



Giving

*By Marcia Rae
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Brownsville is the giving-est place. Volunteerism is rampant – just ask the folks who will be working this weekend at the Pioneer Picnic. Since 1887 volunteers have created this family-oriented, fun-time event. And it is hard to find a weekend in the summer when something isn't going on with the 4th of July, Antique Faire, and Stand by Me coming up.

The Farmers Market runs on volunteer effort. Each week people just show up and pitch in, carrying tables, starting the fire, getting the speakers set up. The fabulous music we have? All played and sung in the spirit of giving and the joy of doing it.

What many don't know, though, is that the Calapooia Food Alliance gives a significant amount of food each year to Sharing Hands, our local food bank. This happens in a couple of different ways. The CFA sponsors the Community Gardens which is located at the old elementary school and managed by Anne Stein with Margy Riggs as liaison.

At the Gardens, people can rent their own individual garden plots and/or volunteer in the "Community" Garden. Food from the Community Garden goes directly to the Senior Meals and Sharing Hands. Beneficiaries of the Sharing Hands program and Seniors also volunteer their time to work at the Garden, participating in cultivation, planting, and harvest, and learning gardening skills from Master Gardener, Anne.

The Farmers Market, too, is a source of fresh food for Sharing Hands. This year we have re-opened the Community Booth. Anyone who agrees to abide by GAP (Good Agricultural Practices, i.e. no un-composted manure) can bring produce to the Community Booth and we will sell it for you. CFA keeps 20% of the sale, with all proceeds directed back to supporting the Community Garden. Usually, any items that do not sell are also donated to Sharing Hands. In addition, many of our vendors donate un-sold food to Sharing Hands. Last year the CFA donated over 3,000 pounds of food to Sharing Hands.

Munch on This – This year, when you find yourself with excess in your garden, harvest it. Bring it to the Community Booth. Support the CFA, Community Garden, and Sharing Hands.

PS – See you at the Farmers Market this Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon, for real local food. Music by ever-popular Joe Hall.

PSS – Can't find what you want at the Farmers Market? Remember to go online to WillametteLocalFoods.com and order fresh local produce, dairy, and meats. Order by Monday at 11:40 and pick up on Tuesday afternoon at Roots.

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