

Belmont Food Collaborative

Annual Report

spring 2014

www.belmontfarmersmarket.org

www.belmontfood.org



*Open June 12th -
October 30th
rain or shine!*

Thursday afternoons

2:00 to 6:30 pm, June - August

2:00 to 6:00 pm, September - October

Belmont Center parking lot

in this issue . . .

2013 Farmers Market Annual Report

2013 Education Report

2013 Food Assistance Report

The Belmont Food Collaborative:

Who we are and what we do

Did you know...

The Belmont Farmers' Market is run by the Belmont Food Collaborative?

We are a volunteer run 510(c)(3) organization?

In addition to the Farmers' Market, we also offer classes and plant purchases, and work to improve access to fresh and healthy food to the people of Belmont, regardless of need?

Our mission is to:

- promote the good health of the citizens of Belmont, Massachusetts, and surrounding communities;
- enhance the quality of life by providing education and information about healthy, active lifestyle choices to people of all ages, abilities, and means;
- increase the availability of fresh, locally produced foods within walking or bicycling distance;
- help people in need obtain fresh, healthy foods;
- promote and support local, sustainable agriculture and home vegetable gardening; and
- conduct programs and develop other means by which the Collaborative can pursue the aforementioned purposes.

We invite you to read more about who we are and what we did in 2013!

Belmont Farmers' Market

2013 report

Looking back on the 2013 Belmont Farmers' Market season, the following scenes spring to mind:

- The vendors' blue and white tents, tables piled high with bright red tomatoes and apples; orangey peaches and squash; and of course kale and chard in every shade of green and purple
- People chatting, their arms filled with bags of produce, smiling as they greet neighbors and friends.
- Rapt children sitting under the red Events Tent, watching and listening as volunteers read storybooks from the Belmont Public Library aloud.

As the season progresses, the offerings change— the strawberries of June are re-

placed by the peaches of July and August, and then the apples of fall. The farmer whose produce filled one table in the early part of the summer fills more tables, now piled high with sweet corn, hard winter squashes, and yellow, pink, and red beets. The scene at the Farmers' Market changes form month to month, helping to keep us all in tune with the natural cycles of our home on earth.

In 2013, we were excited to continue several initiatives and start some new ones. Our Events Tent was a busy place, as we set a new goal of having up to three different events each afternoon. We were honored to partner with the Belmont Public Library on our new Storytime at the Market program. On Market afternoons, children gathered around, listening to Belmont Public Library's wonderful

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Growing, Classes and More

Education Report 2013

In 2013, our Education Committee promoted healthy eating and local agriculture in a wide variety of ways. The Pomona Project, now in its fourth year, offered edible landscape plantings for sale at wholesale prices. In 2013 we saw a 20% increase in purchases over 2012. If you notice more fruit and vegetable plantings in your walks around town, you may have Pomona to thank (*and don't forget to ask before sampling!*)

A long-term goal has been to provide fresh food to the Belmont Food Pantry (*see Food Assistance section, pg. 3*) The Beth El Temple Center in Belmont generously provided space to build four raised vegetable beds for this project. Our high school student intern Olivia worked alongside our adult volunteer Patricia, learning the basics of vegetable growing. Olivia also delivered the fresh produce to the Belmont Food Pantry. Her enthusiastic contributions helped make this project a big success. We're pleased that our intern helped start a new Garden and Food Justice Club at the high school that will be growing vegetables for the Pantry this year. We'll be supporting them all the way. We love it when our projects bloom and grow!

We have continued to offer classes in growing and preparing foods, including starting and saving seeds; caring for ornamental edible plants; cheese-making and even making fresh ravioli. During the Farmers' Market season,

we also share a recipe that uses what's being harvested now in our weekly e-newsletter. We are excited to provide education around growing and cooking with local foods.

Our mission to increase the availability of fresh, locally produced foods extends beyond the Farmers' Market season. Last October, we hosted our first annual Fall and Winter Farm Share (CSA) Fair. More and more New England farms are offering CSAs that include storage vegetables like winter squash, potatoes, and carrots, as well as leafy greens that love crisp cold fall days. Some farmers have teamed up with producers of other local agricultural products like maple syrup and cheese, and offer menu-type shares where you can pick and choose. A crowd of visitors spent the evening tasting late fall foods and meeting representatives from nine farm share programs and the farm-based nonprofit Boston Area Gleaners (*learn more about them in the Food Assistance article, pg. 3*).

Our work in fulfilling our educational mission in 2013 was robust. We are always seeking more opportunities to inform and educate. If any of these projects sound intriguing to you, we invite you to get involved this year! Our classes and other activities are posted on www.belmontfood.org and are publicized in our online newsletter (*sign up at the website*). Better yet, come volunteer with us, and share your ideas!



