

tunities for new vendors to take root as well as offering different options for patrons each weekend. She's also giving priority space to businesses on Mississippi and in the neighborhood.

"Like Fresh Pot or [area] florists, if they wanted to come and set up a booth, I wanted them to be able to do it first so I wasn't bringing in outside competition," explains Williams. "I've been working with some of them to see if they'd be interested."

Market Q, says Williams, is keen on getting smaller organizations, smaller farms, start-up businesses and local businesses into the mix, though the market is open for all.

"I open the doors for families, too," says Williams. "If anyone has a backyard garden with their neighbors and they wanted to sell fruits or vegetables, there aren't any crazy laws against it. I want this to be all inclusive."

Vendors pay a nominal rental fee and then keep 100 percent of the profits from their sales. As the summer progresses, Williams hopes to incorporate the art gallery in the center to engage additional cross-marketing for the artists, and possibly even open areas indoors to vendors if further expansion necessitates it.

"Spots have been filling up quickly," says Williams. "I'm doing my research and checking into queer-friendly businesses, but I'm definitely not excluding anyone. I find a lot of people come to me because they think it's a really great opportunity to be a queer advocate or they want to be involved in that part of the community."

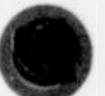
Spots are still available for the inaugural Market Q, and Williams stresses that vendors need not be food based.

"What I'm trying to do is make sure that [vendors] are providing some kind of service, or something that's good and productive in terms of selling a product at the market," says Williams. "It's good to make it work all the way around."

Heading into the first event, Williams has high hopes for growth as word spreads and the temperature rises.

"I'm looking at maybe getting some musicians there to play," says Williams. "The summers here are great, so any way we can have an excuse to get outside and get everybody to partake, I think it will be really great on Mississippi to have that."

The first annual Market Q runs every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. May 7–September 3. Vendors interested in being at Market Q can contact Ali Williams at ali@pdx-qcenter.org. For more information, visit pdxqcenter.org.



Portland's Hamburger Mary's is teaming up with Cascade AIDS Project to host an "Iron Mary" competition in which contestants cook up their best burgers for charity and fame, all while raising funds and awareness for CAP.

The format will be more *America's Next Top Model* than *Iron Chef*, with contestants competing in both cooking and AIDS awareness challenges to fight for their right to continue on to the next round.

"I assure you this is no ordinary competition where someone bedazzles a burger with glamorous toppings and wins a prize at one fell swoop," mascot "Mary" says in a press release. "This is a competition riddled with challenges meant to test one's capacity to turn ordinary food into something legendary while reaching out to the community."

The real bling is in the prize. The last one left flipping burgers wins a \$2,000 pot—as well as \$500 to donate to the charity of his or her choice. And while "the person that wins this competition isn't guaranteed a job or anything," general manager James Dixon points out, his or her burger will appear on the Hamburger Mary's menu for a year, and 50 cents from every burger sold will go to CAP.

The search begins April 15, as organizers sift through 45-second video entries in which hopeful contestants cook their favorite dish and explain why they should be the first "Iron Mary." Selections will be announced May 3 and screened for the Mary's crowd. Challenges will then take place on Thursdays, with contestants coming together every Tuesday from May 3 through August 2

Best in Burger

Hamburger Mary's searches for its first "Iron Mary" BY ERIN ROOK



to work it out in front of an audience.

Dixon says they are still lining up judges but hope to have local meteorologist Tim Joyce, Cupcake Jones' Lisa Watson and CC Slaughters' Andrew Spaulding and David Pettit on hand to weigh in on the competition.

"We wanted to try to reach out to people that had an active interest in the community and what we're doing with CAP," Dixon says.

Hamburger Mary's decided to work with CAP for the inaugural competition since the restaurant had participated in the annual AIDS Walk in the past. This marks the eatery's first major community service project, Dixon says.

"A lot of us here at Hamburger Mary's have friends who are affected by AIDS," Dixon explains. Next year, a new community partner will be chosen.

It's all part of the Hamburger Mary's mission to engage with the local community, a relationship that seems to be reciprocated. Hamburger Mary's recently made it to the top four in 95.5 The Game's 2011 Burger Bracket with

quarter pounder "Proud Mary," a feat Dixon attributes to strong word-of-mouth and customer support.

After the burger had an on-air tasting, listeners were encouraged to vote online or text their support. The "Proud Mary" beat out "The Downtown Burger" (from Grays at the Park Hilton in Vancouver), "You Can Has Cheeseburger" (from Brunch Box) and Five Guys' "Go Big Or Go Home" Classic Regular Cheeseburger.

In addition to showing love to the local community, Hamburger Mary's is striving to build connections with other area businesses, rather than competing with them.

"We personally don't believe in competition among establishments," Dixon says. "The gay community is going to go where they want to go. We want to see more establishments working together."

For more information, email pdx@hamburgermarys.com. Hamburger Mary's Bar and Grille is located at 19 NW Fifth Ave.



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