

HEALTHY, LOCAL FOOD NEWS FOR YOU TO USE



FIRST EDITION

winter 2009 - spring 2010

... brought to you by the
Growing Partners of SW Colorado and
the **Healthy, Local Foods Committee**
of Healthy Lifestyle La Plata

in this issue

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Partners of SW Colorado*

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planting seeds and growing our efforts

Greetings and welcome to the **first edition** of *Healthy, Local Food News*. In October of 2009, it was suggested that a resource be developed that could serve the community with specific local food information including:
* updates on local food projects;
* a list of upcoming local food events - including classes, workshops and other learning opportunities; and
* a directory of local food resources and volunteer opportunities.

The newsletter will likely never be *complete*, but to keep it as full of valuable information as possible, **please send me your**

updates and ideas for future editions. Information about *upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, project updates and scholarships* is great.

Thank you for your help. I hope this newsletter will help facilitate better communication and understanding about the exciting local food opportunities and activities happening in our community.

Sincerely,
Katy Pepinsky
GPSWCO, 09-12 CFP
Project Manager
katypepinsky@gmail.com



The harvest from the CSU Research Station in Yellow Jacket, CO
September 2009

Who are

Growing Partners of SW Colorado?

To see a complete report of the La Plata County Food Assessment go to:

http://www.sustainableswcolorado.org/la_plata_county_food_assessment

Growing Partners of Southwest Colorado (GPSWCO) is a partnership of non-profits and service agencies dedicated to implementing sustainable local food programs that reach all incomes, ages and cultures. After coming together in 2004, the partnership secured funding from the USDA's Community Food Project Competitive Grants Program to initiate and lead the La Plata County Food Assessment (LPCCF), the first official Community Food Assessment (CFA) project to be done in the state of Colorado.



The LPCCF identified the current needs and resources of the local food system, developed a community-based definition to address and improve community food security in La Plata County and proposed a series of diverse food projects to address the issues identified.



In May of 2009, GPSWCO received a second Community Food Project Competitive Grant to work on the food projects developed as part of the Community Food Assessment process and evolved into a much larger, more



Octoberfest, Durango, CO 2005

diverse partnership. The 2009-2012 GPSWCO, CFP involves collaboration of over 20 non-profits and service agencies, all working to implement sustainable local food projects that address food security in La Plata County. **The focus of the current CFP is toward connecting individuals at the greatest risk for**

food insecurity in our community (low-income, senior, school age and adolescent children, Native Americans and Latino residents) **to healthy, local food resources and incorporating diversity into the planning and implementation phases of local food work in our region.**



GPSWCO's 09-12 CFP Projects

include: broad partnerships to help support cooking and nutrition classes; Farm-to-School; school and community gardening; gleaning programs; the FLC EC Food Fellows Program; CSU Growing Farmers Program; and food networking.

The USDA Community Food Project Competitive Grants Program



...supports communities in their work to increase the food self-reliance; promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues; develop innovative linkages between the public, for-profit, and nonprofit food sectors; and encourage long-term planning activities and comprehensive multi-agency approaches to food security. Community Food Projects are designed to meet the food needs of low-income people; increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs; and promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues.

For more information go to:

http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/food/in_focus/hunger_if_competitive.html

What is Healthy Lifestyle La Plata's Healthy Local Food Committee?



The mission of [Healthy Lifestyle La Plata](#) is to empower and support Durango and La Plata County in becoming an interconnected community where citizens and visitors have access to affordable, local, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and are empowered to live a healthy, active and sustainable lifestyle.

Healthy Lifestyle La Plata (HLLP) is a coalition of health & wellness

professionals who are working to create a healthy, active and sustainable community for its citizens and many visitors. It is comprised of three subcommittee's, each with a specific wellness focus – Healthy Local Foods, Worksite Wellness and Active Community Environment.

The Healthy, Local Food (HLF) working group of Healthy, Lifestyle La Plata, formed in 2007, is dedicated to working with restaurants,

grocers, schools, farmers, ranchers and food distributors on a consumer education campaign to support the use of healthy, local foods for all La Plata County residents.

