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Proposed rendering for Evanston Talking Farm

“Talking Farm” coming to Evanston

By Nora Graham
News Editor

An urban farm and environmental learning center, which will benefit the community in numerous ways and get both students and adults involved, will be coming to Evanston soon.

The goals of the non-profit urban farm project are to provide fresh food for local distribution, teach about agriculture, food production and entrepreneurship, and promote conversation and bring the Evanston community together around the issue of food, according to Carolyn Zezima, president of The Talking Farm.

Students can participate in numerous ways. “We want to teach people about food production. We anticipate that kids will come to work on the farm and learn marketing and other skills that go

along with it,” said Zezima. She also stated that the farm could serve as a part-time job for students, and perhaps “inspire kids to think about local farming as a career.”

The farm will encourage people to buy locally for various reasons. “Having food sources so far away does not give any food security,” Zezima stated. In addition, organically grown products do not use harmful pesticides that degrade the environment and harm health, and buying locally supports the local community and economy and reduces food miles.

“When you fly an organic tomato from California, you aren’t really doing something better for the environment, and you are wasting a lot of fuel,” said senior Elle Spacek, student liaison for the program.

According to Zezima, the farm,

which will reconnect Evanston with food production, is expected to be two-three acres and grow 10-20 tons of food-enough to make around 15,000 plates.

According to Patsy Benveniste, chair of the Education Committee for The Talking Farm, one of the biggest problems in the U.S. is the system of farms and people’s separation from it. 90% of the U.S. lives in cities, which is the opposite of 50 years ago. Industrial food is efficient, but when looked at closely, it is imposing huge costs in terms of land and the environment,” said Benveniste.

“The Talking Farm is a way to teach, show, and personify the benefits of organic farming, and support a great grassroots organization, not some agribusiness that’s making everything monoculture,” stated Spacek.