



GOOD FOOD – MILES BET

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Taste the Local Difference® Hires New Local Food Staff Covering Michigan

TRAVERSE CITY – Taste the Local Difference®, Michigan's local-food marketing agency, has hired four new staff members representing communities around the state.

In fulfilling its mission to help sell more locally grown and produced food in Michigan, TLD has added three local food coordinators in Northeast Michigan, Southeast Michigan, and the Upper Peninsula.

Molly Stepanski operates the Presque Isle Farm in Posen, Michigan with her husband Dion and has taken on the local food coordinator role covering all of Northeast Michigan. The work keeps her on the road between East Tawas and Mackinaw City, building relationships with farmers and others throughout the food system.

Kelly Wilson, also a farmer, lives in Ortonville and helps TLD serve the diverse food communities of Southeast Michigan including ten counties stretching from Flint through Detroit, Ann Arbor, and over to Lansing. She is an alumnus of the MSU Student Organic Farm program and is a registered dietician. Ms. Wilson will provide TLD with a wealth of experience in their food marketing and healthful food access focus areas.

Melissa Orzechowski, a graduate of Northern Michigan University, now covers the Upper Peninsula for TLD. Melissa is based in Marquette but spends many days on the road connecting farmers, growers, and buyers in the burgeoning agricultural economy in Michigan's expansive northern-most territory.

These three new TLD staff members join TLD's local food coordinator for Northwest Michigan, Emma Beauchamp. In total, these four TLD specialists assist farms, value-added food producers, institutions, wholesalers and retailers in over 45 counties throughout Michigan.

Back in Traverse City, at TLD headquarters, Paula Martin is the fourth new hire and has taken on the role of Community Health Coordinator. Paula assists hospitals, clinics, and other institutions to make local, healthy food more accessible through environmental and policy changes. Funds are distributed to support these changes through a grant called 'Building Healthy Communities' in connection with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan. Her work entails evaluating the potential for impacting communities in need, developing a strategy to

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make improvements at each site and providing professional marketing support to the institutions and businesses to sell more fresh, healthful, local food.

TLD has grown from two to seven staff members over the past year. Taste the Local Difference is Michigan's local food marketing agency, providing affordable marketing and promotion services to all aspects of Michigan's food system.

For more, information, please contact Tricia Phelps at (877) 562-2539, email her at tricia@localdifference.org or visit <http://localdifference.org>.

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