



July 2007, Vol. 4

Food System Connections

New Grants Help CFC Grow Capacity and Impact

It's been a while since our last newsletter, but CFC has stayed busy, growing our programs, staff and board to ensure greater access to healthy foods for vulnerable families with greater production and distribution opportunities for local farms and small businesses. We have gained some wonderful new funding partners in the last several months whose generous support, like yours, is integral to keeping the work going strong.

- **Jewish Family and Children's Services** - \$700 to support the Arizona Food Policy Coalition and help publish this newsletter
- **MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger** - \$15,000 to fund a Coordinator position for the Arizona Food Policy Council
- **Gila River Indian Community** through the **City of Phoenix** – three year grant providing shade structures and site improvements for the Downtown Phoenix Public Market, helping to increase visibility and expansion. It also provides a mobile kitchen for Native American Connections, to help them create some economic development and job training opportunities for their clients, while bringing traditional foods to the Market.
- **Wells Fargo Bank** - \$10,000 to support the expansion of the Downtown Phoenix Public Market
- **Bank of America** - \$25,000 to support the expansion of the Downtown Phoenix Public Market
- **Washington Mutual** - \$5,000 for economic development by growing the capacity of local producers and micro-businesses that participate in the Downtown Phoenix Public Market
- **US Bank** - \$500 to support the expansion of the Downtown Phoenix Public Market
- **State Employees Charitable Campaign** – state employees can check off CFC during 2007 as their charity of choice and make a donation to help support our general operations.

This newsletter provides outreach and education by showcasing practical models of food self-sufficiency activities already occurring around Arizona and best practices in food security policies throughout the US, Canada and the World.

Our Mission

Community Food Connections (CFC) is a statewide 501 c 3 non-profit organization established in 2002 that works to alleviate hunger and create food self-sufficiency for low-income households through community and economic development.

Our Vision

CFC is committed to helping build strong healthy communities that ensure access to and the availability of a culturally acceptable nutritionally adequate diet for every person, or, in other words, increasing community food security.

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Board Member Update

Community Food Connections is pleased to announce its 2007 board of directors. **Tammy Ellsworth**, US Dept. of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services and **Dee Logan**, Arizona Farmers Community Market Association, continue to serve the organization as they have since its start-up. Tammy is Board President. CFC welcomes new directors **Maya Dailey**, Maya's Farm; **Raylynn Dorny**, Marketing Consultant, RUKM Marketing; **Pamela Hamilton**, editor, *Edible Phoenix* and co-leader Slow Food Phoenix; and **Denise Stefanisin**, Master Gardner.

Elaine Okayama is leaving the board after five years. She has our sincere gratitude for her commitment and guidance to help CFC establish its strength and roots.

Community Food Connections

Food Service Survey for Farm to School Program Completed

by Terry Marsh

Earlier this spring collaboration between Community Food Connections, the Community Food Security Center of the Community Food Bank, Tucson, and the Arizona Department of Education led to a statewide survey of school district food service directors with regard to food purchasing practices and the feasibility of establishing a farm to school program in Arizona. Building on similar work that has been done in other states, Terry Marsh, a Peace Corps Fellow/graduate student at the University of Arizona, along with Mel and Enid Zuckerman, College of Public Health, conducted the survey online starting in February and running through early May.

Farm to school programs have been gaining ground across the country. Approximately 1,000 programs exist today. Depending on the region, farm to school programs can come in many different shapes and sizes. But the main ideas remain the same: providing children with fresh, local produce in their school meals while supporting local farmers and communities.

The 38 question survey investigated how food is purchased and served for school meals as well as the types of foods served. The information gathered by this effort can be used to guide the formulation of a farm to school program here in our state. Responses to the survey suggest that there is significant interest in this program idea. Also, motivations for involvement closely parallel the reasons for creating such a program: increasing access to fresher food products and supporting the local community and Arizona farmers. At the same time, not all schools have access to nearby local farms or know where the farms are or what produce they might have. Thus, as indicated by survey responses, a list of Arizona farmers and their products will be very helpful going forward. A further survey to assess the interest of producers and supply is underway and expected to be completed in August 2007.

CFC has been involved in promoting this idea in the past and important groundwork has been laid for the farm to school concept. Now this collaboration between multiple organizations is an important step forward. Combining this information with other related endeavors will provide a comprehensive look at what is needed to make farm to school successful in Arizona.

Local Produce a Hit on Elementary Schools' Salad Bars

by David Schwake, RD

Litchfield Elementary School District (LESD) continues to buy local produce from as many local farms as possible on a weekly basis.

