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Gorge Grown Food Network

Project brings local produce to corner stores in The Dalles

Gorge Grown Food Network will launch the region's first Healthy Corner Store Project June 28 at Allen's Grocery Outlet and La Michoacana in The Dalles, meeting the needs of low income families for farm fresh fruit and vegetables in neighborhoods without easy access to a grocery store.

"In an area with such a rich history of agriculture and an abundance of seasonal produce, no family should go without fresh, healthy options. We hope to build lasting relationships between local farmers, corner stores, and their customers," said Silvan Shawe, Healthy Corner Store project manager.

Starting this program has been met with enthusiastic support from the participating corner stores, Fit in Wasco walking groups, Oregon State University Extension Service, Columbia Gorge Health Council, Pacificsource, regional Health Departments, Wasco Country Schools and community members, according to Shawe. Five small local farms have signed on to be producers for the corner stores, providing everything from carrots to specialty hot peppers.

GGNF has also partnered with the Wahtonka Community School Garden and will help to support the school garden and provide business skills to the students. Krystal Klebes, teacher at WCS noted that, "The opportunity for our students to see the produce they grow in local markets provides meaning for all the hard work they do at the school's garden."

To promote the Healthy Corner Store Project and the fresh food now in the corner stores, tastings and recipe demonstrations highlighting a monthly selection of seasonal ingredients will be held at La Michoacana every second and fourth Wednesday, at Allen's Grocery Outlet every first and third Wednesday, and at local events and schools throughout the community.

Support for this project comes from The OHSU Knight Cancer Institute Community Partnership Program, which is designed to build sustainable collaborations with Oregon communities by providing grants and other resources to foster development of community-identified cancer prevention, early detection, treatment and survivorship projects. The OHSU Knight Cancer Institute has made a decade-long commitment to invest in this program to develop robust, sustainable programs that benefit the health of all

Oregonians. Additional information about the program is available on the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute's website.