

Every month since February 1987 the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation has produced one-hour TV programs on issues related to peace, social justice, economics, the environment, and nonviolence.

The Olympia FOR's program airs several times every week for the entire month on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), channel 22 for Thurston County's cable TV subscribers. You can see TCTV's schedule at www.tctv.net.

You can also watch the program described below (and more than 90 of our previous interview programs and special programs at the Olympia FOR's website, www.olympiafor.org. Simply click the TV programs link to reach www.olympiafor.org/tv_programs.htm, scroll down, and click the program you want to watch.

Many of our website's TV program listings also include a .pdf document describing the program.

MAY 2013

“CREATING A SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM”

by GLEN ANDERSON, PRODUCER AND HOST OF THIS TV SERIES

In our local community, more and more people are interested in sustainability, are growing good food locally, and are helping other people grow food.

Our May 2013 TV program is all about “Creating a Sustainable Local Food System.” Three knowledgeable guests with interesting first-hand experience teach us a lot during this program:

- **TJ Johnson** is a former Olympia City Council member, organizer of the October 2011 Food Summit, and a vigorous participant in the local food movement. The Food Summit attracted so many pre-registrants that it filled to capacity long before the event. The Food Summit brought local people together and moved toward solutions.
- **David Copley** is the Kitchen Garden Project Coordinator for Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB), which helps our entire community, especially young people and lower-income people, to grow their own food. GRuB has an excellent reputation in our community. David's own background with food is long and varied, ranging from farm labor to produce purchaser at a grocery store.
- **Celeste Wade** used GRuB's services about 8 or 9 years ago to help her start growing food for her own family, and now raises a lot more food and operates a Community-Supported Agriculture entity called Crosstown Farms. Celeste's enthusiasm is an inspiration, and she continues to reach out to people to build the movement for growing more food locally.

Our nation's existing food system relies heavily on an industrial model with heavy use of chemicals derived from oil and natural gas. It relies upon genetically modified (GM) crops and includes other aspects that are not compatible with healthy food or healthy environment.

For thousands of years people grew food locally, so they could make relevant decisions about their food. Now the decisions are made by giant corporations without our participation, and the food is grown distantly and transported over long distances

Our nation's current food system has many problems, such as:

- Food travels an average of about 1,500 miles from the farm to our kitchens.

- The Peak Oil crisis not only makes transportation more expensive, but excessive use of oil also destroys the world's environment and climate.
- Petroleum-based pesticides and fertilizers consume oil, undermine nutrition and add toxins to our diet.
- Long-distance transportation and unnecessary processing also weaken food's nutrition value.
- Factory farms and a cold-hearted industrial approach to food production are disgusting and violate our "small-is-beautiful" ethic.
- Large-scale farming destroys topsoil and repudiates nature's ways of replenishing soil nutrients.
- Giant corporations rip off much of the money we spend for food – and squeeze small farmers into bankruptcy.
- **In contrast, locally produced food is fresher, safer, and more nutritious.**
- Locally grown food supports small farmers and keeps our food dollars circulating within our local community.
- Locally grown food creates a sense of community because people can share knowledge and resources for growing food in our own yards and in local farms. We know the folks who sell local food at local farmers' markets.

A tremendous amount of Thurston County's farmland has been lost over the decades, and people are working hard to protect what remains. Local cities and Thurston County's current three Commissioners have taken several wise actions to protect farmland and promote sustainable small agriculture in Thurston County. But they can and should do even more.

Community gardens can bring people together to use available space to grow food for themselves and to share with others.

The movement toward Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) allows a consumer to buy a share in a local farm's output at the beginning of a season and receive a box of fresh, varied produce every week.

Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB, www.goodgrub.org) is a much-loved local organization that combines several positive dynamics, including local food production, support for low-income people who want to produce more of their own food, and training for young people (in their teens and 20s) who want to learn and help. David Copley, GRuB's Kitchen Garden Project Coordinator, explains GRuB's interesting and inspiring activities and successes.

Celeste Wade tells how she started raising food at home with GRuB's help, and now she is actively raising a lot of food on several properties and engaging more people to do the same. What a great story!

Local folks are promoting many other solutions. Several active local resources are:

- Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB), www.goodgrub.org, (360) 753-5522
- South of the Sound Community Farmland Trust (www.communityfarmlandtrust.org)
- Sustainable South Sound (www.sustainablesouthsound.org)
- Thurston Food System Council (www.thurstonfoodcouncil.org)
- Crosstown Farms (www.ctfarms-rabbits.com)