

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Will There Be a Free Harvest Supper This August?**

For information, contact Dino Schnelle at [info@freeharvestsupper.org](mailto:info@freeharvestsupper.org) or 413-773-5029

Will there be a Free Harvest Supper of Locally Grown Food on Greenfield's Town Common this August?

The Supper organizers' answer to that question: "It depends. We hope that more community members will step forward to join the organizing committee and that area restaurants will respond to Hope & Olive's invitation to share the work of producing the annual meal that feeds upwards of 1,000 people." In order for there to be a Free Harvest Supper this year, the organizers need to hear by June 1 from new organizers and restaurants willing to help organize the Supper.

Maggie Zaccara, co-owner of Hope & Olive and Magpie and Free Harvest Supper head chef for the past ten years, explains, "This year, we want to get more of the community involved in creating this popular event, and especially want to further Juanita Nelson's vision of connecting the community to local farms and locally grown food. Instead of Hope & Olive coordinating all of the meal production, we hope that area restaurants will join us by preparing a dish featuring locally grown food for the meal. Each year, over 50 farms and local food producers donate food for the meal and this year we want restaurants to step up to donate their energy and expertise to the meal."

The Supper organizers are an ad hoc committee of community volunteers that comes together from May to August each year to produce the Supper. The group includes members who have been involved for the Supper's ten years and those who are new to the group. This year, there are not enough organizers to do the pre-planning work necessary to create the event.

**What's Needed:**

**Restaurants and Catering Companies:** Maggie and the organizers are calling for local restaurants and catering companies to commit to producing 15-20 gallons of 1-2 dishes made primarily with food grown and produced by western Mass farmers and food producers. The restaurants will need to source the food from local producers, prepare the food, and help serve the food at the Supper. Maggie and the organizers can assist restaurants in connecting with farms that can supply specific foods.

**Organizers:** The organizers need people to join the committee and help to coordinate publicity, a display area, equipment and logistics, recycling/composting, fundraising, and overall coordination. Committee members commit to attending a few meetings and coordinating their part of the Supper planning.

**When? The organizers need restaurants and committee members to commit by June 1 that they will help with this year's Supper.** If enough committee members and restaurants commit to helping out, the tentative date for the Supper is Sunday, August 23.

**For more information and to get involved:**

**Contact the committee at [info@freeharvestsupper.org](mailto:info@freeharvestsupper.org) or 413-773-5029.** For more information and to see pictures of past Suppers, visit [www.freeharvestsupper.org](http://www.freeharvestsupper.org).

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**About the Free Harvest Supper of Locally Grown Food**

Each year since 2005, inspired by Juanita Nelson's desire to encourage people to eat locally grown food, the Free Harvest Supper of Locally Grown Food has transformed the Greenfield Town Common on a Sunday evening in August. The Supper features a free bountiful meal of locally grown food prepared by local chefs, live music, children's activities, educational displays, and a Really, Really Free Market. Appetizers are served to those standing in line and everyone is encouraged to bring their own reusable place setting to conserve resources and help work toward the goal of being a "trash-free" event.

The Free Harvest Supper has three goals:

- to encourage everyone to eat locally grown food;
- to support local agriculture; and,
- to raise money for Farmers' Market coupons distributed by the Center for Self-Reliance Food Pantry.

While the Supper is free to all, donations are accepted and are used for the coupons which help achieve the supper's goals. Local residents in need of food get coupons from the Food Pantry, use them to purchase locally grown food at local Farmers' Markets, and then Food Pantry staff pay the farmers for the coupons they have accepted. It's a win-win system. Each year, Food Pantry Director Dino Schnelle distributes thousands of dollars' worth of farmers' market coupons to low-income Franklin County families.