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Free October Community Meal to feature traditional American Indian menu

Summary: The meal reflects the American Indian tradition of sharing food with everyone as a sign of respect and community.

(October 17, 2011)-Morris Community Meal will feature an authentic, made-from-scratch American Indian meal at the Morris Senior Community Center on Monday, October 24, 2011. Community Meal is open to every member of the Stevens County community and entirely free of charge. Food options for people with special diets, such as gluten-free, diabetic, vegan and vegetarian, are always available, as are child friendly options. The meal is served from 5:30 until 7 p.m. The Morris Senior Community Center is located at 603 Oregon Avenue in Morris.

Ingredients for the October meal are from the on-campus American Indian garden, the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate from South Dakota, the Ojibwe from White Earth in northern Minnesota, Pomme de Terre Food Co-op, and Willie's Super Valu. The October menu is comprised of Three Sisters Stew, cornbread, roast buffalo, wild rice salad, and chokecherry pudding.

The October Community Meal focus began during the 2011 academic year in Associate Professor of Anthropology Donna Chollett's Culture, Food, and Agriculture course. Professor and students began a Morris Healthy Eating service learning project to research and design a American Indian traditional garden. Students soon recognized the project's complexity, as they began to consider the history of the Morris campus as an American Indian board school and the vast number and array of culturally based food traditions practiced for thousands of years by Americans Indians in different regions of the United States.

The students' research led them to the Upper Great Lakes Indigenous Farming Conference and to traditional mentors, methods, plants and ideals that were, and are, unique to American Indian cultures. Back on campus, American Indian students, faculty, and staff assisted the students by sharing knowledge and resources, and through collaboration.

The American Indian garden was planted near campus in June 2011 guided by a simple yet ingenious Native design. Traditionally, food is an asset that is shared with all, from the newly born to the elders whose knowledge is the cornerstone of the community. The October Community Meal is keeping the tradition of sharing food with everyone as a sign of respect and community.

The Community Meal program has established a reputation for its delicious menus and the warm, welcoming atmosphere that accompanies each meal. The project is a valued event in the community, providing free meals to hundreds of Stevens County residents and opening community space to build bridges and strengthen existing connections. In serving the meal, the sponsors hope to initiate new connections among community members and provide a free warm meal to those who may not normally be afforded one.

Support for the monthly Community Meal is provided by a broad coalition of local businesses and organizations. This fall, the collaborating and sponsoring organizations include: Pomme de Terre Food Co-op, Willies Super Valu, Conway,

Death, and Schmiesing, Morris Healthy Eating, Morris Senior Community Center, UMM's Office of Community Engagement, LAZOS, and the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Intercultural Programs.

Organizers are looking for businesses and community organizations that would like to serve as future meal sponsors, as well as volunteers to help cook. Community members can come to the Morris Senior Center between 1 and 9 p.m. on the day of the meal to help out, or Sunday night from 4 until 9 p.m. to learn to make the traditional foods. To get involved as a sponsor or volunteer, contact the [Office of Community Engagement](#) at 320-589-6276.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.