

Farmer's Market Moves to Saturday Mornings in Front of Library

Helping Tualatin Build a Healthier Community

BY **ENDRE RICHARDS**, MANAGER OF THE TUALATIN FARMER'S MARKET

When I was a little girl, my family planted a garden every spring. We lived in Eastern Montana where the summers are long and hot, and everything we ever planted grew. I remember going with my parents and choosing, with my sisters, the seeds we would grow each year. The smell of tomato vines, the sweetness of peas eaten straight from the plant, the deep, pollen yellow of squash blossoms – these are some of my earliest memories of food; food that I chose and food that I loved.

While not all children have the opportunity to plant a garden or grow their own vegetables, food choice is still an important part of teaching children healthy eating habits. Mentoring our youngest neighbors in ways to find satisfying foods that will nourish the body, rather than simply fill the belly can be a powerful tool in empowering children. It is also a tool for combatting childhood obesity along with its accompanying illnesses.

Last year, the Tualatin Farmers Market, seeking to encourage food choice for children, piloted our Market Sprouts program. This was based on a program started by the Oregon

City Market several years ago. Our initial plan was to run a 4 week program that provided 100 children ages 4-12, with \$2 each week to purchase produce from Market vendors. Each child was provided with a reusable shopping bag, along with a passport filled with games and questions to help them interact with the farmers who grow our food. Our belief is that children will eat produce when they are able to choose it for themselves. The ability to choose and purchase healthy food fully invests children in developing healthy habits that include a diet of fresh food.

The program was a huge success, gaining the hearty support of kids, farmers and community members, some of whom donated funding in addition to that from Whole Foods which allowed the program to continue for 7 weeks, rather than 4. In this short period of time, \$1400 of fresh fruits and vegetables were purchased and consumed by the children in our community.

This year the Market is experiencing big changes. We are moving to Saturday mornings and will be relocating to the space in front of the Public Library. Our Market Sprouts program will be evolving also to promote the

Opening Day
is Saturday,
June 13th!



theme “feed the body, feed the mind”. We will be acting in partnership with the Tualatin Public Library to encourage summer reading as well as good nutrition. This is an opportunity for the community to demonstrate our commitment to the health of our citizens by donating funds to operate and grow the Sprouts program. Tax deductible donations are now being accepted to fund the 2015 Market Sprouts program and we would love a broad, community based funding pool – giving to our littlest neighbors to maintain a healthy Tualatin. To support this summer's program contact us at market@tualatinfarmersmarket.com for details or visit us on Facebook at Tualatin Farmers Market.

Endre Richards is the manager of the Tualatin Farmers Market. When she isn't hanging around the market, you can find her cheering slightly too loudly at lacrosse games, dreaming of a future as a roller derby star, and generally leading a life that is more like a Portlandia sketch than she'd like to admit.