Students are enjoying carrots, beets and turnips from Maya's Farm in south Phoenix. And Maya's flowers - they really look great on the dining tables during the meals. Get vases for .25 each at the thrift stores and you are set!

From Tolmachoff Farms in Glendale we get watermelons and cantaloupes. Some of the sweetest melons we have tasted this year, LESD is ordering at least 50 of each on a weekly basis. Tolmachoff's also has a large variety of produce that we review each week for possible inclusion in our menus and salad bars.

Tonopah Rob's All Natural Fruits and Vegetables has tomatoes that taste like what a real tomato should taste like and the kids love them. We're serving 50 lbs. a week.

There are several other local farms that have some super produce available right now. Pricing is about what you would pay from a regular vendor but you cannot match the freshness or taste at any price. If you need phone numbers or more info please call us at (623) 535-6060.



Welcome to New Staff

Carol Blonder has come on staff at CFC as the Director for Resources and Development for the Downtown Phoenix Public Market. With an educational background in social services and a history of community involvement, Carol pursued her passion for all things culinary, most recently as a pastry chef and manager, part of a restaurant tea which emphasized local and organic menu ingredients.



Mark Minisce has been hired as Market Assistant, helping with set-up and tear-down, product transportation and the *More of Arizona's Best* booth, which features items from Queen Creek Olive Mill, Star Ridge Crackers, McClendon's Select Honey, Fistiki Farms pistachios and Van Horn Farm's pecans.

Doug Resh and his firm One : Deux International, LLC have been hired to assist us in the role of Coordinator for the Arizona Food Policy Coalition. One : Deux is an international business consulting firm and Doug holds a B.S. in International Business along with an Executive Masters of Science in Food Marketing from Saint Joseph's University.

The coordinator role will be to analyze the food systems and policies in place for Arizona; develop marketing material to enhance public awareness; facilitate meetings for the Food Policy Coalition; assist in writing grants to help support the public market and CFC endeavors and grow overall capacity. The newsletter is also edited in this role.



Community Food Connections Goals:

Hunger prevention through...

- the Arizona Farmers' Market Nutrition Program by developing resources and support to increase fruit/vegetable consumption among low-income women, children and seniors.
- support of local farmers' markets .
- Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) at Farmers' Market projects by administering and developing resources so that Food Stamp and TANF clients may shop for eligible items at select farmers' markets statewide.

Build self-reliant local and regional food systems that...

- create and offer on-going workshops with qualified trainers to develop community leaders and community solutions to meet local food needs.
- map and assess local food systems, developing infrastructure to support strengths while addressing gaps.
- create and support local and regional food system policy

Expand economic and community development activities to improve overall quality of life, create healthier choices for Arizona households and help to support local communities and rural economies through...

- Community-based solutions to food insecurity such as community gardens, community farmers' markets and community supported agriculture.
- The Downtown Phoenix Public Market project
- Farm to Cafeteria programs that encourage and support restaurants and institutions to purchase and serve locally produced foods.
- Expanding farmers' markets, community supported agriculture co-ops and avenues to sell fresh and local foods directly to customers statewide.

Board Members:

Tamara Ellsworth, *President*; U.S. Dept. of Agriculture/Food and Nutrition Services
Maya Dailey, Maya Farm
Raylynn Dorny, RUKM Marketing
Pamela Hamilton, *Edible Phoenix* & Slow Food Phoenix
Dee Logan, Arizona Community Farmers' Market Assn.
Denise Stefanisin, Master Gardener

Slow Food Phoenix and Valley Farmers' Markets Sponsor Farm Tour and Dinner

On April 1, more than 80 people hopped aboard buses for a tour of three west Valley farms to see where their food really comes from. The 2nd annual Slow Food is Local: Eating from our Farmer's Markets Event also included a rustic Western dinner under the stars at Sahuaro Ranch in Glendale. The spring menu featured native Churro lamb, a pig roast and a wonderful selection of local vegetables all accompanied by local beer from Sonoran Brewery.

Chefs were on hand at each stop of the tour, offering samples made from the farms' bounty. Participants were treated to an overview of farming in the valley, then and now, and got to hand-pick some veggies to take home for later.

The route began at the Sahuaro Ranch Park Historical Area in Glendale. The Ranch is an historic property founded in 1885 and now owned by the City of Glendale. Preserving one of the Valley's oldest and most magnificent homesteads, Sahuaro Ranch Park Historical Area has 13 original buildings and structures and a breathtaking rose garden where a weekend wedding is a common sight. Chef Jason Taylor, executive chef of cafebistro Bar and Grill in Scottsdale provided a cooking demo and sample at this stop.

