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Mary Nolan Fri Aug 27 2010 09:44:00 2

A fresh alternative to typical campus cuisine

THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

A student walking around campus and nipping into a brown paper bag could leave the wrong impression.

But this bag was full of blueberries and the noshing student was overheard to say, "It's just like eating a bag of chips, only better for me."

Indeed -- just like the peaches, peppers, potatoes and everything else for sale at yesterday's launch of the McMaster University market stand.

The lineup was "huge" at 11:30 a.m. when the market opened, says McMaster Student Union



McMaster Farmers Market Sales looked brisk at the Mac Farm Stand Ron Albertson, The Hamilton Spectator



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president Mary Koziol, whose idea of an on-campus market was part of her campaign platform last winter.

Business was brisk all day and by 5:30 p.m. closing, almost all the produce was sold.

Three local farms had a presence under the tents set up in front of University Hall: Simpler Thyme in Flamborough, Two Century Farm from Grimsby and Busy Liz's Farm Shop in Campbellville.

Mary Arnold usually goes to the Ottawa Street Farmers' Market for produce but walked over from her desk in the president's office to pick up some plums.

"I think it's a great idea," she said.

Ildar Samit, a Mac grad, and his brother Dinar, a University of Windsor student, bought bags of apples, peaches and blueberries, saying they were happy to have the chance to support local farmers.

Most customers at the market were faculty and staff with a sprinkling of students, Koziol said.

The MSU partnered with the university's hospitality services and office of sustainability on the project. Koziol said it was promoted by e-mail and there was plenty of word-of-mouth hype, but she still didn't know what to expect.

"You're always a little nervous that your dream might not quite come true, but it was really, really good.

"And the students aren't even back yet."

She said she expects the convenience of having a wide selection of fruits, vegetables and preserves on campus will appeal to students, whose "food options aren't always the healthiest."

"I think convenience is a really big factor," Koziol said. "We're making it ridiculously easy to eat healthy."

The market will run Thursdays from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. until mid-October and is expected to resume in April.

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