



MICHIGAN FARMERS' MARKET ASSOCIATION

MIFMA heads to Washington D.C.

by **Dietrich Bronner**

Frankenmuth Farmers' Market

Just after the Michigan Farmers' Market Association's Kick-Off Celebration on April 20, two Michigan Farmers' Market Association (MIFMA) representatives met in Washington, D. C. with fellow farmers' market enthusiasts to report back on the tremendous progress our new organization has made so far.

On May 2 and 3, Elaine Brown (Executive Director of Michigan Food & Farming Systems and MIFMA Project Leadership Team Member) and Dietrich Bronner (MIFMA Community Outreach Co-Chair and MIFMA volunteer) convened in Washington, D. C. for the conference held by Project for Public Spaces (PPS), the organization that provided grant funding to organize MIFMA. PPS convened all of its grantees from across North America, who were granted funds to support their farmers' market association or network.

Participating organizations also included New Jersey's Community Health Market Alliance, Kentucky's Community Food Alliance, Toronto's Food Share, New York's Just Food, California's Southland Farmers' Market Association, Washington's Wenatchee Valley Farmers' Market Association, the Farmers' Market Federation of New York, the New Mexico Native American Farmers' Market Association, and the South Carolina Direct Marketing Association.

Many special guest participants provided insightful advice and guidance, including Mr. Errol Bragg, Associate Deputy Administrator of the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service and supervisor of the popular Farmers' Market Promotion Program grant, which MIFMA applied for earlier this year.

The convening offered the unique opportunity for the associations and networks to discuss their successes and challenges while highlighting new opportunities and ideas to pursue. PPS could also evaluate the success of the grants offered to these organizations to provide further guidance and support. The networking opportunities also afforded



Elaine Brown and Dietrich Bronner at a reception in Washington D.C.

a wealth of insight as participants shared passions, triumphs, challenges, and eye-opening experiences across diverse backgrounds.

After participants visited their representatives' offices on Capitol Hill to request further support for farm programs, the convening concluded with the fourth Annual Capitol Hill Farmers' Market Briefing and Reception. Elaine spoke to group of 75 farmers market operators, congressional and federal agency staffers and interest groups/non-profits representatives regarding the economic impact that farmers' markets have on communities and farmers as well as additional support for EBT access at farmers' markets, before guests enjoyed farm-fresh foods supplied by nearby farmers' markets and even shipped over night from California on a beautiful veranda overlooking the Capitol.

The convening was held at Gallaudet University, the world's only university completely dedicated to the deaf, which provided an enlightening and interesting experience in itself. Elaine and Dietrich brought back many new exciting ideas to share with MIFMA, as well as a wealth of information, resources, and contacts for future reference as MIFMA grows to new levels in the future.

What's Happening?

• **June 13, 2007:**

Accepting Bridge Cards at Your Farmers' Market: EBT Training and Workshop, Lansing, MI. 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. \$5 for MIFMA members and \$15 for non-members, including lunch. Contact Dru Montri at (517) 432-3381 or dnmontri@msu.edu.

• **June 19, 2007:**

Mid-Michigan Organic Farming Bus Tour, \$25. Contact Dan Hudson at (517) 676-7207 or cvernon@ingham.org

• **June 26, 2007:**

Michigan State University Student Organic Farm Hoophouse Field Day, \$15 including lunch and materials. Adam Montri (517) 432-3381 or admontri@anr.msu.edu.

For more information regarding any of these listings, call the MIFFS office at 517-432-0712.

MIFMA would like to thank all of its charter members for their support!

A list of charter members is available on the MIFMA Web site, along with information about how you can join or get involved.

Visit the MIFMA Web site at www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu.

The Michigan Farmers' Market Association advances farmers' markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products. Visit www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu to learn more about MIFMA. Michigan Food & Farming Systems received a grant from the Project for Public Spaces to start MIFMA. Learn more at www.mifffs.org.

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Michigan Food & Farming Systems-MIFFS
Bringing Farmers & Communities Together