for assistance.

Small Farmers Get Connected to Area Food Pantries

My husband, Jim, and I own and operate Sweeter Song Farm, a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farm just north of Cedar. We are gearing up for our sixth CSA season and will be raising food for over 100 member families this year. In addition to sharing the bounty with our families, we also sell vegetables to the *Fresh Food Partnership*. These additional sales are not only helpful to our business, they also fuel our spirits – knowing that healthy, locally grown food is being shared with those less



fortunate throughout our communities.

At Sweeter Song Farm we have a tight budget and very limited time. With its computerized system and well-thought-out organization, the *FFP* provides

Jim Schwantes & Judy Reinhart of Sweeter Song Farm

us and many other local farmers with an easy market for quality produce at a fair price. This *FFP* "system" is rather amazing. Here's how it works: At the beginning of each harvest week we log into the *FFP* website and list our available produce and the price. Meanwhile, local pantries have also logged into the site and posted their needs. The *FFP*

coordinator matches product with need and with delivery volunteers. She then lets us know if our produce will be purchased and if so when it will be picked up and by whom. We get to sell our produce and never have to leave the farm to take the food to market or to deliver it. We are supported; those in poverty are fed; the community is connected.

To be able to farm this beautiful land and to produce quality food is such a privilege. To be able to *partner* with the *Fresh Food Partnership* is an added privilege. We look forward to this year's work.

Judy Reinhardt and Jim Schwantes
Sweeter Song Farm, Cedar, MI

Fresh Events Support Fresh Food Partnership

Oryana to Donate 1% of Proceeds

Use the power of your spending choice to support local farmers and help those in need.

Oryana continues to be a unique place to shop and an integral part of the fabric of our community, supporting numerous innovative initiatives. *Oryana* will generously donate one percent of their sales on **Saturday, July 22 to Fresh Food Partnership.**

Please help us by shopping at *Oryana* on Saturday, July 22, anytime from 8 am to 8 pm. *FFP* volunteers will be on hand to greet you and offer information about the program and our progress. Of course, you'll also enjoy shopping at one of our areas most innovative stores. As always, the funds we raise will be used to purchase fresh food from local farmers and delivered by volunteers to area food pantries, shelters and community meals programs.

TLC Tomatoes "Dinner on the Farm" Supports Fresh Food Partnership

The atmosphere perfected by Jim and Toni Beaton at their weekly TLC Tomatoes "Dinner on the Farm"



events will host the **Fresh Food Partnership Fundraiser Dinner on Friday, September 8** from 6 to 9 pm. The setting is a lovely converted barn situated on an eleven acre farm, surrounded by their greenhouses, cherry orchards and rolling landscape. You will dine with friends and guests at large communal tables as you enjoy a superb meal prepared by Samuel's of Suttons Bay and features fresh ingredients from TLC's hydroponic greenhouses. We're lining up some excellent live music and other entertainment for your enjoyment. Tickets are \$30 and may be purchased by calling **231-929-3696.**

Fresh Face for FFP

Laura Otwell joined the Land Information Access Association staff in March as Program Coordinator for *Fresh Food Partnership*. Laura comes to *FFP* with a background in various community volunteer programs. She has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and has worked in the environmental field. She also has an elementary education degree with a major in science. Food is an important focus of Laura's daily activity with the highlight of the day being sitting down to eat a "yummy" dinner with her family.



Your Gifts Make the Difference . . .

With a gift of \$50, you will ensure that three families of four people each (12 people) receive a three-day supply of fresh food. A \$50 purchase of local food might include:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 10 pounds tomatoes | 3 pounds carrots |
| 3 pounds lettuce | 12 pounds broccoli |
| 10 pounds summer squash | 6 pounds green beans |

Please help us feed hungry people and support local farming in the Grand Traverse Region. Make a tax-deductible donation to the *Fresh Food Partnership* today. Please select the amount, fill out the form below, and send your check to:

Fresh Food Partnership, 324 Munson Avenue, Traverse City, MI 49686.

You may also make a donation on-line by visiting our web site: www.freshfoodpartnership.org.

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|----------|----------|------------------------|---------|
| \$10.00 | \$25.00 | \$50.00 | \$75.00 |
| \$100.00 | \$500.00 | \$_____ (other amount) | |

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

electronic-mail _____ Phone _____

Land Information Access Association
324 Munson Avenue
Traverse City, MI 49686
Phone: 231-929-3696

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U.S. Postage
PAID
Traverse City, MI
Permit No. 456



Purchasing locally grown fresh foods to serve people in need.

The *Fresh Food Partnership* is a program of:
Land Information Access Association
Michigan State University—Extension
Northwest Michigan Human Services Agency
Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce
United Way of Northwest Michigan

Send to:

Fresh Food Partnership Accepts Bay Bucks

Fresh Food Partnership is pleased to accept your donation in Bay Bucks, northern Michigan's local currency. Conceived of by a group of volunteers including business people, farmers, students, artists, professionals and community activists, Bay Bucks was launched in late 2005 as a tool to support locally owned businesses by keeping the region's wealth close to home. The beautifully designed paper currency can be used in exchange for goods and services throughout the Grand Traverse area. FFP will use Bay Buck donations to purchase local food from farmers. More information is available at www.baybucks.org

The Time to Give is Now Your Help Is Needed!

Those that know the bounty of, and enjoy, our local harvest realize the good fortune and blessings. We look forward to the first taste of sun warmed strawberries, asparagus, and fresh salad mix that the season brings. But many in our area do not know of these healthy pleasures. What should be a part of everyone's daily life becomes available only for those that can afford the expense. In these uncertain times, people are being squeezed and must make choices between various daily needs. The need is not diminishing as more and more people are visiting local pantries, shelters and community meal programs. In fact the Northwest Food Coalition statistics indicate that the number of visits to pantries in our six-county area has more than doubled in just the past four years to over 106,600 in 2005.



The 2006 growing season is underway and your generous donations are needed now. Your donations will benefit friends and neighbors in our community and help to sustain local farming. People living at or near the poverty level are at risk of food insecurity and are very vulnerable. Many of the working poor are only one event away from falling below the poverty level. Whether it is an illness, divorce, death, or job loss, people can unexpectedly find themselves in need of a assistance.

Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution of funds today. We would be happy to make a presentation to your area church or community group to explain the program and report on our progress. For more information, please call (231) 929-3696 or look at our website at