

Lettuce Ink

LettuceLink



GROWING AND GIVING

Lettuce Link creates access to fresh, nutritious and organic produce, seeds, and gardening information for low-income families in Seattle in an effort to educate the community about food security issues and sustainable food production.



Laura harvesting fruit

Volunteer to harvest! Call 694-6754 or email cdean@fremontpublic.org

Volunteer your tree! Call the Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline at 633- 0224.

In-kind or cash contributions are also graciously accepted.



63 pounds of donated plums!

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Community Fruit Tree Harvest

Half-way through the season and with a yield already more than four times the amount collected last year, the Community Fruit Tree Harvest is a huge success. Through the dedication of our volunteers, we connect homeowners and their limited-income neighbors who greatly appreciate the donation of fresh, locally grown fruit.

In its second year, the Community Fruit Tree Harvest coordinates volunteer teams who pick unwanted apples, pears, and plums from North Seattle neighborhoods and distribute them to food banks, senior housing facilities and meal programs throughout Seattle.

A call from a homeowner willing to donate fruit from their tree sets in motion a network where neighbors and volunteers come together to share tips on natural fruit tree care, discuss food security, work, and even eat together.

A recent donation of close to 200 pounds of fresh plums and pears to a senior housing facility brought together over 70 low-income, homebound seniors for a community gathering around this nutritious and otherwise expensive fruit.

With a recent article in the Seattle Times, the CFTH has grown in popularity, and homeowners have been keeping the Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline busy.



Don with the pole picker

So far, over 50 private households have donated their trees for harvest, resulting in nearly 2000 pounds of fresh produce for people who need it most!

Michael Jacobson, a homeowner who donated the pears from his tree exclaims, "This was the best thing we've done all year! Our fruit was picked and used, we enjoyed meeting the volunteers and we even kept some fruit for ourselves! What a great service, sign us up for forever!!!"



Fruit Tree Harvest

Food Bank Cooking Demo



The Lettuce Link Giving Garden at Marra Farm grows produce for the Providence Regina food bank in South Park. We know what happens when produce is grown and harvested, but what about afterwards, once it goes home with the food bank clients? What if they don't know how to use that kale or kohlrabi?

To help show food bank clients how to use common vegetables from the farm, two Lettuce Link volunteers teamed up for a cooking demonstration at the food bank one bright Saturday morning this summer.

On the menu was a quick and easy pasta with carrots, broccoli, kale, beet greens, onion, and garlic. Recipes in both Spanish and English were provided to clients, and they really seemed to enjoy watching, learning, and eating! Since the demonstration, clients have repeatedly asked, "When is the Noodle Lady coming back?" Because of the enthusiastic response, the "Noodle Lady" and her partner will be making monthly appearances at the food bank to continue sharing ways to prepare the fresh harvests from the farm.

We are prone to judge success by the index of our salaries or the size of our automobiles, rather than by the quality of our service relationship to humanity.

~Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

LETTUCE LINK STAFF

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[Http://www.fremontpublic.org/client/food.html#lettucelink](http://www.fremontpublic.org/client/food.html#lettucelink)

Profile of a Giving Gardener

The enormous Hat n' Boots structure at Oxbow Park is plenty to grab the attention of any onlooker, but there is much more happening inside Oxbow. Strongly driven by community efforts, this two-year-old park is striving to create a place for the diverse neighborhood of Georgetown to come together.

Amie Pease is just one of the many committed gardeners at the adjoining Oxbow Park P-Patch. With a plot of her own as well as the Giving Garden plot she is caring for, Amie has dealt with dogs running through the garden and theft twofold. With a landscaper as a father however, Amie has always been getting her hands dirty, and is able to find perseverance through her passion for gardening and growing her own food.



Before Oxbow Park officially opened up to the public, Amie took part in 'guerilla' gardening, where passionate gardeners would hop the makeshift fences and grow produce in the unused but fertile soil. With this unofficial start, the gardeners would invite neighbors to come and pick the food and take what they wanted. In this way, the Oxbow Park P-Patch has been a Giving Garden from the start. Now an official P-Patch, the gardeners are challenged with ongoing theft and vandalism. Despite this, Amie continues to garden not only for herself, but for others in her community that appreciate a meal cooked with local and organic produce. Thank you, Amie!

