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Community-supported agriculture grows on local Jews

By [Jane Ulman](#)

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*Alison Kaminsky (left) and Jennifer Goodnow pick up fresh produce at the JCC.
Ronnell Conn, photographer*

Every Wednesday at noon, the Westside Jewish Community Center becomes a market where families pick up fresh, seasonal and certified organic fruits and vegetables grown by farmers who are part of a community-supported agriculture (CSA) project established by the Tierra Miguel Foundation. About 12 families participate in the program, which was launched last May and which does not require JCC membership.

"People love the produce," JCC Executive Director Brian Greene said. "They feel good about buying vegetables straight from the farm and supporting organic farming."

Inspired by a Jewish Journal editorial about ethical eating ("[Moral Diet](#)," Jan. 5, 2007), Greene began looking into affiliating with a community-supported agriculture project giving families the opportunity to purchase a seasonal or annual share in an organic farm for a predetermined payment and, in return, receive a weekly box full of fruits and vegetables.

"This is a community-building activity," Greene said, explaining that the project connects families with farmers, allowing both to share responsibility for stewardship of the land.

Additionally, Sinai Temple is starting the first Tuv Ha'Aretz community-supported agriculture project in Southern California. Tuv Ha'Aretz is the first Jewish CSA in North America and a program of Hazon, a New York-based community organization that sponsors physical challenges and engages in food-related work.

Families who sign up -- who do not need to be Sinai Temple members -- will commit to buying an entire season of fresh, organic produce from the McGrath Family Farms in Camarillo.

Besides receiving the food, the families are required to participate in a social action component by volunteering at least once during the year at the Greater West Hollywood Food Coalition.

"We are creating a community of people who care about health and the sustainability of the world," said Michelle Grant, Sinai Temple's Green Committee co-chair.

A meeting for families interested in Sinai Temple's Tuv Ha'Aretz project, slated to begin in the spring, will take place on Jan. 22. For more information or to R.S.V.P., call (310) 481-3243.

Those interested in becoming shareholders in the Westside JCC's community-supported agriculture program can call (323) 938-2531.

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