



# LOCAL FIRST

## Fork Fest 2016

BY BRI KILROY

**D**o you have dinner plans October 20? Cancel them and work up an appetite for Local First's 6th annual Fork Fest. Dozens of local restaurants, farms and bakeries set a table at Romence Gardens & Greenhouses, inviting you to indulge in menu item favorites and introduce your taste buds to new concoctions.

"It's really about connecting people with their food," Local First Marketing Manager Mieke Stoub said. "[Food is] a communal thing and we like to bring the community together."

The "If you cook it, they will come" basis of Fork Fest is inarguably solid, but the Local First team is consistently brainstorming changes they can make to strengthen the relationship between community members and our food sources. Heffron Farms offers a taste of their products that are adored for being free of growth hormones, preservatives, dyes and antibiotics. West Michigan Growers Group, a local farm collective, is also joining the mix of restaurants and bakeries to give people a taste of the best crops and produce of the season.

Local First's intention is to educate the public on the importance of creating and maintaining a sustainable community, and Fork Fest offers people a first-hand opportunity to connect with the primal local food sources in our community. By supporting local businesses, we fuel our economy and, in turn, receive quality ingredients that aren't questionably disguised in Styrofoam and plastic cases.

Fork Fest 2016 further bridges the understanding of the food-making process by including a butchering demonstration by Louise Earl Butcher. Attendees can watch owner Matt Smith as he shows the start-to-finish process of making pork chops and loins with meat sourced from a local farm.

Adult beverages provided by Brewery Vivant, Fenn Valley Vineyards and Vander Mill Cider serve sips between the nibbles. Beer lovers are reunited with Pumpkin Tart saison and two other Vivant favorites. Choices of red and white wine and Vander Mill's prime cider flavors grace the bar table as well. Ages 21 and over can purchase drink tickets for \$6 at the entrance. Non-alcoholic beverages are also available at no extra charge.

Prepare for the feast of a lifetime by indulging in the opportunity to taste unlimited samples from the restaurants, bakeries and farms that play the critical part in the enviable food culture of Grand Rapids. Tickets are available at LocalFirst.com along with a list of participating restaurants, volunteer opportunities and membership information.

Get hungry, Grand Rapids. You have to taste this!

**What:** Fork Fest 2016  
**Where:** Romence Gardens & Greenhouses, 265 Lakeside Dr. NE  
**When:** October 20, 5-9 p.m.  
**Cost:** \$30 in advance. \$35 at the door. Free for kids 10 and under.  
 Tickets at LocalFirst.com.

**Book Discussion:** The President's Book of Secrets. CIA insider during the Clinton and Bush administrations, David Priess, discloses 50 years worth of stories about the past presidents, including insights from their staff. Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library & Museum. 7 pm. [www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov](http://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov)

**Women Helping Women Annual Bazaar.** Support the Women's Resource Center and their life-changing programs at this fundraiser that also gives your business a chance to increase sales and exposure. Boulder Creek Golf Club. 5:30-8:30 pm. For more details, contact [Roberta@robertalathrop.com](mailto:Roberta@robertalathrop.com).

**CMC-Movie:** Psycho. Wealthy Theatre. 8 pm. [www.grcmc.org](http://www.grcmc.org)

**October 26**  
**Prospective Literacy Tutor Information Session.** Literacy Center of West Michigan. 10-11 am. Call (616) 459-5151 to register. [www.literacycenterwm.org](http://www.literacycenterwm.org)

**VARI Seminar Series:** Michael Karin, P.h.D. Van Andel Institute. Noon. [www.vai.org](http://www.vai.org)

**October 27**  
**Hope on the Hill: The Great Gatsby.** Channel the style of the roaring twenties during 2016's gala featuring cuisine from the finest local restaurants, live entertainment and dancing the night away in Club Hope. All proceeds benefit medical research and science education at VAI. Van Andel Institute. 6-11 pm. Tickets at [www.vai.org](http://www.vai.org).

**Estate Planning Seminar with Jennifer Coles.** This established estate planning attorney presents solutions for securing your assets and addressing elder care issues. 6 pm. Call (616) 308-3509 to register. [www.coleslawfirm.com](http://www.coleslawfirm.com)

**October 27-November 12**  
**American Idiot.** Adapted by the rock band's 2004 album, this musical centers on three young men who escape suburbia to find freedom and excitement in the city, only to discover the harsh realities of the world. Spectrum

**Theater.** Tickets and showtimes at [www.actorstheatregrandrapids.org](http://www.actorstheatregrandrapids.org).

**October 28 & 29**  
**Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto.** Tchaikovsky's music of Czarist Russia and Shostakovich's grittier style collides in this violin concerto, part of the Richard and Helen DeVos Classical series. DeVos Performance Hall. 8 pm. Tickets at [www.grsymphony.org](http://www.grsymphony.org).

**October 28, 29 & 30**  
**Bassnectar Halloween concert festival.** DeltaPlex. Tickets and showtimes at [www.deltaplex.com](http://www.deltaplex.com)

**October 29**  
**Opening of Merry Christmas, Charlie Brown exhibit.** Explore the making of the animated Peanuts classic complete with comic strips, seasonal novelties and a video that dives into the details of producing this beloved classic. Grand Rapids Public Museum. 9 am-5 pm. [www.grpm.org](http://www.grpm.org)

**Stranger Things Halloween Party.** Get in costume and celebrate the bizarre holiday in the back room that has been turned upside down with decorations and special features, including food and drink specials. Stella's Lounge. 10 pm-2 am. [www.stellasgr.com](http://www.stellasgr.com)

**Learn Spooky Halloween Design.** Join the design experts at this workshop that shows you how to make a floral arrangement perfect for your Halloween season décor. Eastern Floral. 10-11:30 am. Save your spot by calling (616) 949-2200. [www.easternfloral.com](http://www.easternfloral.com)

**October 30**  
**Artists in Conversations: Almost Home exhibit featuring Norwood Viviano and Joyce Recker.** Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. 2-3 pm. [www.meijergardens.org](http://www.meijergardens.org)

**October 31**  
**Happy Halloween!**