Connecting Chefs and Kids at Marra Farm



Outdoor classroom - lesson on whole grains

This summer, Lettuce Link teamed up with Operation Frontline to connect local chefs with children from the South Park Community Center. Operation Frontline and the chefs modified their nutrition curriculum to fit the outdoor setting. Chefs Sachia and Trisha Tinsley, two of the sisters who own Osteria la Spiga in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood, and Chef Sue Sheldon from Issaquah Care Facility have generously given their time to make this program happen.

The adventure begins with a walk to the farm and then a nutrition education segment where they learn the importance of grains, fruits, vegetables, and protein. The group then hears about the recipe of the day, splits into groups, and go off to harvest the crops! The kids come back with their bounty, wash and prepare it for the professionals, and then help transform the raw, dirty vegetables into a delicious healthy meal.



Cooking with fresh broccoli



Martin crushing garlic

This free program is vital because it demonstrates how tasty vegetables are and teaches safe, age-appropriate cooking techniques. It also enhances their knowledge of food, as they learn how vegetables are grown, selected, harvested, and then used to help make nutritious meals. The first recipe involved kale, squash and whole-wheat pasta. The children declared immediately, "This is SO delicious!" They were also very proud that they had helped create the dish.

The outdoor classroom and kitchen are new this summer—built by volunteers and funded through a Department of Neighborhoods Small and Simple grant. The counter tops are removable and allow us to both dry produce and prepare meals.



As a drying rack



As a cooking counter

Marra Farm Design



A volunteer hard at work

The Seattle Parks Department, Marra Farm Coalition (Lettuce Link is a member), and the South Park community continue to work on creating a long-term design plan for Marra Farm. Thanks to neighborhood input, the department is committed to preserving existing programs, the rich farm land, and its historical roots.

Future site improvements may include park furnishings, pathways, inviting signage, welcoming fencing, a learning center, play area, and wetlands restoration.



Draft design of site improvements

If you have specific questions, comments, or want to be involved in the planning, please contact David Goldberg, Project Planner with the Parks Department at david.goldberg@seattle.gov. Come to Fall Fest for a presentation of the next phase of Marra Farm. Details about the festival are on page four.

News & Information

From the Office

This has been a tremendous first year for me at Lettuce Link. The array of inspiring people that make up our program include passionate volunteers, energetic children, smart students, and diverse community members.

Working with these amazing people invigorates me, which is no small thing considering that I am expecting a new addition to the family any day now!

Yes, with the expanding belly, the gardening has gotten a bit difficult. Yet the program has accomplished a great deal this past year, due in no small part to volunteers contributing sweat, ingenuity, creativity, and time from their busy lives.

One volunteer in particular who has gotten things done and then sought out and accomplished the next with great finesse is Caitlin Dean.

Caitlin will be filling in for me while I am on maternity leave. Between Sue at the farm and Caitlin in the office and in the fruit trees I am confident Lettuce Link will be well-tended. You can contact Caitlin at 206.694.6754 or cdean@fremontpublic.org. See you next year!

~Michelle

Check out the Nation's well publicized food issue. You can read it on-line at <http://www.thenation.com/>

What We're Reading Now

In a recent interview with the LA Times, best selling author Michael Pollan stated, "Increasingly, people recognize that the industrial food system is failing us—it is not keeping us or our world healthy."

This summer has produced a storm of books and articles about our growing food and health crisis. Michael Pollan's book, *The Omnivore's Dilemma* has been our favorite. In this book, Pollan traces the origin of four distinct meals ranging from a meal entirely forged by himself to the opposite extreme - a fast food meal.

The information in this book is remarkable, unexpected, and distressing at times. However, everyone who eats should know where their food comes from.

There can be no other occupation like gardening in which, if you were to creep up behind someone at their work, you would find them smiling."

Mirabel Osler



Harvest Celebrations

Seattle Tilt's 2006 Harvest Fair

Farmer's market, tomato tasting, permaculture clinics, plant sale, music, family fun, and a chance to donate produce through Lettuce Link's BEET HUNGER BOOTH.

When: September 9, 2006 10 am - 4 pm

Where: Meridian Park in Wallingford

Marra Farm Fall Festival

Join us in celebrating a successful year at Marra Farm!
~ Sample tasty treats, play games, tour the farm, and help us vision a great future at the Farm~
~ *Bring the whole family and a dish to share* ~

When: October 7, 2006 Noon - 3pm

Where: 9026 4th Ave S in South Park