

Food clinic gives low-income residents access to fresh food

Just Roots, Franklin Community Co-op and Food Bank offer food clinic once a month

By TOM RELIHAN
Recorder Staff

GREENFIELD — A few of the barriers to getting fresh, local food may soon fall for some local residents thanks to a new outreach effort by Just Roots, the Franklin Community Cooperative and the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts.

Once a month, people passing by the Just Roots farm share program next to

Green Fields Market will have the chance to learn about how to obtain food assistance from the federal government, sign up for an affordable co-op membership or join the farm share program at the organization's Local Food Clinic.

Andy Grant, Just Roots' community outreach director and a member of the Franklin Community Cooperative's board, said the clinic happens once per month. The first happened in July and the second was Aug. 3. The program will run two more times before the season is over — on Sept. 7 and Oct. 5 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. — as part of a trial phase.

The intention was to bring together community groups to remove obstacles to



RECORDER STAFF/TOM RELIHAN
Tricia Ruggles of Greenfield and her daughter Ariana pick out vegetables during Just Roots' farmshare pick-up Wednesday afternoon.

healthy local food. The clinic is designed to help people learn how to get involved with the farm share program through subsidized access, enroll in the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, and obtain an affordable or incrementally paid membership to the cooperative through the Food For All program, especially for low-income residents.

"That's a way to diversify the membership of the coop, and provide food for the whole community," Grant said of that last purpose. He said the clinic also helps people enroll for "auto-SNAP" enrollment in the farm share, which allows them to register to have their benefits auto-

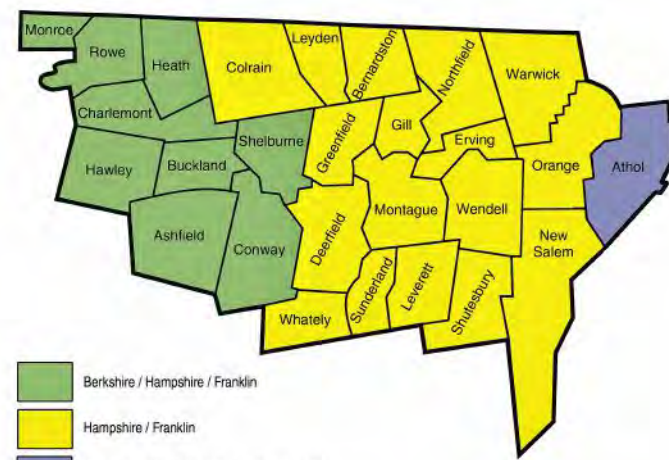
matically pay for farm share dues. That, he said, allows them to show up and receive their food like anyone else, without the stigma of having to show their card.

Passersby can stop for a free individual consultation during the clinic's hours.

"It's something we're prototyping. We just started this, and we basically set it up to see how it worked, didn't do much advertising," he said.

This year, the organization offered a fall extension to its farm share program, adding an additional four weeks to its 20-week season.

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Massachusetts Senate Districts

Debate

FROM B1

North Adams.

He also cited his work with the U.N. in the Middle East where he said he learned to work with communities toward collaboration while also encountering negotiators "with some tough actors."

Harrington described herself as someone who has "always been for the underdog" and said she'd be a tireless advocate for working families, which she said are increasingly unable to afford to live in the Berkshires and get ahead.

She promised to pursue "a progressive agenda" in the Senate and added, "I am not a politically connected person, but what I am is a fighter. Don't let my size or my gender fool you," said Harrington, who is slight of build.

The candidate said her work as an attorney and her experiences growing up in a working class family in Pittsfield have given her the ability

to forge collaborations but also the insight to know when to stand up strongly in opposition.

Hinds said the Senate position "needs someone to be effective in pushing an agenda," saying his experiences growing up in a family that stressed education, his local work with youth the low-income residents, with the U.N. and working for former U.S. Rep. John Olver, D-Amherst, has prepared him for the job.

Del Gallo said in his closing remarks that "I am the anti-establishment candidate, no doubt about it." But he asserted that more than his opponents he has been out in the community and active for more than a decade and he would fight hard against income disparity, which he said is at the root of many other problems.

"You need someone with fire in his gut," he said.

In November, the winner will face Christine Canning of Lanesborough, who is running unopposed as the Republican candidate.



RECORDER STAFF/TOM RELIHAN
Ethan Kinney of Hancock, N.H. (right) examines a tomato with Tanner Valentine of Hatfield during Just Roots' farm share pick-up Wednesday afternoon.

NORTH COUNTY NOTEBOOK

Kids to taste-test healthy snacks and vote at Farmers Market Thursday

NORTHFIELD — Dickinson Memorial Library, located at 115 Main St., is hosting a Healthy Snack Market on Thursday, Aug. 18 from 1:10 to 2:30 p.m.

Just Roots, a nonprofit organization in Greenfield, will supply snack-sized portions of fruits and vegetables for children to taste test and vote on which they like best, according to Matt Atwood, programming librarian at Dickinson Memorial Library.

The event is part of the library's summer program called Exercise Your Mind. The snack market is the final event of the summer.

The event is free and no registration is required.

Thursday is library Trivia Night at Northfield Golf Club

NORTHFIELD — Dickinson Memorial Library is holding a trivia night Thursday, Aug. 18 starting at 6:30 p.m. at the Northfield Golf Club, located at 31 Holton St.

Local residents are invited to come with a team of up to five people, or they can be matched up with a team once at the event, which will be held at the club's outdoor pavilion.

According to Matt Atwood, programming librarian at Dickinson Memorial Library, each round will have a different theme: Mean Girls, Bad Boys and Lovable Pets.

The event is a potluck, though the library will provide salads from Highland BBQ.

The event is free and no registration is required.

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