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Pickering community art project spreads message of eating local food

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PICKERING -- Hundreds of people. A massive dinner plate. One universal message.

That's the goal of the dinner plate project - a community art event aimed at promoting the message of supporting locally grown food.

Heather Rigby, an installation artist from Claremont and the project's organizer, said the plan is for more than 400 people to gather in a field in north Pickering to form a symbol of a large dinner plate with a knife, fork and spoon beside it. 'Eat Local' will be written on the inside of the plate and an aerial photograph will be taken from a passing hang-glider.

"We want to create a symbol that will have meaning for everyone worldwide," said Ms. Rigby. "I think people feel disempowered to make positive change, so I hope through this project we can empower people and get them to realize they can come together to do something extraordinary."

While the project is lofty, Ms. Rigby has been planning it for more than two years after she was inspired by a similar project in California. More than anything, she wants to inspire young people.



Celia Klemenz / Metroland

BROUGHAM -- Heather Rigby, organizer of the Dinner Plate project, secured another marker stake, on Sept. 10, as she mapped out a giant Eat Local symbol onto a field at High Perspective Hang Gliding School. Folks are invited to participate in the community art project at 10 a.m. on Sept. 19, creating the eat local, plate and cutlery symbol with human bodies. September 10, 2010

"We are hoping kids will feel inspired by the project and carry on investigating the issue of sustainability because it will be important for the future," she said.

Once the photo is taken she hopes to distribute it worldwide to promote eating locally grown food as well as promote sustainable development, protection of farmland and greenspace as well as the reduction of humanity's ecological footprint.

Ms. Rigby said volunteers and sponsors for the project are still needed. Those wanting to participate are asked to wear a bright and colourful hat and outfit. They are also encouraged to bring water and a snack. Local food will be on sale and there will also be live music during the event.

The dinner plate project will take place on Sept. 19 at the High Perspective Hang Gliding School, 1150 Hwy. 7 in Pickering. Those wanting to participate should be at the field for 10 a.m.

For more information or to donate visit www.thedinnerplateproject.ca.