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## Detroit's food system: Planting seeds of resilience in our communities

Posted by: [The Michigan Citizen](#) Posted date: [May 30, 2013](#) In: [Fresh Ideas](#) | comment : 0



Myra D. Lee

**Myra D. Lee**  
[Special to the Michigan Citizen](#)

The value of quality, affordable and accessible fresh food for all is more than an attractive concept; it is what is necessary in order to foster and nurture a community design-based food system.

The more people are involved in and are committed to analyzing Detroit's food system, we as a community will be more informed and thus better armed to overcome the challenges within it.

Today, many of our food habits — from purchases to consumption — support the very paradigms that perpetuate health disparities in many Black, Latino and low-income communities.

We need to reverse this institutional commonality to end diseases, such as childhood obesity and diabetes, which have a great presence in these underserved communities.

Food is the most effective form of medicine and yet can be the most destructive.

Detroit residents have to become more knowledgeable about the ways in which their food is being grown and processed as well as where it is intentionally distributed.

Protect your children's health and advocate for healthy fresh produce to be provided in school menus, and join an organic produce buying club or start a food co-op.

Those who find it financially challenging to eat healthy on a budget, take advantage of the Double Up Food Bucks program at local farmer's markets.

When a person eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) uses his or her Bridge Card to shop for food at a participating farmer's market, the amount of money he or she spends is matched with Double Up Food Bucks bonus tokens.



The tokens can then be exchanged for Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables and can earn up to \$20 per market day in credits.

Parents and guardians must be the most aware to create a fresh food literate culture that is passed on to your children's children. Grocers sell what is in demand, and it is important to know how to use that power as the consumer to influence what is placed on store shelves.

We must begin to shake hands with our local farmers and support businesses that value buying produce from local farmers.

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"I'm leaving, but I won't be far....I'm leaving, but I won't be gone....I'm leaving, but I'll still be

here." DPS Emergency manager Roy Roberts announced his retirement to board members at his 14th floor offices at the Fischer Building May 2. ... ∞

[Urban renewal displaces residents](#)



Recent evictions in the downtown and midtown area send the message to some that the new

Detroit does not include many of the old Detroit residents. "This is going to end up like Harlem," says lifelong Detroiter Betty Scrusse. "They're going ... ∞

There is not a shortage of fresh produce but a limited food access infrastructure.

So, we have to make sure we're a part in some way of building these direct routes to urban grocery stores in underserved communities.

We must be involved with growing and definitely purchasing organic, GMO-free produce. We have to manage developing community kitchen cooperatives.

If we don't, who will build the pipelines to nurture urban farmers that mirror the people of the communities for which they serve? When will we begin to see people of color transition from being exploited consumers and rise to stakeholders in our food economy?

Detroit, who will keep our food economy resilient and sustainable by generating a workforce that is able to replenish by planting seeds of expertise and innovation in our people? We must work together and fill these positions to build change for the generations to come.

*Myra D. Lee is the director of Sustainable Communities and Healthy Food Access for the Church of the Messiah Housing Corporation and a member of the Detroit Food Policy Council.*

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## Students grow organic at Belle Isle Conservatory



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