

Organic food hits the streets for better health

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Local business owner Debi Athos is ready for this weekend, dressing kids like bugs for a parade to promote organic food in Asheville.

"My life's mission is to promote organics in everything I do," she said. "I wanted to reach out to people who weren't shopping at Earth Fare and Green Life."

Organicfest is a downtown street festival in its eighth year that takes place on Battery Park Road.

One of the activities this year is a kids garden parade, where children can come in costumes and march around. Athos is the founder and director of the Imagine Center, an organization that hosts Organicfest every year.

"We invite kids in the community to come dressed as their favorite bug or garden fairy," she said. "For an hour before the parade, we have activities for the children who don't come dressed."

She barely has time to do anything but plan.

"I've been talking on the phone non-stop for two days," she said. "We're very rich in the organic community we have in Asheville."

This year's Organicfest will happen on a Sunday instead of the usual Saturday, Athos said, because of overlap with Asheville's half-marathon.

An Organicfest regular, Paul Littman, is also a manager at the weekly North Asheville Tailgate Market. He says that the half-marathon will hurt business substantially, especially since the produce at the market is so fresh.

"People simply can't get to it," he said. "This stuff was picked yesterday. It's per-



Taliaferro Pollock - Staff Photographer

Tom Elmore, owner of Thatchmore Farms, grows organically grown tomatoes in his greenhouse.

ishable. It needs to be sold today."

However, the market is preparing for Organicfest. Signs were posted at last week's tailgate market reminding patrons

to go around the marathon's path.

"Our community is full of amazing and wonderful things. One of them is people pushing the limits on growing food or-

ganically," he said. "It's an enormous amount to have in our community."

Littman said that it is easy to start

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McHargue said the university uses a similar unwritten practice.

"The first and foremost thing is we want that student to get medical attention. Afterward, when the dust settles, we'll figure everything else out," she said. "The follow up is more to see if they need counseling afterward and that they get that."

"If there needs to be a probationary period because it was a dangerous situation, and they knew it and engaged in it anyway, we are going to work really hard to find out what was going on with this student and what led up to this."

McHargue said gray areas are the reason the school lacks a written amnesty policy.

"In some cases there could be the need for disciplinary action or a parental noti-

fication. If you have a medical amnesty policy that says none of that stuff will happen to you, as a university, we could incur a lot of liability and risk should something happen to that student a second time," she said. "We choose to not have a policy because we choose to work with students on an individual basis."

Bill Haggard, vice chancellor for student affairs, agrees that a written policy can potentially lead to problems.

"I'm often cautious about blanket policies, not just the medical amnesty, but I don't even like what I call prescribed sanctions, per say, for any violation," he said. "It's not like you use the same sanction for every person because every person is different and every case is different."

The big argument against the policy falls under moral obligation and the debate that students' desire to help save their friends' lives outweigh the fear of legal repercussions, according to Werle.

"I've talked to some students who say anecdotally that the policy would have caused them to call for help in certain situations," Werle said. "Although, I have heard some students say that if someone is in trouble they will call regardless."

Some students decide to stay with their friend throughout the night and attempt to help them themselves, the counselor said.

"Some students have been in trouble before and that was enough for them to decide that they won't stick out their neck for anyone," she said.

The medical amnesty policy idea follows very closely with the schools practice on students who report sexual assault or rape, Haggard said.

"Any person reporting sexual assault or any type of victimization is not going to be charged with anything because they came forward to report," he said.

One suggested compromise allows students to avoid legal repercussions but still requires the student to complete a course in the Citizenship Education Process.

"You have to weigh it for yourself," Werle said. "I mean yes, you get a pot citation on campus and have to go through a screening, but you just saved your friend's life. It is a citizenship and a humanity thing. Do you put yourself before some-