



News Release

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For immediate release –

Community Garden Partnership Director attends Wisconsin's first Local Food Summit

Menasha, February 16, 2007 – Susan Richardson, program director of the Fox Cities-based Community Garden Partnership was among 200 farm group leaders, producers, nonprofit advocates, retailers and educators who participated in Wisconsin's statewide first annual Local Food Summit on Jan. 4 in Stevens Point. The Community Garden Partnership is a program of Goodwill Industries of North Central Wisconsin.

The Summit provided a forum for sharing information about efforts on expanding Wisconsin's local food markets. Attendees discussed the challenges and opportunities for increasing consumption of Wisconsin-produced agricultural products.

Speakers included Brian Halweil of the WorldWatch Institute and author of "Eat Here: Reclaiming Homegrown Pleasures in a Global Supermarket;" Rod Nilsestuen, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; Senator Julie Lassa; and Sarah Klavas of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism. A lunch featured locally grown foods.

A highlight of the summit was the announcement of a “Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin” legislative initiative which would provide statewide support, including technical assistance and grants. This proposal supports local grassroots efforts to increase consumption of Wisconsin-produced agriculture products.

Speaker Brian Halweil noted that Wisconsin is a leader in local food innovations with a large and growing number of farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms. Building on these successes, a number of initiatives around the state are attempting to expand local food markets by increasing institutional purchasing of Wisconsin-grown products.

The Wisconsin Local Food Summit was supported in part by a USDA Agriculture and Entrepreneur Education Grant, UW Cooperative Extension and a variety of organizations including DATCP, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, and a host of local organizations dedicated to supporting local food initiatives. For more information about many of the local food initiatives represented at the Summit, see this Web site: <http://aic.uwex.edu/localfood.cfm>

About the Community Garden Partnership and Goodwill Industries

The **Community Garden Partnership** was created in 1999 as a part of an Urban Initiative grant through UW-Extension Outagamie/Winnebago counties. Its mission is “growing food, people and communities.” It became a program of Goodwill NCW in 2004, and directly served 405 people this past year. The Partnership includes the Simply Learning Teaching Garden near Jefferson School in Appleton, as well as five other Community Garden sites: GV/Casaloma, 4-H Garden at the Gardens of the Fox Cities, UW-Fox Valley Garden, Hope Garden at Hope Lutheran Brethren Church, and the Goodwill Community Center Garden in Menasha.

Goodwill NCW is a not-for-profit human services organization that helped improve the lives of more than 37,000 people across north central Wisconsin in 2006 through nearly 20 programs and services, including the Community Garden Partnership. It covers 35 counties and includes 19 retail stores/training centers, in communities from Manitowoc to La Crosse, and as far north as Rice Lake and Rhinelander. A member of Goodwill Industries International and Rehabilitation For Wisconsin, it is based at the Goodwill Community Center in Menasha. It is on the Web at www.goodwillncw.org.