

The Dinuba Sentinel

Farmers Market offers healthy choices

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June 19, 2015

Fresh fruits and vegetables will be on sale most Fridays throughout the summer

The second annual Farmers Market has partnered with Summer Night Lights to create a Friday night the whole family can enjoy.



Fresh fruits and vegetables are displayed at last Friday's Farmers Market in Entertainment Plaza

Last Friday attendees enjoyed food, live music, vendors, bounce houses and games. Farmers sold their fruits and vegetables. The band, "Without A Doubt," performed Jazz and R&B songs for the crowd.

Summer Night Lights and the Farmers Market will continue on most Fridays throughout the summer at Entertainment Plaza in downtown Dinuba.

The Downtown Dinuba Certified Farmers Market was formed by the group Network Leaders on the Move (NLOM) in 2014.

NLOM created the Farmers Market in an effort to educate residents about nutrition, diabetes and obesity. NLOM consists of the Family Healthcare Network, Kaweah Delta Community Outreach, Kiwanis

International, 50 Years And Counting (Self-Help Enterprises), Champions for Change, Step Up and the city of Dinuba.

Bailoterapia (Zumba style) "dance therapy" dancers performed last Friday and were led by their instructor Eustolia Zamora-Bonilla, who teaches free classes on Thursday, from 6-7 p.m., in Viscaya Gardens. Zamora-Bonilla is Zumba and Bailoterapia certified.

In addition, to teaching in Dinuba, she teaches classes in Visalia on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at the Whitman Community Center.

"I am not doing it to make money. I am doing it to help the community," she said. "I want to make fitness classes for everybody in the community, not just those who can afford the gym."

Zamora-Bonilla hoped her students' performance would encourage more people to join and more participation in her classes.

As a founder of the collaborative, Zamora-Bonilla wanted residents to have a voice. She started teaching last year with a group of 25 people. This year she has 125 registered in her class.

Her advice to everyone, "Stay physically active, eat fruits and vegetables because that's the whole goal of this farmers market."

Health experts were seated at various booths throughout the Farmers Market.

Experts educated the public on nutrition and diseases associated with obesity.

Alta Family Health Clinic, Champions for Change, Family Healthcare Network, Dinuba Orthodontics, Tulare Works, and the Tulare County Health and Human Service Agency had booths at the Farmers Market June 12.

These booths gave people the opportunity to sample fresh fruit, get applications for Medi-Cal or EBT and have their blood pressure taken.

Complimentary items included healthy recipes, measuring cups, insulated bags, T-shirts and pill organizers.

A free healthier alternative to nachos will continue to be served at the Farmers Market. The healthier alternative includes boiled beans, tortilla chips and cheese and is served with water.

Stephanie Hurtado, with the city of Dinuba, stated the best thing about the Farmers Market was that experts have the ability to teach others about healthy eating habits, then people can go to the local farmers and purchase fresh fruits and or vegetables.

Shoppers had the opportunity to pay with cash, EBT, WIC or senior vouchers. If a person spent \$10 in EBT they received \$10 back in market match money.

In addition, seniors 60 or older were given \$20 in senior vouchers to spend at the Farmers Market. This was made possible by Tulare County Health and Human Services.

Edwina Franks spent her senior vouchers on fresh produce. Franks purchased tomatoes, green beans, onions, squash, corn and peaches.

Everything is so fresh here. I go to the stores and it's not as fresh as it is here," she said.

Arturo Garcia, a farmer from Dinuba, said more people paid him with EBT than with cash. "It's better for us because without the food stamps you wouldn't have this many people," he said.

Garcia hopes the success of the Farmers Market will grow and encourage more people to visit Dinuba.

Another local farmer, Robert Cendejas, shared his experience at the Farmers Market as more of a family affair.

Cendejas' children were stocking fruit and helping customers. "Before school's out we have them plant the vegetables. So when they are out of school they are ready to sell. We're not here to make a profit, but it is something the kids can do as a project."

Cendejas encourages everyone to attend the Farmers Market in hopes that it will bring the people in Dinuba closer together.

The city of Dinuba will continue to accept new vendors and farmers to the Farmers Market.

The dates for the Farmers Market are as follows: June 19, June 26, July 10, July 17, July 24, July 31 and Aug. 7. The Farmers Market runs from 6-9 p.m. and Summer Night Lights runs from 7-9:30 p.m. at Entertainment Plaza in downtown Dinuba.