For more information on these and other HLF sponsored programs and events, please contact the HLF co-chairs:

Jim Dyer at jadyer@frontier.net or Amita Nathwani at amita@ayurvedamedgroup.com

Or visit HLLP's website: <http://www.healthylifestylelaplata.org/>.

A Local Food Partners Resource Guide

If you would like to add an organization, resource or update to the food partner list, please contact: katyepinsky@gmail.com.

El Centro de Muchos Colores Hispano Resource Center is Fort Lewis College's thriving Hispano Resource Center actively working for improved retention and recruitment of Latino students at Fort Lewis College. El Centro works with Growing Partners as a cultural liaison with the Latino community for local food projects.

Contact: Sirena Trujillo-Long, Director: long_s@fortlewis.edu

Phone: (970) 247-7290

An Update from El Centro

On January 18, El Centro hosted the *MLK Day On Not Off Food Drive* to benefit Manna Soup Kitchen. Students donated non-perishable food items at collection points at the FLC Student Union, Center for SW Studies and North City Market.

The Center is currently offering a *\$250 to \$500 per year book scholarship* to freshman, sophomore, junior or seniors from any state who have minimum cumulative 2.50 GPA and financial need. Preference given to Hispanic or multi-cultural applicants. Funds are renewable up to 4 years. Deadline is Feb. 15, 2010.

For more information see: fortlewis.edu website under the Foundation's Office link, or call El Centro de Muchos Colores.

Colorado State University Extension in La Plata County offers informal education in agriculture, horticulture, consumer and family education and 4-H and youth development. The Extension Office can provide information and documented research on subjects relating to living and working in La Plata County. Programs include classes and information in high altitude gardening, pest and plant disease identification, weed management, landscape and turf management, commercial vegetable crops, backyard orchard management, and small acreage - land use and production practices. CSU Extension is involved in many of the local food programs and initiatives taking place in La Plata County.

Contact: Darrin Parmenter, Extension Director, La Plata County: parmenterdm@co.laplata.co.us, website: http://co.laplata.co.us/fairgrounds/fair_ext.htm

Phone: (970) 382-6464

Community Connections provides opportunities for children and adults with developmental disabilities to lead healthy and fulfilling lives within our community. The organization serves people from age 4 through adulthood. They are currently participating in a greenhouse/grow dome project with Fort Lewis College Environmental Center's Food Fellows Program. CCI would like to see this project evolve into a self-sustaining business, and would like to involve their clients in business and technical agricultural training.

Contact: Julie Dreyfuss, Development Director, julied@cci-colorado.org, website: <http://www.cci-colorado.org/index.cfm>

Phone: (970) 259-2464



The Environmental Center at Fort Lewis College (FLC EC) is a resource for social and ecological awareness, dialogue, and activism in the college, community, and surrounding region.

For the CFP, the FLC EC has constructed a demonstration organic garden and greenhouse to provide a training ground for the next generation of sustainable and organic growers. Students are also working on a variety of projects that promote environmentally sustainable living.

Contact: Marcus Renner, FLC EC Coordinator: rennerm@fortlewis.edu, website: http://www.fortlewis.edu/community_culture/ec/default.aspx

Phone: (970) 247-7676

A Food Project Update from the Fort Lewis College, EC Coordinator, Marcus Renner

Farm to College – Students are starting to break down the Sodexo menu and analyze what ingredients hold the greatest potential for local substitutions. The College also decided to set targets in its Sustainability Action Plan of having at least 10% of the Sodexo food budget on local and 10% on organic ingredients for its meals by 2015. This is along with additional targets around dishes made entirely from food grown on campus and from local producers.

Food Retreat – Students at the EC will be finishing stakeholder interviews and preparing a presentation for February's Food Security Collaborative retreat.

Local Food Fellows – The Environmental Center will be accepting applications for the Local Food Fellowship in February. The Fellowship for FLC students provides \$4500 for two students to work on community food security issues while maintaining the Environmental Center's demonstration garden over the summer.

Garden Cooperative – The Environmental Center's Sustainable Business Team will be finishing a draft of a three-year business plan for the Garden Cooperative – a partnership between the EC, The Garden Project, and Backyard Harvest. The Cooperative hopes to end 2010 with 20 members and a steering committee for the project will hopefully be off the ground by the beginning of the growing season.