Farms visited included:

Crooked Sky Farms, based in Glendale, and Arizona's largest Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farm. They farm with sustainable methods to grow over 200 varieties of produce each year for the 800+ CSA members in Flagstaff, Prescott, Phoenix and Tucson. The chef for this location was Deborah Knight from Mosaic.

McClendon's Select, a certified organic grower located in the Northwest Valley on 25 acres. Their primary focus is growing for restaurants and one Farmers' Market. More than 100 different kinds of specialty greens, microgreens, root vegetables, citrus, and dates are grown at the farm. Chef Claudio Urciouli, Taggia Restaurant, provided an Italian twist on the chef demo at this location.

Tolmachoff Farms, a unique four generation family farm operated in Glendale, Arizona by Bill and Gracie Tolmachoff and their four children. The farm hosts school field trips and operates seasonal u-pick and farm stand operations including an annual corn maze and pumpkin patch. Chef Elizabeth Milburn, from Leave It To Elizabeth and a regular presenter at the Downtown Phoenix Public Market, gave a demonstration and provided tips for selecting in-season produce.

Folks gathered back at the Sahuaro Ranch for an open-air dinner, served by Quiessence Restaurant at the Farm at South Mountain. Chefs Greg LaPrad and Anthony Andiaro prepared a western-themed BBQ using local, seasonal fare.

Slow Food is Local: Eating from our Farmers' Markets was sponsored by Slow Food Phoenix, Community Food Connections, Arizona Community Farmers' Market Group, Maya's Farm and Edible Phoenix.

Slow Food Phoenix is the local chapter of Slow Food USA. Slow Food USA is a nonprofit eco-gastronomic organization that supports a biodiverse, sustainable food supply, local producers, heritage foodways, and rediscovery of the pleasures of the table. For more info, visit www.slowfoodphoenix.org



left to right, 2nd Annual Slow Food is Local planning team members included Pamela Hamilton, Edible Phoenix and Slow Phoenix, Carol Blonder, CFC, and Maya Dailey, Maya's Farm.

Public Market

D O W N T O W N P H O E N I X

Downtown Phoenix Public Market Announces Expansion

Plans include Local Food Grocery Store and Second Market Day

by Catrina Knoebel, Adrenaline Marketing

The Downtown Phoenix Public Market has announced plans to expand with a second Market day and the opening of a local food grocery store.

The expansion will add over 5,000 square feet of parking structures to the existing parking lot, providing much needed shade for vendors during the hot summer months. The lot improvements will allow the Market to add a second day in the fall of 2007.

Plans also include the lease of 4,000 square foot retail space, located adjacent to the Market at 14 W. Pierce St., which will provide an opportunity for the Market to sell prepared foods and groceries throughout the week. It will be the first local foods grocery store downtown.

The expansion comes as demand for the Market's fresh and local products continues to grow. Sales have risen 48% over 2006 records. Funding for the project comes from community grants courtesy of Gila River Indian Community and the City of Phoenix, Wells Fargo Bank and Bank of America.

"Overwhelming response to the Market has allowed us to move forward with our business plan," said Cindy Gentry, Market Director and Executive Director of Community Food Connections, the non-profit organization that produces the Market. "We are pleased to meet the growing demand for our fresh and local products by expanding our downtown footprint with a local food grocery store and a second Market day. We are extremely grateful to our funding partners for their support."

"I am enormously proud of what the Market has achieved over the past two years and pleased to continue our relationship," said Kurt Schneider, LD Schneider and Associates, and owner of both the lot the Market is currently on as well as the Market Store. The space is currently occupied by an architecture firm.

The expansion is part of the on-going work by CFC and the Downtown Phoenix Public Market team to establish a permanent, indoor-outdoor market hall in the heart of Phoenix as well as support the development of an adjacent market district with complementary retail and services.

For more information please visit www.phoenixpublicmarket.com



Left: Thanks to Valley Metro Light Rail for the Market's new signage celebrating local agriculture.



Right: left to right, Greg Mendoza, Chief of Staff and Cheryl Pablo, Special Funding Coordinator for the Gila River Indian Community and Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon presenting the check that will facilitate the expansion of the Market. (Photo by Linda Felde)

State Funding for Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

It's confirmed! The Governor has signed a state budget that includes \$600,000 in the Arizona Department of Health Services (AZ DHS) budget for Senior Nutrition Programs. \$160,000 of this will go to restore the senior component of the Arizona Farmers Market Nutrition Program (AZ FMNP) which was cancelled as of Oct. 2005 due to lack of funding.

