

Eating locally

BY DANA KRAUS

Raspberry-stained fingers and bellies full of apple pie have marked Carleton student's celebrations of Northfield's fall harvest. The festivities started with raspberry picking with Farm House on second week. Green House continued with massive applesauce canning and apple pie making at Can'n Jam last weekend. This Saturday starting at 3 pm, Farm House is holding HarvestFest, the grand finale event of the harvest season.

Delicious, local food, good music and even better company are the main attractions of all these events. They might just seem like fun weekend activities, but I'd argue that these events are a tangible way to create a more sustainable future.

There aren't many activities that are more important environmentally than eating local food. Worried about global warming? The average food item travels more than 1,600 miles before it is eaten. Eating local reduces the amount of fossil fuel used to get food onto a plate.

Concerned about the demise of family farmers, rural communities, and the loss of farmland to urban expansion? (You should be. Two acres of farmland are lost to urban expansion every minute in the U.S.) By buying from Northfield farmers, you can help them stay profitable enough to not be forced to sell their land to developers.

Local food is available at Northfield's Farmer's Market in River Side Park on 7th Street every Tuesday and Friday from 11:45 - 1:00 and on Saturdays starting at 9 a.m. Just Food's carries local products of all kinds. Both are great places to get to know friendly and knowledgeable community members.

Buying local food as individuals is a great first step, but let's not stop there. We could be eating local foods in the dining halls. St. Olaf is. Why shouldn't we? Dream and discuss all the possibilities that could be this Saturday at HarvestFest.

Dana Kraus is a member of the class of 2006.