Community Connections Greenhouse – The greenhouse at **Community Connections** has been fully winterized and EC student Patrick Crowell has been getting seedlings and greens growing in the four-season dome. Patrick has worked with CCI clients on planting and watering.

Earth Week Food Event – The students at the Environmental Center are planning an event tentatively titled "Take Back Your Food" to equip students and community members to take more control over the sources and quality of their food.

The Garden Project (TGP) of Southwest Colorado is a non-profit with the mission to build a healthier community through the facilitation of year-round educational and therapeutic garden programs and the promotion of our local food system.

Contact: Shari Fitzgerald, Executive Director: thegardenprojectsw@yahoo.com, website: <http://www.thegardenprojectswcolorado.org/site/Welcome.html>

Phone: (970) 259-3123

An Update from TGP Director, Shari Fitzgerald

School Garden Resource Guidebook – In 2008, The Garden Project started a school garden resource guide filled with guidelines to starting a school garden, lesson plans, sample budgets, theme gardens and other helpful hints for school garden coordinators and teachers. To see the guide visit www.thegardenprojectswcolorado.org/schoolgardens

Tool Mobile – The NEW 2009 tool library transports tools, curriculum, and other garden materials between schools, agencies, and volunteers. Donations of garden materials for the tool library would be highly appreciated. The tool library was made possible by Healthy Lifestyle La Plata, SW Community Foundation and a grant from Coutts Clark and Western. Call Shari to access the mobile or donate supplies! The fabulous handmade mural was done by Upward Bound with Aspen Sign and Design adding our graphics.

The Garden Project's Tool Mobile
surrounded by Fort Lewis College,
Upward Bound Students,
2009 Season



Healthy Community Food Systems (HCFS) addresses policy issues affecting local food systems. Jim Dyer is responsible for the Farm-to-School, Electronic Benefits Transfer farmers' market program, Community Networking Food Security Workshops and Beginning Farmer programs of the GPSWCO, CFP and is current Co-Chair of the Healthy Local Food Committee of Healthy Lifestyle La Plata.

Contact: Jim Dyer, HCFS: jadyer@frontier.net

An Update from Healthy Community Food Systems

Grant Awarded for Colorado Farm to School

A Colorado Dept of Ag Specialty Crops grant has been awarded to help connect producers with their local schools throughout Colorado. The Center for Systems Integration (CSI) and Healthy Community Food Systems (HCFS) will receive the funding aimed at:

- ensuring all Colorado schools and producers are aware of farm to school and how to connect and do business with each other
- compiling effective resources to aid schools and producers in these efforts, as well as farm to school educational resources
- determining the obstacles facing implementation of farm to school in Colorado and exploring ways to overcome these impediments

Many partners aided in laying the foundation for this project including, notably, the National Farm to School program. Jim Dyer of HCFS is the Colorado liaison for the National Farm to School Network, and director of the Southwest Marketing Network, the Southwest Regional Lead Agency for the Network along with Farm to Table.

La Boca Center for Sustainability (LBCS) located on a 190 acre ranch near Ignacio, implements programs that build community, distribute goods and knowledge to local communities, and provide food security through sustainable, ecological agriculture. LBCS was a key partner in the La Plata County Food Assessment and continues to partner on a number of community food projects.

Contact: Gabe Eggers, Executive Director: mountainegg@yahoo.com

La Plata Unity Project is a coalition of individuals and organizations funded by the Colorado Trust, serving the immigrant community committed to promoting intercultural understanding and unity. The Coalition serves as a cultural liaison with the Latino and other underserved minority communities for local food projects.

