

Area vendors celebrate 30 years at tailgate market

Locals and UNCA students enjoy fresh produce from Asheville farmers

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This year marks the 30th anniversary of the North Asheville Tailgate Market, which has provided UNC Asheville with fresh, local produce and goods for the last three years.

"In 30 years it's gone from a lot of backyard farmers to about 60 percent of our farmers being full-time farmers. I think what it has done over the years is with more and more people being familiar with eating locally, it supports farmers like me who make their living off the farm," said vendor **Julie Mansfield** of Mountain Harvest Organic.

Paul Littman, market assistant to the two vendor managers, said in his three years working for the market, he has seen an increase in the number of young people who are curious to learn about the values of eating local foods.

"I think the neat thing about it is that students are at an age when they're in college that they're willing to explore new things. Adults aren't necessarily that flexible in their age, whereas students on campus who have the chance to casually stroll down to the market have an opportunity to learn about different choices they can make with eating fresh food and having relationships with the people who produce it," he said.

Littman said he realizes students don't always take great care of themselves while away from their parents.

"Your academic environments ask a whole lot of the students. They ask a student to push themselves mentally and emotionally. People don't often take into consideration that pushing yourself mentally and emotionally through your studies and through the new experiences that you're having takes a whole lot out of you physically," he said.

Littman said he suggests students struggling with this issue go to the market and buy one really fresh thing and eat it right there to see how great it



Megan Dombroski/photography editor

Local vendor Carl Evans of Mountain Harvest Organic sells area produce to UNCA senior Spencer Revels at the North Asheville Tailgate Market. The market has been located at UNCA for three years and sells naturally grown produce, cheeses, meats, eggs, honey and baked goods.

makes them feel.

"I personally remember when I went to school my skin changed. I started getting acne and I had never had that happen. I think part of that was just physical changes in my body, but it was also the fact my diet deteriorated," he said.

UNCA sophomore Rebecca Rogers said she is trying to eat healthier this year after gaining the freshman 15 her first year.

"I have allergies to the local plants, and a friend of mine told me to get local honey so I came to the market," Rogers said.

The South Carolina native said she has been to many markets, but the

North Asheville Tailgate Market is different than others she's visited.

"I feel like there's more of a homey feeling here. I feel like I'm getting more in touch with the local people," the psychology student said.

Littman said the vendor interaction is something that should draw students to visit the market more often.

"It's somebody who's giving you food that they grew and harvested themselves. They say thank you and may ask how you are and how classes are going. You just get so much more out of it than the food that you're buying (at a grocery store). In addition,

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**— Paul Littman,
market assistant**
