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Redlands may have first 'earth market'

Joy Juedes, Staff Writer Posted: 11/05/2010 08:24:32 PM PDT

REDLANDS - The city may have the first "earth market" in the country.

Stephanie Georgieff, an acupuncturist who started a Slow Food Redlands chapter last year, attended Slow Food's Terra Madre conference in Turin, Italy, last month. She applied there to start an "earth market," a farmers market that may be the first of its kind in the United States.

"The certification team from Italy would come to Redlands and certify us," said Georgieff, who was in Italy from Oct. 18 to 28. "It would be an awesome (thing) for Redlands."

An "earth market" must adhere to Slow Food principles, Georgieff said.

"They have to prove all the producers are local and directly involved with the production of the product," she said.

"Only one other market applied, and they were from North Carolina," she said. "We'll probably beat them."

She said she was the only person from the Inland Empire at the biannual conference, which drew more than 8,000 people, 700 from the United States, according to Slow Food. She also attended the 2008 conference.

Conferences highlight the international following of the local food movement, and they draw farmers, cooks, educators and activists.

The birth of the Redlands group has drawn the attention of Slow Food USA, Georgieff said.

"The way the chapter was set up, we're a model for setting up new chapters," she said.

Slow Food Redlands is helping a chapter start at the University of

Redlands. The chapter will work with Students for Environmental Action, according to sophomore and Slow Food Redlands board member Andrew Patalano.

Georgieff spoke to students about her time in Italy on Wednesday.

It's an extremely good idea as a whole, because there's so much that can be done," Patalano said of Georgieff's "earth market" plan. "Especially in this community, it has a lot of potential."

Georgieff plans to work with the Grove School's Saturday morning farmers market to start the "earth market." Grove teacher Mamie Powell said she hopes Slow Food Redlands can take over running the market. The produce comes from the Redlands and Riverside areas, including San Timoteo Canyon, she said.

"It's picking up really well, we have a lot of participation," she said. "We know all the farmers who come."

If Slow Food is involved, the market can include more educational information, which was the original intent, she said. The market may have cooking demonstrations when the school gets a commercial kitchen, she said.

Georgieff called in to her radio show, "Real Food Empire on KCAA 1050 AM, while she was in Italy. She formed an alliance with a chapter from Macedonia and met a someone organizing Slow Food Farm tours for Americans in China.

Slow Food Redlands and nearby chapters, including Orange County, will begin holding joint events, she said. The chapters are taking a trip to the Hollywood farmers market Nov. 21, she said.

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