Contact: Crystal Harris, Coordinator: contact@laplataunity.org

Phone: (970) 903-1761

Or Grisela Picasso, Outreach Coordinator

(970) 764-0986

An Update from the Unity Project Coordinator, Crystal Harris

Bridging the Gaps In Our Community – On Sept. 24 and 25, the La Plata Unity Project hosted a 16-hour training to increase capacity among providers to provide culturally competent interpretation services. The training, facilitated by Dijana Rizvanovic of the Spring Institute, cultivated confidence levels among local interpreters and helped to standardize interpretation services among local providers. The 18 participants, which included representatives from the local Sheriff's department, schools, hospital and probation, left the training empowered by the fact that they provide a valuable service in our community. After the training, a number of the participants came together to form a local interpreter committee with the goal of formalizing the La Plata Unity Project's volunteer interpreter pool.

A free translation service – is taking place Monday nights from 6 pm to 7 pm in room at the Durango Commons Building, Rm #319 on the 3rd Floor of the Commons Building located at 710 Camino del Rio in Durango.

Manna Soup Kitchen strives to make a difference in the community at many levels and continuously looks for ways to serve people while staying within the mission of providing, in the name and Spirit of Jesus Christ, nourishing meals and supportive services in an atmosphere of acceptance and caring for those in need. Manna has hosted a garden project for the past 7 years.

Contact: Sarah Comerford, Executive Director:

Director@MannaSoupKitchen.org, website: <http://www.mannasoupkitchen.org/>

Warren Smith, Chef/Kitchen Manager: Kitchen@MannaSoupKitchen.org

Phone: (970) 385-5095



Volunteers prepare a lunch at Manna Soup Kitchen using ingredients from the garden.

An Update from the Manna Soup Kitchen Director, Sarah Comerford

In 2009 Manna served over 45,000 meals. The kitchen was open seven days a week with a hot breakfast on all mornings, hot lunch Monday through Friday and sack lunches to go every day. Manna's facility provided showers, laundry and computer services free of charge throughout 2009. Manna also helped individuals and families in crises with gas vouchers, food vouchers, clothing vouchers, prescriptions, haircut vouchers, bus tokens and Greyhound bus fare to people that want to get back to their homes or to job opportunities in different parts of the country. The Manna facility acted as a mail drop and pick up location for homeless clients. In FY2009, Manna distributed \$14,799.00 in vouchers and \$2,165.00 in Greyhound bus tickets and bus tokens.

Christmas Dinner – the Manna staff, Board and volunteers cooked and served 327 meals on Christmas day. The party was fantastic with live music from Joyful Noise and Santa passed out gifts donated by Project Merry Christmas. Manna took four families under its wing over the Christmas holiday. Three of those were low-income single-parent families, the fourth was a family of three girls headed up by eldest 21 year old sister. For these families, Manna was able to provide Christmas dinner and basic groceries, gifts donated from Project Merry Christmas, gas cards, and Wal-Mart cards. The kitchen has also been able to provide cinnamon buns and refreshments for families unable to provide food for funeral receptions.

Chef Warren Smith – has been busy in the kitchen and hitting the books with his intern, KJ, from Durango High School. KJ completed and passed the National Restaurant Association's Safe Serve Course certification and is running the kitchen and managing volunteers one day per week and doing an excellent job.

Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline (OFL) – strives to surround kids with nutritious food where they live, learn and play. OFL is a program of SOS, led by volunteer Chefs and Dietitians. Courses teach families with limited resources how to get the most nutrition for the least amount of money. The program covers the basics of cooking, nutrition, food safety and food budgeting and is available to kids, teens and adults. Courses are free to participants.

Contact: Wendy Rice, CSU Extension Family and Consumer Science Agent & Interim OFL Program Coordinator: ricekw@co.laplata.co.us
website: http://www.strength.org/operation_frontline/colorado/

Phone: (907) 382-6461



Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline Cooking Class at the Adult Education Center



Southern Ute Community Action Programs (SUCAP) was established in 1966 by the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. SUCAP provides human services in Ignacio, Colorado, to Native Americans and the broader community. SUCAP is the fiscal agent for the GPSWCO, CFP and provides outreach and garden space for Southern Ute and Ignacio-based garden and food projects.