Belmont Food Collaborative Board of Directors

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The Belmont Food Collaborative is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and the parent organization of the Belmont Farmers' Market

Belmont Food Collaborative

2013 By the Numbers:

At the Market:

Averaged 356 shoppers per day
20 musical performances
9 restaurant tastings
4 face-painting sessions
3 magic performances
2 art sessions

Food Assistance:

\$1,898 SNAP matches
3,840 lbs of BAG deliveries to the Belmont Food Pantry
5,710 lbs of produce donated to Food for Free

Belmont Farmers' Market
Winner of *Boston* magazine's

BEST OF BOSTON 2009

Awarded by *Boston* magazine
runner-up
'Best of Boston' 2010

Best Farmers' Market

www.belmontfarmersmarket.org

The Market is a member of the Belmont Center Business Association.

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photo: Hal Shubin

2014 Vendors

Here are the vendors we expect this season. Not all of them will appear every week. Check the BFM website or e-newsletter for updates and complete details.

- **Belmango Farm** fresh microgreens grown in Belmont
- **C & C Lobsters and Fish** a family run business selling locally-caught seafood
- **Carlisle Honey** local honey and hand-made beeswax candles
- **Coastal Vineyards** of South Dartmouth
- **Coutt's Specialty Foods** natural jams, jellies, applesauce, relishes
- **Dick's Market Garden Farm** vegetables, fruits, and plants
- **The Farm School** organic vegetables, fruits, flowers, eggs, grass-fed meat
- **Fior d'Italia: The Pasta Man** pasta in many different shapes and flavors
- **Flats Mentor Farm** fresh Asian produce
- **Foxboro Cheese/Lawton's Family Farm** fresh cheeses and veal
- **Goodies Homemade** award-winning, better-than-homemade cookies
- **Hutchins Farm** certified organic plants, vegetables, herbs, small fruit, and apples
- **Japonaise Bakery** French pastries with a Japanese twist
- **Kimball Fruit Farm** vegetables, fruit, and plants
- **Mamadou Bakery** handcrafted breads
- **Nicewicz Family Farm** apples, peaches, plums, berries, vegetables, flowers
- **Nobscot Artisan Cheese** made from raw milk produced in Framingham
- **Nonna's Soups** Belmont-made frozen soups based on Nonna's recipes
- **Real Pops** handmade Mexican-style fresh fruit ice pops
- **Samira's Homemade** Middle Eastern dips and salads, freshly made, delicious
- **Sfolia's Pizzelles** sweet and savory Italian treats handmade in Belmont
- **Soluna Garden Farm** herb, spice and tea blends, organically, sustainably produced
- **Still River Winery** apple icewine from Harvard, MA
- **Stillman's at the Turkey Farm** grass-fed meat and freshly cut flowers
- **Turtle Creek Winery** of Lincoln
- **Underwood Greenhouses** potted plants grown in Belmont
- **Westport Rivers Vineyard & Winery**
- **Wild Acre Inns** flowers, herbs and more



Improving Access to Fresh Food

Food Assistance Program 2013

A healthy diet includes lots of fruits and vegetables, and the fresher they are, the more nutritious they are. That's why one of the Belmont Food Collaborative's most important priorities is to find ways to improve access to fresh produce to those in need. Our Food Assistance Program is collaborative and multi-faceted.

At the Market, volunteers help to process shoppers' SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps) benefit cards, giving them coupons that they can use to shop at the Market. This is done quickly and professionally at the Blue Market Tent. We are proud that we double the value up to \$25 for each shopper each day. This allows people with severely limited food budgets access to fresh food they would otherwise not be able to afford. We matched \$1,898 in 2013, which was made possible by generous donations to the Belmont Food Collaborative.

Food for Free, a nonprofit based in Cambridge, sends a truck to Belmont at the end of each Market day to collect unsold produce and bread from participating vendors. The food is distributed within 24 hours to a variety of food pantries, shelters and meal programs in the greater Boston area. In 2013, our vendors donated 5,710 pounds of fresh food to those in need via Food for Free. We are grateful for their community spirit.

We collaborate with the Belmont Food Pantry in a variety of ways, including both cash donations and the weekly collection of non-perishables at the Market. Additionally we coordinate two programs that bring fresh produce to the pantry: our Community Growing program (*see pg. 2*) and our collaboration with Boston Area Gleaners (BAG). Together with BAG, we are able to work within the Pantry's limited hours and limited refrigeration. BAG coordinators are aware of the Pantry schedule, so when they glean at local farms on a Pantry day, they bring boxes of produce to Belmont. We underwrite the administrative costs of this program. In 2013, BAG brought approximately 3,840 pounds of fresh produce directly to the Pantry. The greens, carrots, beets, apples, and other fresh food were greeted with delight by Pantry shoppers, who go home with fresh, healthy produce.

The Belmont Food Collaborative is proud to work with such wonderful partner organizations. We are committed to making fresh and healthy food accessible to the whole community, regardless of need. We are excited to continue to find new ways to fulfill our mission and welcome new volunteers who want to share ideas and work with us.

