

The GHERKIN

The newsletter to support and celebrate community food projects in London!

ISSUE 2: AUGUST 2009

There is great work going on across London changing Londoners' experiences with food for the better. London Food Link wants to support and publicise community food projects so their work can continue to reach out to more and more Londoners.

Thanks to those who have sent us news. Please get in touch with Hannah@sustainweb.org or Suzanne@sustainweb.org if you want to be featured in the next bulletin!



London Food Link

London Food Link is working to create a healthier and more sustainable food system. Members range from individuals, to restaurants, caterers, community food projects, allotment holders and food writers. London Food Link currently supports a wide range of community food groups. For more information see www.londonfoodlink.org

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NEWS



A HEALTHY START FOR FARMERS' MARKET CUSTOMERS

Stoke Newington Farmers' Market, run by Hackney group Growing Communities, is the first to allow families on low incomes to use their Healthy Start vouchers at the market. The Farmers' Market is the only all-organic weekly farmers' market in the UK and is the first in London to accept the vouchers, which can be exchanged for fresh vegetables, fruit and milk.

Growing Communities' director Julie Brown said, "We can't change the fact that organic food costs more to produce [...] but by accepting Healthy Start vouchers we hope to enable more people to buy locally produced sustainable food - which has got to be good for them and good for the environment."

Growing Communities is a pioneering urban growing group set up in Hackney over ten years ago. As well as running the Stoke Newington Farmers' Market, they run an organic fruit and vegetable box scheme – unique amongst London box schemes in that the salad in the bags is actually grown in Hackney.



For more information please contact Kerry Rankine on 0207 502 7588 or e-mail: kerry.rankine@growingcommunities.org

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NEWS

ALARA WHOLEFOODS START COMMUNITY FOOD GARDEN



Alara Wholefoods, one of the UK's biggest organic muesli producers, is not only making very tasty cereal, but their staff are getting their hands dirty with local residents in King's Cross. With the help of green-fingered locals, a large patch of derelict land behind the Alara factory in King's Cross is being transformed into a vibrant food garden. Situated amongst Alara's Permaculture Forest Garden, the food grown will be used by local community groups. As well as encouraging local food production, the area has a huge part to play in Alara's aim to become a carbon neutral company by 2010. Alex Smith, MD of Alara, has said, "The benefits of the garden to the community, environment and company speak for themselves, and seeing the garden come to life has been a joy to behold."

For more information on Alara please visit www.alara.co.uk.

AARDVARK SPOTTED DELIVERING LOCAL FOOD IN SOUTH LONDON!

Aardvark Recycling in Brixton is squaring up the food chain by collecting people's compost and also distributing fruit and veg boxes in Lambeth. Aardvark has now teamed up with the Larkhall Children's Centre in Stockwell so parents can collect their kids and their weekly shop at the same time. Being huge fans of local and London-grown food, their box delivery scheme is full of seasonal fruit and veg from the UK. Recently, the veg boxes included Savoy cabbages grown on a Brixton estate allotment – you can't get more local than that!



For more information on Aardvark email Natasha@ardvaarkrecycling.org.uk

LOCAL FRUIT AND VEGETABLES? AT YOUR CONVENIENCE!

Fifteen stores across London have been chosen to participate in the Buywell Retail Project. Buywell supports small independent retailers and larger Symbol Groups (Costcutter, Londis etc) to introduce more fresh, affordable and sustainably produced fruit and vegetables into areas where healthy food access is a real problem.

The project's first shop to embrace the changes is Tesa's Regional Store in Poplar, Tower Hamlets. This newsagent and grocer stocked no fruit and vegetables. But with the support of the Buywell team, Tesa, a sole trader and female business owner, has been enthused to start selling a good range of fruit and vegetables. Tesa said "It's been great, I wanted to stock fruit and vegetables for ages, but never got round to it. So when Stephanie and Gregory from Buywell came and offered to help I knew this was my chance and said yes."

The Buywell Retail Project is managed by London Food Link and funded by Tower Hamlets NHS Primary Care Trust, London Development Agency and the Big Lottery.

For more information contact - hannah@sustainweb.org

BUILDING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY IN NEW CROSS

The Building Healthier Communities project expands food co-op in New Cross. Their new membership scheme has attracted 158 new customers, and they have organised educational trips and extended the opening hours of the co-op. The group plans to develop the scheme throughout the coming year and is aiming to open a stall on Saturdays to attract even more customers.



For more information email Leon Pearson: L_pearson@btconnect.com

TAKE ACTION

The London Plan is currently being revised. This is the strategic spatial, environmental, transport and social planning framework for London and also sets the context for borough development plans. This plan influences local authorities and their planning policies and we want there to be more support for food growing, food retail and business, and recognition of food access issues in borough plans.

London Food Link will send in some comments, and if you have ideas you would like to see included in the London Plan please get in touch with Suzanne@sustainweb.org. The consultation closes soon, so don't delay!