Contact: Eileen Wasserbach, Executive Director: ewasserbach@sucap.org, website: <http://www.sucap.org/index.php>
Diane Downing, SUCAP Garden Director: ddowning@sucap.org

Phone: (970) 563-4517

An Update from the SUCAP, Ignacio Community garden director, Diane Downing: We have located a space for our garden at the south entrance to the SunUte Recreation Center and will be partnering with the Boys and Girls Club program. We have not broken ground yet, but plan to as soon as weather permits. The garden will contain raised beds, some 12" high and some 24" high for wheelchair access. We also plan to develop an education center for community garden trainings, compost bins and a tool shed. There are plenty of volunteer opportunities with this project, as we are starting from the ground up. This is a great opportunity for want-to-be gardeners to learn more about gardening, veteran gardeners to assist and teach others, and for those who like to eat fresh produce. What better place than your local community garden to grow fruit and veggies?

Turtle Lake Refuge (TLR) works to create a more sustainable community by linking the value of a healthy internal environment with a healthy external environment by promoting eating locally grown foods, wild harvested foods, and living foods. As a partner working on the community food project, they facilitate a Gleaning and Wild Food Program.

Contact: Katrina Blair, Executive Director: katblair@frontier.net, website: <http://www.turtlelakerefuge.org/>

Phone: (970) 247-8395

Mark Your Calendar for Local Food Events and Workshops

Ongoing

Meals at Manna Soup Kitchen

Take a break and come have lunch at Manna Soup Kitchen. Chef Warren puts out some fantastic meals daily that include soups, fresh salads, fruits and delicious main courses and we would be delighted if you would share a meal with us.



January 21st - February 4th

Alive and Wild

Thursday nights 5:30 - 8:00pm
Offered through Turtle Lake Refuge - A gourmet local, living and wild foods preparation class with emphasis on sprouting and growing greens year round, delicious and healthy recipes. Includes dinner each night of class. All four sessions - \$111
Each individual class - \$33
Call 970-247-8395 for more information.



January 30

Caulk and Seal Party at Manna

4-CORE, (Four Corners Office for Resource Efficiency) in partnership with Ft. Lewis Environmental Center will be doing a Caulk and Seal Party at the Manna Soup Kitchen on Saturday, January 30th From 12:00 to 3:00PM. Volunteers from FLC and the community will seal air leaks with caulk, weather stripping, outlet gaskets and other energy efficiency improvements to help Manna lower their utility bills. 4-CORE got approval from the Governor's Energy Office to do a complete energy audit and weatherization on Manna's facility. These services are free, and qualified homeowners or renters can apply for these services by contacting the 4-CORE office.

Contact: (970) 259-1916



February

Simple Winter Gardening Class

Offered through Fort Lewis College Continuing Education Program, taught by Katrina Blair of Turtle Lake Refuge February 11th and 18th from 5:30-7:30 and Feb 20th from 1-3 (field trip) another class will be offered in November on November 4th and 11th 5:30-7:30 and November 13 from 1-3pm (field trip)
Early bird registration - \$69 (7 days prior to class date) or \$74 thereafter
Call 970-247-7385 for more information.



February 23 & 24

Organic Weed Symposium and Weed Symposium

Starting in February, San Juan County Cooperative Extension in New Mexico will host the Organic Weed Symposium on the 23rd and the Weed Symposium on the 24th at McGee Park in Farmington. Get the most updated information from experts in the Rocky Mountain Region. Learn about weed identification, application control and safety, the new Organic Weed Management Learning Center, revegetation and much more! Colorado and New Mexico Pesticide Applicator Continuing Education Credits will be available, and local and regional vendors will be available to answer your questions on products, equipment, and weed management techniques.

Contact Mike Larsen at (505) 334-9496 for more information.



March 2nd

Beef Symposium

La Plata County Extension will host the Beef Symposium at the La Plata County Fairgrounds. Topics will range from small-acreage and grass-fed beef.

Contact Darrin Parmenter at (970) 382-6464 for further information.



March 27

Alfalfa and Pasture Management Symposium

Montezuma County Extension will be hosting the Alfalfa and Pasture Management Symposium at the Lewis Arriola Community Center on March 27th. For those of you interested in hay production or pasture management for animals, this symposium cannot be missed.

Contact Tom Hooten at (970) 565-3123 for further information.



