



PETER HUOPPI, Free Press

David Zuckerman of Burlington sells his organic produce on Tuesdays and Fridays in the Magic Hat Brewery parking lot. He donates what he doesn't sell to the Chittenden County Emergency Food Shelf and Meals on Wheels.

A surplus of good will

Produce grower shares with agencies that feed needy

By Eve Thorsen

Free Press Correspondent

This summer's challenge for chef Donna Green is how to make food go further as the numbers of those using the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf continue to increase.

Luckily, the answer to her problem has been arriving regularly on the back doorstep of the Burlington-based kitchen: donations of fresh vegetables from Full Moon Farm in Burlington's Intervale.

"We enjoy it when we see it at the back door. Ideas start running through our heads," said Green, whose kitchen is serving 4,000 meals a month to people in need throughout the county. "It stretches the food right out. It makes the spaghetti sauce go further, and it's nice, it's very pretty, and it's very healthy."

The vegetables are the surplus produce from an eight-acre farm worked by David Zuckerman on land leased from the Intervale. He operates the farm on a share ba-

Donations

Surplus produce can be taken to:

- Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf, 228 N. Winooski Ave., Burlington. 658-7939
- Burlington Meals on Wheels. 862-6253
- Essex Meals on Wheels. 878-7681

sis, meaning that others can pay for shares of the produce in advance.

The system gives the farmer the capital he needs to get going, while making the members' fruit and vegetables cheaper during the growing season. Zuckerman grows about 40 fruits and vegetables on the farm.

"I have 75 members and I grew for 100 shares, so because I didn't sell all the shares, I typically have produce left over," Zuckerman said. "I sell a little of the extra to people who stop by, but at the end of the day I'll have 50 to 200 pounds of vegetables left over."

Twice weekly, Zuckerman distributes the harvest to his 75 members from a stand in the parking lot of the Magic Hat Brewery in South Burlington, selling some of the surplus at the stand. But the majority of the extra produce goes to the Food Shelf and to the Burlington Meals on Wheels.

That service provides food at very low cost to those who can't feed themselves, regardless of age or ability to pay. It delivers freshly cooked meals to people in Burlington, South Burlington, Shelburne, Charlotte, North Ferrisburg, as well as preparing the meals for Winooski Meals on Wheels.

"People need food in the county, and this is the time when people forget them," said Peter Carmolli of Burlington Meals on Wheels. "So when David has some extras and he gives them to us, it's great. I don't have to buy frozen vegetables, and this is organic, so it doesn't have all the pesticides on it. And then it's

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Burlington Meals on Wheels

fresh, so it tastes better. The big benefit is that we get them at no charge, and that helps us keep our costs down."

Both Green and Carmolli said that Zuckerman has been their main supply of extra vegetables this summer, but they would welcome donations from anyone in the county with extra in their gardens.

"We had some people who were getting ready to go on vacation, and they didn't know what to do with all their vegetables, so they brought them to us," Green said. "A lot of people who do their home garden find they've planted too much. They can bring any extra to us."