

# Sherman Garden Cooperative Apartments

*A monthly publication for residents of Sherman Garden Apartments, 1856-66 Sherman Avenue, Evanston, IL*

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## **EVANSTON'S DOWNTOWN FARMER'S MARKET**

By Diane Keely

The season suggests we start with the Downtown Evanston Farmers Market which opened this year on Saturday, May 26, at the intersection of University Place and Oak Avenue (behind Hilton Garden Inn). Inspiration came from Harriet Friedlander, a non-farmer resident who simply wanted to shop at a farmers market. In about 1974, when Harriet recruited four women friends and neighbors, there was no such market anywhere in the Chicago area. They first decided to find markets elsewhere and see how they worked, focusing on Ann Arbor MI, Madison WI, and West Ellis (near Milwaukee) WI. The Ann Arbor "Market Master" sent a helpful copy of their city ordinance.

When the ladies took their proposal with their research and the Ann Arbor ordinance to the Evanston City Council, they received 100% approval. The women, however, did not know any farmers. So they sent press releases to rural newspapers within a 100-mile radius, contacted university agricultural extension programs, and arranged radio announcements. The market opened in 1975 with seven farmers.

It rained the first day but, nonetheless, it was "a huge success," Harriet said. Word-of-mouth spread among farmers and the market quickly expanded. Likewise, word-of-mouth brought more and more shoppers to the market. By the second year, other areas were copying the Evanston example and opening their own farmers markets. Today you can see posters all around our city, advertising the Downtown and numerous nearby markets. More than 50 farmers come a considerable distance to display their vegetables, fruits, meats, flowers, herbs, baked goods, honey, sauces and more. Downtown Evanston Farmers' Market is a delightful place to visit (and just a short walk away) on Saturdays between 7:30 am and 1:00 pm, now through early November.



Sally Stover (right) helps an enthusiastic long-time customer who said, "They're the best." Sally is part of the fourth generation of Stover farmers whose 200-acre farm lies across the lake in Berrien Springs, MI. Stover's has been part of the Farmers' Market for 34 -35 years, Sally noted with pride.



Evanston natives Jonathan Klemt (left) and his partner Joshua Schiff (not shown) graduated from ETHS in 2004. Their New Traditions Farm, a 5.5-acre farm some 75 miles south on the IL-IN border, specializes in organic and heirloom vegetables. They are among several new Farmers' Market vendors.

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