

Market a success – but urgently seeks help

Sisters Farmers Market reports success with its new day and time, programming, and outreach efforts. However, the Market is requesting that new volunteers, donors, and sponsors join in—quickly if possible.

Changing the day or time of a Farmers Market can slow business down for a season or even years. Sisters Farmers Market took the risk and switched to Sundays, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., still taking place at Fir Street Park.

“The market is going freaking amazing,” exulted Market Manager Rachel Kelleher. Attendance is up to 120-165 visitors, up from a low of 15-20 in late season last year. A strong base of regular vendors is rounded out by “pop-up” vendors to keep offerings varied each week.

Karen Swaner of Cascade Mountain Pastures has been a regular vendor for years.

“The improvement in the market is phenomenal for us,” she said, “We see a lot of familiar faces, but then a lot of new faces... Consistently, this year, we are selling more at the Sisters market than the Bend market.”

Kelleher acknowledged, “Last year at this time, three weeks in, vendors were asking me where the customers are. They asked what was I doing to advertise.”

She continued, “I heard you! I hired real help from T and Plazm. Now we have banners, we have a logo, we have media coverage, sponsorship, and newspaper ads.”

Plazm refers to a design and branding firm that expanded its presence to Central Oregon three years ago, when Creative Director Joshua Berger and writer/editor T. Lee Brown moved to Sisters.

This winter they offered to help Sisters Farmers Market develop branding

and strategic marketing at a reduced rate. When told that the Market was struggling and might close down, Brown volunteered to collaborate on programming, research, outreach, and apply to The Roundhouse Foundation for a small grant.

Like Kelleher, Brown has since donated hundreds of hours to revitalizing the Market. Both women thanked their husbands and friends for helping make it possible.

“I’m eternally grateful to the local sponsors that have stepped up — with friends, volunteers, and Roundhouse,” said Brown, whose new title is director of marketing and special ops. “And the City of Sisters for providing the market a grant last year.”

“Rachel has pulled out the stops to make this market rock, while raising two toddlers and working full time. She’s amazing,” Brown said. “Plus she’s a hoot to work with.”

But the high level of volunteering has been hard on Brown and Kelleher. They’re asking the Sisters community to ease their load.

What does the market need in order to keep the momentum going?

“Everything!” exclaimed Kelleher. “I need physical help with setting up and taking down.”

She said the market needs help with volunteer coordination, event planning, and bookkeeping.

Kelleher specified she is looking for “local people who understand what we are trying to do and want to dedicate hours to help.” For marketing and community outreach, Brown said she would love to have volunteers from throughout Central Oregon: “If you can approach a business and ask them to put up a poster, you’re hired!”

Why put in so much work? Kelleher is a Registered Nurse



PHOTO BY TL BROWN

Local families can sell their wares directly to their community at Sisters Farmers Market. Little farmer Junius savors freshly plucked pea pods.

who often has health on her mind.

“My friend Russ lives in Black Butte,” she said. “He is 80 years old. The Farmers Market brings him access to the freshest veggies anywhere.”

Kelleher and Brown are both working moms. Promoting the market as a free, fun, family-friendly space is important to them.

“I love how the kids come out and play,” said Kelleher. “I love how working moms who are vendors can do their thing here and feel safe.”

Potential sponsors, donors, and volunteers are invited to email sistersfarmersmarket@gmail.com or call 503-706-0387 to help. New sponsors may join businesses including Metabolic Maintenance, Cottonwood Café, *The Nugget Newspaper*, She Soars Psychiatry, and XPress Printing in supporting the nonprofit market, which is fiscally sponsored by SPRD.

Studio invites community to try outdoor yoga, barre

By T. Lee Brown
Correspondent

Life.Love.Yoga. studio is revving up to celebrate its 10th anniversary in August. Throughout July, three of the studio’s instructors will share their yoga and barre expertise in an outdoor setting: Maret Pajutee; Tara Seymour; and Cindy Miskowiec. Sisters residents are welcome to join in on a donation-optional basis.

“We believe that yoga is for EVERYbody,” states the Life.Love.Yoga. mission, with emphasis on the every. The local studio was founded

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