

What's happening

Tuesday, Dec. 24

Konditorei will host a free string quartet concert from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Christmas Eve at the bakery, 2710 Fifth St. in Davis. The annual concert is a holiday gift from the Konditorei owners to the Davis community. Performers will be Robert Bloch and Julian Woodruff on violin, Gay Currier on viola and Julie Hochman on cello.

Tuesday, Jan. 21

Students attending secondary schools in the Davis Joint Unified School District get a day off thanks to a teacher work day.

Ongoing

Tickets for the 2014 Davis Grad Night celebration are now available for purchase online through the Davis Grad Night website at <http://groups.dcn.org/davisgradnight/tickets>. Scholarship tickets are also available through school counselors. Grad Night gives graduates a fun, safe and sober way to celebrate completion of their high school education. For the past 28 years, Davis graduates have been enjoying this event, which includes music, dancing, casino games, outdoor activities, shows and a huge raffle, with plenty of food and refreshments. Nearly 90 percent of graduates attend each year. So, as you're thinking about the ideal stocking stuffer or gifts, don't forget a ticket to Grad Night 2014! Tickets are \$75, which covers the cost of all activities, food and drinks for the entire evening. Prices go up after Jan. 1, to \$90.

Ongoing

Also, dig out that kindergarten picture of your senior to be sure they are included in the awesome "Kinder Wall" at Grad Night — send your pictures (copies are OK) with graduate's names on the back, to: Sandy Langley at 2026 Klee Place, Davis 95618. Please provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you would like the photo returned.
— *Have an event you would like publicized on the Next Generation page? Email it to Anne Ternus-Bellamy at aternus@davisenterprise.net.*



FRED GLADDIS/ENTERPRISE PHOTOS

FARM Davis

Grow & Give brings students and seniors into the farm-to-fork movement

By Anne Ternus-Bellamy

ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

The kitchen at Eleanor Roosevelt Circle was bustling last Tuesday, packed to capacity with fifth-graders who were busily preparing lunch for residents, using the fruits and vegetables they'd planted in September and harvested earlier that day.

There would be vegetable soup on the menu, with dumplings no less, kale chips and persimmon cookies.

And once it was all prepared, these 28 Birch Lane students would sit down with the senior residents of Eleanor Roosevelt Circle for a festive holiday meal.

Students Madison Rutherford, Skylar Schouten and Mimie LeValle were looking forward to the meal, knowing they would be making the day a little brighter for some members of the community.

They'd been told that the seniors "love to talk to kids," Skylar said.

And they are especially likely to appreciate kids who grew, harvested and prepared the food for them, Mimie noted.

The students' efforts started at the beginning of the school year, when Robyn Waxman visited two classes of fifth-graders at Birch Lane to discuss FARM Davis' "Grow & Give" project.

The collaborative effort, which also includes the Davis Food Co-op, would involve students spending a day at FARM 2.6 on County Road 95, preparing and planting a 600 square-foot garden. In December, they would return to harvest what they grew, take it all to Eleanor Roosevelt Circle, and under the direction of the Co-op's Julie Cross, prepare, serve and share a meal with residents of the low-income senior housing cooperative.

When Waxman first visited the students in September, asking them what they would like to plant, they still had summer fruits and vegetables on their minds, so she had to remind them what grows in the fall and

could be harvested in December.

After much discussion, the students voted on what they wanted to prepare for the meal, settling on vegetable soup, kale chips and persimmon cookies.

Soon after, all of the fifth-graders in Sally Palow's and Lakshmi Aradhya's classes headed out to the farm. There they spread manure, planted seeds and harvested persimmons, which would be frozen until students were ready to use them in December.

Periodically over the next few months, Waxman — whose daughter is a student in Aradhya's class — would send photos of the crops slowly growing, while she and a FARM Davis intern from UC Davis handled the periodic weeding and transplanting.

"We babied their babies," Waxman said.

Things got a little dicey earlier this month when temperatures dropped precipitously. Waxman ended up harvesting the peas before the fifth-graders' scheduled return to the farm or they wouldn't have survived.

But return the students did last Tuesday.

It was another freezing-cold morning out at Farm 2.6. But cold or not, harvest time was nigh.

"We played some games and drank hot chocolate to warm up," Madison said. "Then I harvested bok choy."

Skylar and Mimie, meanwhile, were among the students harvesting kale.

Once they'd finished their work at the farm, the students were driven to Eleanor Roosevelt Circle, where Cross was on hand to teach them how to make all of the menu items they'd selected.

They mixed up the ingredients for persimmon cookies — the Co-op donated the butter and other ingredients needed for the meal — and began preparing all the vegetables for the soup, chopping everything from carrots to bell peppers to onions and everything else they'd planted.

Nearby, tables were being set and decorated for the lunch with the residents.

It's that sharing part that Waxman said is so important to FARM Davis.

While farm-to-school is a cherished program in Davis, she noted, this adds an element of community service, of generosity, to the mix.

Aradhya agreed.

"Our fifth-graders are learning many valuable lessons from the Grow & Give project," she said. "They are learning the process of giving something back to the community and not just thinking about what they would get in return."

