

Upcoming Farm to Table Dinner Series selling out fast

Written By MARNI WALSH

Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance (HFFA) is promoting three farm fresh dinners to be presented in support of children's Farm to School programs.

The popular in-school programs have been running with great success for the last five years in Dufferin-Caledon.

Farm to School educates young students about where their food comes from and the healthy benefits of eating fresh and local. Organizers say, "The Farm to School programs also include education workshops which feature farmer visits, hands-on food activities, lesson plans and curriculum links for Kindergarten to Grade 8".

An important element of the Farm to School Program is the Local Food Club. Lead organizer for the Farm to Table series, Marci Lipman, says "The Local Food Club is a meal-in-a-bag program supplying locally sourced ingredients and seasonal recipes for families to order throughout the school year."

She added "It connects families in the kitchen and the community with their local farmers to everyone's benefit." According to HFFA, "The program operated in 12 schools during the 2018-19 school year, packing 100 bags and feeding an average of 400 people a locally sourced meal each month."

Headwater Communities in Action (HCIA) project lead, Shirley Boxem, calls the dinner series "a win-win opportunity in which people who cherish local food can experience that food right on the farm to get the whole experience. The funds raised connect our kids to that local food through a variety of programs "that's growing a healthy and resilient food system from the ground up."

Ms. Boxem says HCIA is "hugely grateful to Marci Lipman "the champion of farmers for getting these dinners off the ground " and on to the farms. HFFA has benefitted from partnering with In The Hills to publish the Headwaters Food Charter. This current partnership represents another step forward for this alliance of committed foodies from all aspects of the Headwaters food system."

In a press release, Ms. Lipman reports dinners will be held "at three beautiful farms in the Headwaters Region to raise funds for the Farm to School program." She says, all three dinners "will feature locally grown menus prepared by local chefs and served with local beverages." Cash bars will also be available at all meals.

The first meal in the series will be held at Rockcliffe Farm in Mono Township. The culinary event will be hosted in the field "surrounded by black angus cattle and sheep" and catered by local celebrity chef Phil DeWar of Soulyve. Rockcliffe is a family owned farm started by farmer Alix Bezak and her husband George in 2016. The dinner they are hosting Saturday, July 13 is already sold-out.

The second dinner will be at GoodLot Farmstead Brewing Co. in Alton on August 25th. Founded in 2011, by Gail and Phil Winters, the couple says "the brewing operation is a natural extension of their organic farm. Embracing a totally holistic approach to brewing beer, they grow their own hops and include all locally grown grains and other local ingredients grown in Alton." Chairs at the Winter's table are still available, but only because they have added another 30 seats to accommodate even more guests.

The third dinner will be hosted at Not So Hollow Farm in Mulmur on Saturday, September 14. Started in 2002 by Ian Payne, a landscape architect, and Viki Reynolds, a vegan chef, their farm is home to a vast selection of plants. As their tagline says, Viki and Ian are "Passionate People Perpetually Providing Provincially Propogated Pollinator Plants"for a Positive Planet." Seats are still available but going fast.

Shirley Boxem told the Free Press that the summer Food to Farm dinner series "represents a new partnership with Headwaters

Tourism which recognizes that our food and farmers are a huge draw and are supporting HFFA by providing organizing expertise.?

Marci Lipman says local teachers and students are giving the Farm to School program ?an enthusiastic A+.? Farm to School Program Coordinator Adelle Barr-Klouman believes, ?Teaching kids at an early age about where their food comes from and eating healthy, will have a profound consequence in later life.?

She added, ?There are many schools on the waiting list hoping to receive programming next year while the organization works on building capacity to meet this demand.?

The Farm to Table Dinner Series is an opportunity for the public to support this wonderful home-grown program. For more information or to become a sponsor contact marcilipman@gmail.com or visit <http://headwatersfoodandfarming.ca/> to book tickets.