

SECTIONS

NEWS

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

OPINION

SPORTS

FRONT PAGE

INFORMATION

ABOUT THE OTTER REALM

ADVERTISING

PAST ISSUES

CONTACT

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

CSUMB Students Harvest Community Dream

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Amid a sea of white tents drifts the sweet fragrance of Thaiwaiian noodles, the salty perfume of kettle corn and the tangy aroma of the Sun Street Center's barbecue grill.

Everyone's Harvest (or Cosecha Para Todos) is committed to providing a market for local organic growers and a community venue outside of Monterey. It occurs every Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the corner of Reservation Road and De Forest Road in Marina, at the Monterey Salinas Transit parking lot.

CSUMB students Iris Peppard and Sarah Van Der Stad founded the market two years ago in the hope of, as the mission statement reads, "promoting community building and supporting economic development and sustainable agriculture in Monterey County," while "creat[ing] revenue to support community-run organic gardens in the local area."

As a lone guitarist plays and children shout from the bounce house, shoppers mingle amongst the small white palaces, sizing up produce, fingering exotic jewelry, and feasting. Some even rest long enough to have their faces painted by two young local artists, Victoria McCuen, 10, and Amanda Rouse, 11.

Although Everyone's Harvest may not be as large as the farmers' markets in Monterey and Santa Cruz, this young gathering has a solid purpose.

Relieved from the heat, Peppard sits on a haystack in the shade, clipboard in hand after talking with a face-painted vendor. As she scans the crowd and talks about how this festive market came to be, she proves herself to be a driven and focused young market manager.

"There wasn't a place in Seaside or Marina to buy organic produce," she recalled. Her goal, she said, is to give back to the community. "It's not right that farmers' markets are only in rich areas."

Everyone's Harvest hosts a favorably sized crowd and Peppard plans to enhance the quality of this budding market. Noticeably missing from the crowd is an abundance of CSUMB students. Although, with the help of a few Service Learning students, the market will soon have displays for the vendors and their veggies, describing some of the more unique vegetables, what they are good for and how to cook them.



OTTER REALM PHOTOGRAPH/JAMES SPEIR

CSUMB students Iris Peppard and Sarah Van Der Stad work to promote "community building and supporting economic development and sustainable agriculture" in Monterey County.

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These 14 students also help setup and dismantle the market each weekend and supervise the bounce house, which is featured free-of-charge every first and third Sunday of each month.

"It has a friendly, more relaxed atmosphere," says Pavinee Francisco, who alongside her husband, José, sells purses, sarongs, and backpacks in island-inspired colors and prints, as well as necklaces and suitcases with Hawaiian style designs.

Setting up shop each Sunday are around 25 vendors, but there have been as many as 45 during the summer months. Ener Cabangis, owner of Candle Glow, which specializes in decorative candle fixtures and votives that project color and light, said that business is picking up at Everyone's Harvest.

In order "to create a community place in Marina," all non-profit, educational and community groups are allowed free spots at Everyone's Harvest and most of the produce vendors accept food stamps and the Women Infants and Children program.

Peppard invites local musicians to come and entertain for tips and some free produce. This pet-friendly and family-oriented market will close Nov. 23 for the season, re-opening in May of next year.

For more information visit

www.everyonesharvest.org

or call 384-6961.