Donating a portion of the harvest is a key principle of FARM Davis, of course. The 5-year-old organization donates half of the weekly harvest from three area farms to food agencies that serve low-income and homeless people. Since the beginning of 2010, FARM Davis has given more than 3,300 pounds of food to Davis Community Meals and César Chávez Plaza, an Olive Drive apartment complex serving low-income and formerly homeless residents.

Now, kids are a part of the mix.

"This is our first foray into kids participating," Waxman said of the pilot project.

And it has worked out so well, she plans to involve another group of fifth-graders for a February planting and spring harvest.

In the near future, Waxman would like FARM Davis to be able to hire a part-time farm educator who could oversee multiple fifth-grade classes planting and harvesting at area farms. In addition to more funding, she said, that also would require more local farms donating small plots for the project.

But she's hopeful as word gets out about how successful this pilot project has been, more people will step up and make Grow & Give a much bigger program in Davis.

Learn more about the program and FARM Davis at www.farmdavis.org.

— *Reach Anne Ternus-Bellamy at aternus@davisenterprise.net or 530-747-8051. Follow her on Twitter at @ATernusBellamy*

What the new year has to offer for college financial aid

One of the most stress-inducing aspects of college these days is the price tag. Since I do not want to add any additional anxiety to the holiday season, this column will focus on the positive — several new financial aid options that may actually help ease the pain. Why not ring in the new year with some cheer?!



<http://www.therightcollegeforyou.org/uploads/financialaid.pdf>

What's new

Ahh, now on to the new stuff! Major developments include:

1. Bipartisan Student Loan Certainty Act. Signed into law by President Obama on Aug. 9, this law states that direct student loan interest rates will now be based on the 10-Year Treasury note plus a statutorily defined "add-on." It also sets a maximum allowable rate. Interest rates on new loans will be adjusted annually on July 1 but will remain in place for the life of the loan new. These rate changes are backdated to take effect for the 2013-14 year. A couple of noteworthy improvements are that students who would have only qualified for unsubsidized loans will now have a lower interest rate and parents will face a lower federal PLUS loan interest rate.

2. Middle-class scholarship for UCs and CSUs. Gov. Jerry Brown signed this into law on July 1. It will be phased in over four years starting in the 2014-15 academic year. New, transferring and returning

undergraduate students from families with income of up to \$150,000 may be eligible to receive up to 40 percent of the amount of the institution's systemwide tuition. New scholarship money is always a good thing! Check http://www.csac.ca.gov/pubs/forms/grnt_frm/middle_class_scholarship_faqs.pdf for more details.

3. Obama's plan to make college more affordable. On Aug. 22, President Obama announced his plan to create and implement (by the 2015 college year) a new federal system for rating colleges on affordability, access and outcomes. Data such as tuition, graduation rates, and the debt and earnings of graduates will be analyzed. The results will be published on the College Scorecard. Check <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education/college-scorecard>. The stated aim is to use these ratings as a basis for allocating financial aid toward high-performing colleges that provide the best value. Many of these proposals require the enactment of legislation, although some key elements, such as the establishment of college ratings, do not. How this would affect individual students remains to be seen.

4. Pay as you earn. Another beneficial aspect of Obama's plan is to help ease the burden of student loan debt. The proposal would allow all student borrowers to cap at 10 percent of their monthly income federal student loan payments. For more information, see <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/08/22/fact-sheet-president-s-plan-make-college-more-affordable-better-bargain>.

5. Oregon's "Pay it Forward, Pay it Back." Alas, this is not open to Californians, but let's be happy for our neighbors. According to this law passed by the Oregon Legislature in July, students who attend state and community colleges do not pay tuition. Instead they agree to commit a small percentage of their future incomes to repaying the state. If successful, this program may entice copycats ... at least we can hope.

Other helpful resources

Aside from the new laws and proposals, there are a few other reasons to be thankful this holiday season. One is the net price calculator, which is required by the Higher Education Act as of October 2011. What this tool provides is a way for students to calculate an estimated net price of attendance at a particular institution based on what similar students paid in a previous year. Yes, you can actually get a sense of what a certain school will offer you in the way of financial aid before you apply. For more information, see <http://netpricecalculator.collegeboard.org>. Disclaimer: While helpful, it can be difficult to use.

Another source of financial (and emotional) support is the joint effort by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Department of Education to create the Financial Aid Shopping

Free financial aid workshop

When: 2-4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 12

Where: Blanchard Room, Stephens Branch Library, 315 E. 14th St., Davis

What: Jennifer Borenstein, independent college adviser, will lead a workshop open to anyone interested in learning more about the different types of federal, state and private aid options, including who is eligible and how and when to apply.

More info: Call the library at 530-757-5593 to sign up and get more details.

Sheet. They have put together a template that standardizes the financial aid award letters students receive. Let us rejoice! Students and families now have a clear, concise format to ease cost comparisons across institutions. Check it out at http://collegecost.ed.gov/shopping_sheet.pdf

Until next time

Well, I hope that by describing some of the positive developments in the world of financial aid, I have given you a little relief that things will work out and some extra justification to go out and celebrate! Happy New Year.

— *Jennifer Borenstein is an independent college adviser in Davis and owner of The Right College For You. Her column is published on the last Tuesday of the month. Reach her at jenniferborenstein@therightcollegeforyou.org, or visit www.therightcollegeforyou.org.*