

Putting the Fun in Fundraising Kindred Spirits Celebrates Eating Locally

by Christopher Key

It's always refreshing when a nonprofit refuses to take itself too seriously, especially when fundraising. Sustainable Connections' Food and Farming Program plays it for laughs with their .2K (yes, the decimal is in the right place) Harvest Chase. The fundraising foolishness is all part of the Kindred Spirits celebration on Sunday, September 16, at Depot Market Square on Railroad Avenue in Bellingham. Shonie Schlotzhauer is coordinating the event, which runs from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m.



Dart Knights team member with his zucchini baton.

“Originally, we planned to have a very high class wine tasting fundraiser,” she said. “But it quickly degenerated into an event that spoofs Ski to Sea and other serious athletic events.”

The Harvest Chase involves a team relay competition with unusual obstacles, such as milking an anatomically

correct wooden cow, corn shucking, a Pike Market-style fish toss, a potato dig, hay bale stacking and more. Contestants collect pledges that go to support the Food and Farming Program. Spectators are encouraged to wager on the outcome of the races and the winnings also go to the Sustainable Connections program. There will even be a costumed bookie working the crowd and Harvest Chase teams are encouraged to dress appropriately. Or inappropriately, as may be the case.

Harvest Chase is just part of the Kindred Spirits Celebration, which is designed to raise awareness of local agricultural products and to encourage consumers to “Eat Locally.” It is timed to coincide with the national Eat Local Week, September 9 to 16.

Lead sponsors for the event include Sanitary Services Co. and Pioneer Ford. There is a limit of 30 teams participating in the Harvest Chase and those interested can contact Schlotzhauer at (360) 647-7093 extension 106 or shonie@sconnect.org. Among the teams already signed up are RE Store, A-I Builders, WECU, and the Mount Baker-Foothills Chamber of Commerce. Rep. Kelli Linville will lead a team



Elie Samuel, of the Samuel's Seven Sinners team, catches a local salmon in the Fish Toss obstacle.

politicians who are not afraid to make fools of themselves in public. The team that raises the most money receives the Kindred Spirits Award and the competition is fierce, according to Schlotzhauer.

Sustainable Connections' Food and Farming Program focuses on three areas: raising awareness of local food and helping consumers buy fresh; making connections between farmers, institutions, retailers and restaurants; and informing, empowering and providing



Heirloom tomatoes, prepared for chomping.

resources to local farmers. The latter division has helped provide \$10,000 worth of produce to local food banks from beginning farmers.

Other Food and Farming Program projects include the Whatcom Farm Map and Guide, a Producer/Buyer Directory and providing mentorship for beginning farmers.

“It’s fun, it’s irreverent and it’s totally over-the-top.”

– Shonie Schlotzhauer,
Sustainable Connections

“The Eat Local idea is gaining ground as a national movement,” Schlotzhauer said. “Many people are practicing the ‘100-mile diet,’ eating only

foods that are grown and produced within that radius from their homes. We don’t advocate that people be extremists in this approach, but do encourage consumers to buy local first.”

She emphasized that the Kindred Spirits Celebration and the .2K Harvest Chase are family-friendly.

“It’s fun, it’s irreverent and it’s totally over-the-top,” Schlotzhauer said.

There will be pizza and ice cream available from local vendors and a beer garden hosted by Boundary Bay Brewery.

Christopher Key is an actor and director who lives in Bellingham and writes to help support his theatrical addiction.

Photos courtesy of Sustainable Connections



Childlife Cheetahs prepare for blastoff, ready with their zucchini baton.

BOUNDARY BAY
BREWING CO.

TRAVERSE ALE
ON TAP

FISH FRY FRIDAYS!
FISH & CHIPS BOUNDARY STYLE
Golden & Crispy Beer Battered Rockfish & Fries
Sept 14th, 21st & 28th. 4 to 8pm
1107 RAILROAD AVE (360)647-5993 BSBAYBREWERY.COM

CAFE TOULOUSE

Espresso • Breakfast • Lunch

In the Crown Plaza Building, Downtown Bellingham
114 W. Magnolia #102
360.733.8996
Mon-Fri 7am-3pm
Sat/Sun 8am-2pm
DINE-IN or TAKE-OUT
Something Wonderful for Every Taste