

Contra Costa Times June 18 and 19 Letters from our readers

Supervisor Gioia commended for Farm 2 Table

Letter to the Editor

I was surprised to read the letter to the editor (June 4) unfairly criticizing Supervisor Gioia for his participation in the Richmond Farm 2 Table program. The innovative Farm 2 Table program links Contra Costa's farms and cities by providing urban residents with an opportunity to purchase fruits and vegetables direct from local family farmers twice a month.

Because of the generous support of the Richmond Children's Foundation and other sponsors, Nystrom neighborhood families who are not able to pay full price for Farm 2 Table box of farm produce can purchase the box at a lower price. The discounted boxes are distributed at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center, along with recipes and cooking tips. The discounted boxes are not distributed through Supervisor Gioia's office.

Our cities are facing a public health crisis of childhood obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Many Richmond residents do not have adequate access to fresh, healthy food, particularly locally grown fruits and vegetables. Supervisor Gioia should be commended for his vision and leadership in linking local farms with urban neighbors so that all of our citizens are able to enjoy fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

Kathryn Lyddan

Executive Director, Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust

Valuable program

Letter to the Editor

I wish to correct some inaccuracies in Mister Phillips' June 4 letter in the Times about the successful Richmond Farm2Table program.

The letter unfairly criticizes Supervisor John Gioia for making his office a convenient location where residents can pick up locally grown fresh produce.

The program, a unique partnership between local farmers, the Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust, the Richmond Children's Foundation, the city of Richmond, and Gioia's office, brings locally grown fruits and vegetables to area residents.

Phillips apparently doesn't understand the program. The partners have developed a program where residents can pick up a farm box twice each month at one of three locations — the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center, the Richmond Children's Foundation, or Gioia's office.

This twice-monthly farm box costs \$25. Five dollars of that amount is used to help support families who cannot pay the full price. The Richmond Children's Foundation is subsidizing the difference so that low-income families can pay a discounted price of \$5 to \$15 per box.

Rather than being criticized, Gioia should be commended for his leadership and hard work in helping to develop this valuable program. For more information about the program, contact the Richmond Children's Foundation at 510-234-1200.

Eric Zell

Richmond

Zell is the board president of Richmond Children's Foundation.