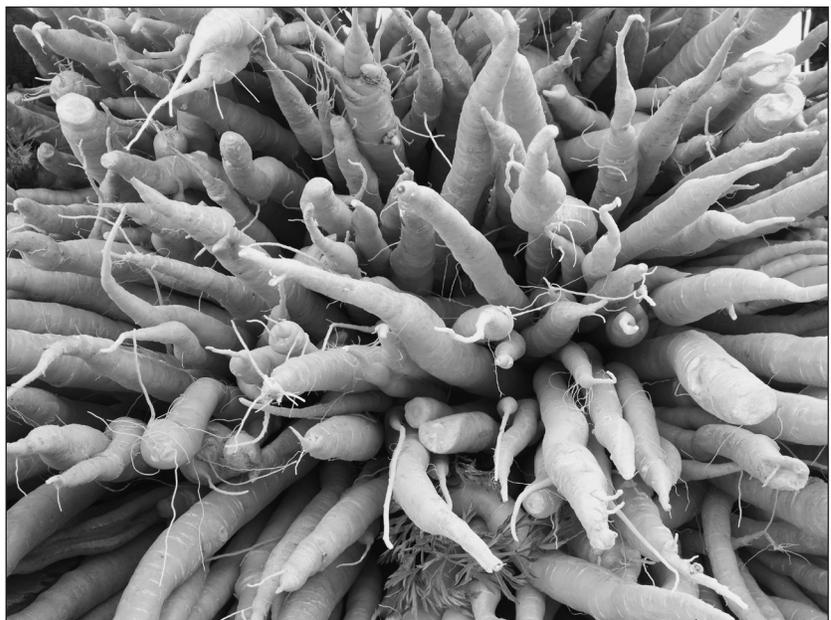


photo: Hal Shubin

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children's librarian, Denise Shaver. When she couldn't be there, our Market Managers happily sat down with a stack of books and a group of children. We read books about food, farming, bees, soil, compost, and animals. Other events in 2013 included performers of all ages and types – instrumental, vocal and even a magician, and many delicious tastings from local restaurants and shops.

Last season we began weekly collections of non-perishable foods for the Belmont Food Pantry. Now our shoppers don't have to remember which week to bring their donations. We also were able to continue our policy of matching SNAP benefits (*formerly known as Food Stamps*) up to \$25 for each SNAP shopper each week. We continue to streamline the process for our SNAP customers—less waiting at the Managers' tent, more time choosing produce!

At the close of each Market day, you may have noticed someone collecting large boxes of produce from many of our vendors. We are proud of our partnership with Food for Free, who collects unsold produce and bread that would otherwise be discarded and donates it to food programs in the greater Boston area.

Looking Ahead to 2014

The Belmont Farmers' Market is looking forward to our ninth season, beginning in the Belmont Center municipal lot on June 12, 2014! We will bring the same carefully curated blend of vendors, with an emphasis on local produce and locally made artisanal foods, and to introduce a few new guest vendors. The Market is bringing back Storytime, magic, music, and tastings. We are happy that library staff will read every week during the summer months and a number of past performers have already signed up for 2014.

We will continue our food assistance programs in 2014, including our SNAP incentive and our collaborations with the Belmont Food Pantry, Food for Free, and Boston Area Gleaners (*see the Food Assistance Report on pg. 3*).

Our enthusiastic commitment to fresh and local food continues. We are delighted that our farmers have chosen to return year after year. Our goal is to offer a range of organic and conventionally grown food. We also have a broad spectrum of locally produced foods, and strive to maintain a good balance of choices at the Market. Shoppers can go home with plans to cook up a storm, or simply make a meal of the prepared foods and baked goods available.

We are looking forward to another vibrant season at the Belmont Farmers' Market. Come down and join the fun!

Simple Frittata

Fresh eggs taste so good they need little to dress them up. Try a simple meal of a frittata, fresh bread, and a salad, using whatever fresh vegetables you have on hand. You can finish the frittata under the broiler or, by flipping it over (using a large plate), and cooking the other side in the frying pan. Use the freshest eggs you can get, such as those from the Belmont Farmers' Market, farm stands, or by offering to do chicken duty when your neighbors who keep hens go away for the weekend! The basic recipe is for a traditional Spanish Frittata, modify it with different vegetables or herbs.

3 tbsp olive oil

1 large potato or 2-3 small ones, ½ inch dice

5-6 eggs

Salt and Pepper to taste

Parboil the potatoes until just soft. In an 8 to 10-inch non-stick frying pan, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Put in the cooked potatoes and season with salt and pepper. Beat the eggs and pour over the potatoes. Turn the heat to low and cook until the eggs are set, 10 minutes or so. Finish by putting the frying pan under the broiler or by flipping the eggs onto a large plate and then cooking the other side in the frying pan. Serve hot, warm or cold.

Modify this recipe to suit your mood, what you have on hand, or what else you are serving. It's delicious with asparagus in springtime, broccoli or cauliflower in summer, or winter squash in the fall. Vary the seasonings or add onions, scallions, or leeks as they appear at the Market. Cheese can be incorporated as well by mixing it in with the eggs or sprinkling Parmesan, cheddar or goat cheese on top.