

The Great Disconnect: the power of food to build community

Written By **MARNI WALSH**

Next Thursday (Feb. 21), the Mono Mulum Citizens' Coalition (MC2) and the National Farmers' Union will hold a presentation and discussion of Tamer Soliman's new documentary The Great Disconnect. MC2 board member Arnold De Graaff calls it "an opportunity to learn and talk about the power of food to build community."

"This is critically important," De Graaff says, "as many people feel isolated, lonely and discouraged in these difficult times." He says, "We need to increase our communal strength in the face of corporate and government interests and the crisis of climate change. It is another opportunity to become connected and live differently. Farms, food and farmers' markets have a positive role to play in changing our culture."

According to his portfolio, Tamer Soliman's work as an international wellness professional was redefined by a trip to the Blue Mountains of Jamaica where he visited the local population to learn about food, nutrition and sustainable living. He says that what he discovered "was a profound sense of community."

This led Mr. Soliman to investigate the sense of community and connectedness in North America and how it affects overall wellbeing. Soliman met with experts in economic, social and urban planning, and discovered "how multifaceted this idea of community wellbeing is, and how crucial it is to our existence." He also discovered that there were "ill effects that stem from community breakdown." The film maker will be at the February 21st MC2 presentation to guide the discussion of his work, The Great Disconnect.

Doors will open at 7 p.m. in Honda Hall at the Gibson Centre, 63 Tupper Street West, in Alliston. The film starts at 7:30 p.m.. To register for the screening and discussion go to: www.nfuontario.ca. The cost for the evening is \$10 per person with pre-registration, or \$15 at the door. Free refreshments will be provided. "Join us and meet our local farmers and neighbours," says Arnold De Graaff, "It takes all of us to make a change."