2010 Backyard Food Production class series

La Plata County Extension is also planning on conducting the 2nd annual Backyard Food Production Class, starting this spring. Take your garden to a whole new level with this session series. Learn how to grow your own food - from design and seed starting to harvest, storage, and preservation. All classes are taught by local experts - Extension Agents and Specialists, growers, and professors - and will give you the tools to effectively and efficiently grow lots of food, whether you have a few square feet or a few thousand feet. Our initial plan is start the class in late March, early April and continue the course throughout the growing season, culminating with harvest and food preservation classes in the fall. Limited scholarships opportunities are available.

Contact Darrin Parmenter at (970) 382-6464 for further information.



Other Announcements

The Ignacio Community Garden is seeking supplies...

Any supplies that can be donated, such as lumber, soil, seeds, fruit trees (2), benches would be greatly appreciated.

Contact: Diane Downing, SUCAP Garden Director: d Downing@sucap.org

Giving to Manna Soup Kitchen...

The average community in the United States already possesses, and likely expends, enough resources to end hunger five times over. But these abundant resources meet only about one-fifth of the need because of how and where funds are spent.

The Manna Soup Kitchen benefits from a very generous community and food donations flow into our kitchen throughout the day. Our chef makes on-the-spot assessments of the food available to determine what should be served immediately, what can hold over for another day, what can be frozen for later and what needs to be redistributed to other area non-profits.

Cash contributions enable the Kitchen to leverage five times the amount of food than what can be purchased locally for the same cost by partnering with the Care and Share Food Bank in Colorado Springs. Care and Share has partnerships in place with local farms and national food distributors and therefore they are able to supply emergency food agencies such as Manna with groceries at deeply discounted prices. Manna is also able to leverage large donations from corporations that are distributed through Shamrock Foods. (A 1,000 lb pallet of assorted meats was donated with our last purchase.)



La Boca circa 1850

A message from the Staff and Board of Directors of La Boca Center for Sustainability

LBCS was created by the vision of Roy Craig, who placed the ranch and other assets in trust, mandating a 15-year lease to LBCS to prove its viability. At the end of the 15 years, LBCS could inherit the ranch and other assets. Unfortunately, the trustees of the Roy Craig trust have terminated our lease and may disperse the trust assets, including La Boca Ranch, to the trust beneficiaries. The situation is complex, but to secure a future for LBCS, we now must argue in court that dissolution of the trust is unwarranted.

The Board of Directors and staff believe that LBCS is a vital agricultural resource for this community but we need your help to continue our mission. Please consider supporting LBCS with a generous donation. *Our legal defense is relying on these donations—we don't have enough money to fight for what's right without your help.* Acting through our fiscal sponsor, the San Juan RC&D allows your donation to be tax deductible. Attached is a donation form for your convenience. Please make your check payable to "San Juan RC&D" (be sure to write La Boca donation in the memo). Your generosity and continued support is greatly appreciated.

[Click here to renew your membership or to make a tax deductible donation.](#)

*Respectfully yours,
LBCS Staff and Board of Directors*

Volunteer

Ignacio Community Garden

There are plenty of volunteer opportunities with this project, as they are starting from the ground up. This is a great opportunity for want-to-be gardeners to learn more about gardening, veteran gardeners to assist and teach others, and for those who like to eat fresh produce. What better place than your local community garden to grow fruit and veggies?

Contact:

Diane Downing: d Downing@sucap.org

The Garden Project

Although community and school gardens are put to rest till March, The Garden Project is always looking for volunteers or interns to work with us on garden planning and creating and reviewing educational resources. Greenhouse planting will begin the first week of March, volunteers will be needed to help get the greenhouses started again and to sow seeds for upcoming spring gardens.

Contact:

thegardenproject@yahoo.com

or call (970) 259-3123

Unity Project

To volunteer for the community interpreter/translator pool or to request interpretation/translation services...

Contact: contact@laplataunity.org

or call (970) 903-1761

Manna Soup Kitchen

Manna has two new volunteer coordinators. Chelsea Augustine is finishing up her degree in Business and Fort Lewis and is working Mondays and Wednesdays. Kim Flute is new to the area and will cover Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Contact: (970) 385-5095 if you would like to know about volunteer opportunities.