The Senior AZ FMNP will be re-instated in Spring 2008.

This effort would not have succeeded without the help of **January Contreras**, Policy Advisory to Governor Napolitano, State Representatives **Pete Hershberger** and **Linda Lopez**, **Marian McClure**, **Jackie Thrasher** and **Jennifer Burns**, and State Senators **Paula Aboud**, **Amanda Aguirre**, **Tim Bee**, **Jorge Luis Garcia**, **Barbara Leff**, **Richard Miranda**, and **Rebecca Rios**.

Community advocates **Ginny Hildebrand**, Association of Arizona Food Banks and **Tony Bruno** and **Kelly Watters** of the Community Food Bank, Tucson also took lead roles.



Many thanks also to AZ DHS Director **Sue Gerard**, Bureau Chief **Margaret Tate** and **Karen Sell**, Nutrition Programs Manager, Office of Nutrition and Chronic Disease Prevention for their leadership in offering the Arizona Farmers Market Nutrition Program that helps low-income women and children enrolled in WIC, and now vulnerable seniors, to eat better, while supporting our state's farmers markets and market farmers.

What Senior AZ FMNP Is:

An economic development program - Funding for the Senior AZ FMNP will bring new income to Arizona's small-scale farmers who sell their produce at the markets. The farmer receives 100% of each voucher they receive. For every voucher spent at a farmers' market, almost 100% of the money stays in the state and gets spent again in the community by the farmers – for seed, labor, equipment, fuel, and local basic services.

It expands access to nutritious food - \$160,000 will provide vouchers to approximately 4,500 low-income seniors at targeted farmers markets throughout Arizona. The vouchers will enable seniors to shop for fresh healthy food choices, increase their socialization and activity opportunities as they visit the markets. AZ FMNP contributes to public health as well as to economic development.

A cost-saving program - Better food for vulnerable seniors means healthier seniors and less medical costs to the state for those enrolled in AHCCS

It builds health for future generations - With so many children being cared for by their grandparents these days, providing access to healthy food to seniors can nurture healthy eating habits in the youngsters they care for.

Part of the hunger solution - AZ FMNP is a small program, not meant by any means to meet the entire food needs of vulnerable seniors, but to add to a spectrum of assistance that supports their ability to access adequate, affordable and fresh healthy foods throughout the year. Many of the markets that participate in AZ FMNP also accept food stamps. In addition, the price points at the markets are competitive with grocery store prices, while the quality and freshness of the produce at the markets is far superior.

Farmers Market Week is August 5-11

August 5 – 11, 2007 is National Farmers Market Week! U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns has proclaimed the week as a time to honor the 4,300 or more farmers markets across our country. The Markets offer direct marketing opportunities for agricultural producers and serve as integral links between our urban and rural communities. The proclamation also raises awareness of the contribution that farmers and ranchers make to daily life in our country.

Arizona will be celebrating at more than 50 farmers markets that dot the state. Market visitors will enjoy a mouthwatering and eye-opening array of the best of what's fresh and local: fruits and veggies, baked goods, eggs, flowers, meat and fish, jams, jellies, salsas, honey, herbs, cheese and more! While you shop for unique ingredients and meet the folks who produce your food, know that the markets and farmers also participate in community food security initiatives. They donate unsold food to area food banks, and many participate in programs like the Arizona Farmers Market Nutrition Program and the Food Stamps at the Market project.

To locate an Arizona Farmers Market visit www.foodconnect.org or call 602-493-5231.

Putting Food in the 2007 Farm Bill



Photo by Josh Schachter

This year's farm bill has appropriations in it to support small local growers like Young Reub of Forever Young's Farm in Arivaca. If passed, it will increase the amount of healthy fresh foods in school meals, expand access to food stamps, help farmers markets and increase food self-sufficiency in low-income communities.

Farmers Markets. More funding for outreach through the Farmers Market Promotion Program could also really provide a boost to our markets in general.

Several hundred community organizations across the country are asking Congress to put "food" back into the Farm Bill. They are working with farmers, agricultural organizations and government agencies to make sure that the 2007 Farm Bill includes policies and programs that develop and enhance local food systems to help smaller producers and lower-income groups. The month of July will bring more active debate in Congress to shape this bill. Visit www.foodsecurity.org for the latest updates and info for our contacting elected officials.

Specific Impact for Arizona: National increases for the Senior and WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Programs could mean increases for these programs in our state to include more of Arizona's 126,000 WIC clients while bringing in additional income to local farmers. Our state could also apply for federal funds for the senior program as well.