EVENTS

NEWHAM PUPILS DEMAND HEALTHY TAKEAWAYS

School kids in Newham have harnessed their "pupil-power" and are demanding healthy food from their local takeaway outlets. Pupils from the Eastlea Community School have been visiting burger bars, curry houses and pizza places to ask the owners to add healthier options to their menus and any that agree will receive a special certificate of approval.

One in four 10 and 11-year-olds in the Newham area are overweight, partly because of the amount of junk food they eat. Jessica, 14, said: "When I eat loads of sugar I get back to the classroom and feel really hyper. We have to think about our future and that's why we are doing this." If the scheme proves successful, it is hoped that the idea can be used across the UK.

For more information see CBBC news 'Pupils tell takeaways to get healthier' - http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_810000/newsid_8107600/8107681.stm

CELEBRATE GOOD FOOD FOR CAMDEN

What: Free 'Good Food' events across Camden, including seed exchanges, workshops and food celebrations

Where: 'Good Food' events will be held at various locations across Camden, including The Calthorpe Project, Kentish Town City Farm, Somers Town Community Centre and Camden Garden Centre. Orchards, beehives and food growing sites will also be open so join in and celebrate food and community around Camden.

When: Saturday 10th October

Organised by Sustain, NHS Camden and Camden Council. For more information, email anna@sustainweb.org or rosie@sustainweb.org or call 0207 837 1228 and speak to Anna or Rosie.

GET GREEN FINGERS WITH ORGANICLEA

What: Organiclea gardening courses. Organised in partnership with the Community Learning and Skills Service (CLaSS), the courses will suit all levels of

experience and interest. Courses range from "Gardening in the Workplace", "Seed Saving from Garden Plants" to "Vegetables and Herb Production for learners with learning disabilities"

Where: The Friday Hill Learning Centre, Hawkwood Nursery Garden site in Chingford, and the Forest Community Centre in Leyton

When: September 2009 to June 2010

For more details, see www.walthamforestclass.gov.uk or contact Clare Joy cleyre@riseup.net. Early booking is highly recommended 020 8523 9355.

FEAST ON THE BRIDGE

What: Southwark Bridge will be closed for the day as part of the Mayor's Thames Festival. Come along for a sit down lunch at a table covering half the bridge and for food activities such as butter making, mayonnaise making from fresh local eggs and the most sustainable meatballs in London!

Where: Southwark Bridge

When: 12th September

www.thamesfesitval.org

THE URBAN GREEN FAIR

What: An independent urban green fair which includes an area dedicated to local food and food growing

Where: Brockwell Park

When: 20th Sep

www.theurbangreenfair.org

BRITISH FOOD FORTNIGHT

What: The annual national celebration of British food. Celebrate the diverse and delicious food that Britain produces!

When: 19th Sep – 4th Oct

To find out how to take part visit <http://lovebritishfood.co.uk>

APPLE DAY

What: Apple Day is a national event organised in local communities to improve awareness and enjoyment of our local apples

When: October 21st – fruity events happening all over London!

FUNDING

NEW FUNDING WEBSITE

The National Council of Voluntary Organisations and the Office for the Third Sector have just launched Funding Central, a new free website for comprehensive information about national, local and regional government funding, national, local or regional charitable funding, and EU funding.

www.fundingcentral.org.uk

FUNDING ALERT

Don't forget you only have until 21st August to apply for the Local Food Fund

see www.localfoodgrants.org for details.

FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR COOKING CLUBS

Does your school cooking club need funding? Let's Get Cooking is inviting existing clubs to join as an "associate club". You could receive £500 for promoting your club as well as recipes, activity ideas, wall charts and much more.

To apply to become an associate club visit www.letsgetcooking.org.uk/associate

BBC CHILDREN IN NEED GRANTS

Grants for projects working with disadvantages children and young people living in the UK are open for applications, with deadlines on 15th July and 15th October 2009.

www.bbc.co.uk/pudsey/grants/apply.shtml

GRANTS FOR PLANTING TREES (UK)

The Tree Council, has announced that its Trees for Communities and Trees for Schools grant programmes are now open for applications. Funds are available for schools and community groups in the UK who can show that children under 16 will be engaged in the planting projects.

For more information please visit: www.treecouncil.org.uk/?q=grants

ESMÉE FAIRBAIRN FOUNDATION - FOOD STRAND (UK)

The Food Strand is a £3million fund over three years (2008 - 2011) aiming to promote an understanding of the role of food in enhancing the quality of life. It will prioritise the enjoyment and experience of food rather than its production and the Foundation seeks to enable as many people in the UK as possible to obtain, prepare and eat nutritious, sustainable food. The Foundation is also interested in work that influences policy and practice across a range of food-related areas. Applications can be submitted at any time.

For more information please visit: www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/funding/food.html



QUOTE OF THE MONTH!

"Community food projects give Londoners the opportunity to get to know their neighbours, learn new skills for growing and cooking and, in these tough economic times, provide many people with fresh and healthy food they can afford" said top Chef **Cyrus Todiwala** MBE.

Cyrus Todiwala with Waltham Forest College Young Chefs



Contributors; **Gaby De Sena**, designed by **Rebecca Joynt**