Funding for Community Food Projects (CFP) would be increased six-fold to \$30 million per year. Arizona has had eight projects receive grants from CFP in the last 10 years. Many were Native American communities that increased local food production, combining economic development with expanded access to healthy foods. More funding could mean a big decrease in diabetes rates in Native American communities.

Farm to School projects across the country could get \$20 million annually. They currently get nothing. Advocates will also continue to work with staff and members from both Senate and House Committees to ensure that language to allow USDA to establish a local purchase preference can be introduced as an amendment in full committee.

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program would expand to \$300 million per year from about \$15 million now. Arizona currently receives \$150,000. With a local purchase preference there could be additional benefits to AZ farmers while helping our school children have more healthy foods in their snacks.

The Farmers Market Promotion Program, currently funded at \$1 million, would go to \$25 million. (One provision would set aside 25% of this to Farmers Markets operating in underserved communities to be able to accept EBT/food stamps). Because of unique equipment needed to process the food stamp debit cards Arizona currently accepts food stamps at only 11 of its 53

"The Farm Bill is the single largest and most important appropriation to impact the health and well-being of every American. About \$90 billion is allotted every five years for the Farm Bill. This taxpayer-funded initiative determines to a large extent what Americans eat."

Nourishing News newsletter, Community Food Bank, Summer 2007, Vol. V.

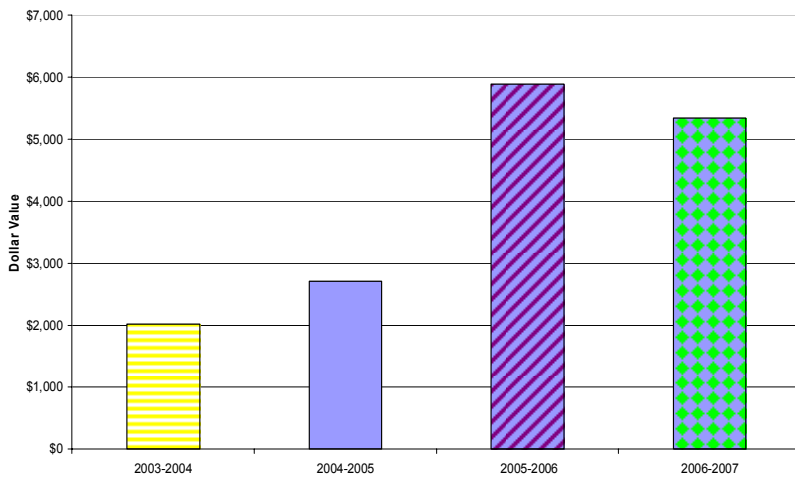
Yes - You Can Use Food Stamps at Farmers Markets!

Arizona Farmers Markets have seen a steady increase in food stamp purchases since a wireless Food Stamp at the Market project was implemented by Community Food Connections (CFC) and the Arizona Community Action Association in 2003. The first year average monthly food stamp sales were \$168. In 2007 that has expanded to \$593.

Eleven markets in Maricopa, Pima, Yavapai and Yuma Counties participate in the program. They use wireless Point of Sale Terminals to process the Electronic Benefit Transfer debit cards that food stamps are issued on. Food stamp customers can shop for eligible items and pay for them at a central kiosk at the Market – just as they would

go to a check out stand at the grocery store. Working with the Arizona Department of Economic Security, CFC hopes to include more markets statewide.

**EBT at Farmers Markets
4 Year Comparison
October - September
(2006-2007 = October - June YTD)**



Getting the word out that the markets can accept food stamps, letting people know that there are affordable and high-quality foods available, and that farmers markets offer a family-oriented place to go for recreation and activities beyond shopping are some of the opportunities that will continue to grow the program.

Community Food Connections...

works in partnership with other non-profits, faith-based organizations, growers, producers, markets, schools, neighborhood associations, government agencies and businesses throughout the state to develop and coordinate resources, education, information and public policies that will enhance local and regional food and economic systems.

Photo credits for this issue: **Josh Schachter, Carol Blonder, David Schwake,**



Become a part of Community Food Connections

Your support will make a difference in the health, economy, environment and vitality of your community.

- Become a Member
- Sponsor a Program or Event
- Donate Professional Services

Annual Membership Fees:

- __ Students and Seniors \$15
- __ Individuals \$25
- __ Small Organizations (budgets under \$100,000) \$50
- __ Large Organizations (budgets over \$100,000) \$100

Please remit to:

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YES! Send Me Your Free Newsletter!

For more information contact Cindy Gentry via email or visit www.foodconnect.org