

7 reasons to hit the Quad-Cities Food Hub this summer

BY LESLIE KLIPSCH

You may have already spotted the Veggie Mobile lumbering down a Quad-Cities street this summer. Though it doesn't come with the familiar ring of a classic ice-cream truck, its bright white exterior adorned with images of crisp vegetables offers an opportunity for taste. Stepping inside, you'll find

in-season fruits and vegetables and a variety of handcrafted and homegrown foodstuffs — a veritable farmers' market on four wheels.

Just like the inventory for the Veggie Mobile is locally sourced, so is the truck. Its home, in fact, is a downtown hub that features all kinds of interesting products and opportunities, all set along the picturesque riverfront in downtown Davenport.

The Quad-Cities Food Hub offers a year-round market, community gardens, educational opportunities, and space for volunteers and community members to gather and learn. Its mission is to support healthy lifestyles by promoting local food production, connecting producers and consumers, and cultivating education and training programs.

Haven't yet checked out this local hub? Here are seven reasons why you should this summer.

The Quad-Cities Food Hub is located at 421 W. River Drive, Davenport. Check its website (qcfoodhub.com), Facebook (facebook.com/quadcitiesfoodhub), or Twitter ([@qcfoodhub](https://twitter.com/qcfoodhub)) for hours, information, and events. If you're interested in joining the Food Box Program, contact Rosemary Phillips at rosemary@qcfoodhub.com.



1 Thelma's Ice Cream Sandwiches.

Available for purchase at the Food Hub market store are ridiculously delicious ice cream sandwiches produced by a mother and son who have capitalized on a family recipe and a knack for comfort food. The family duo has been delivering fresh-from-the-oven cookies in and around Des Moines for several years and has thankfully embraced wider distribution ... and ice cream. Flavors range from peanut butter chocolate chip cookies held together with chocolate ice cream to sweet sugar cookies enveloping a smooth scoop of strawberry ice cream.



Photos by Leslie Klipsch

2 Handmade Soap. There's something about handcrafted skin care products that feels wonderfully indulgent and the Food Hub features a whole cabinet devoted to bar soap in a variety of lovely fragrances. Several local makers work magic with all-natural ingredients like olive, coconut, and almond oil, shea butter, and beeswax, producing high-quality, all-natural soap. My favorite: Earthfaeries' Happy Hippy and Lovely Lavender.

3 Pie! On July 13, pie aficionados will gather to discuss golden crusts, sweet cherries, and cinnamon-coated apples and a teacher-baker will lead participants in making the perfect pie from crust to filling. This is just one of several educational opportunities presented this month. On July 18, Dr. Patrick Connelly, a professor of English at St. Ambrose University, will lecture on writing in nature. And on July 21, the focus will shift to the art of jam making. During this class, students will learn how to juice berries and the process of jelly making from start to finish. The Food Hub offers classes, dinners, and other learning opportunities throughout the year.

4 Community Food Box Program. A variation on community supported agriculture (CSA), community members can sign up to receive a bag of locally grown vegetables each week. Offerings change with the growing season and may include other local farm products such as meat, dairy, and value-added products — items made from locally sourced ingredients or from fairly traded, reputable organic, national, or global sources. Subscribers to the community food box program will commit to a five-week program and pick up their food box at the Food Hub on Thursdays.

GOLDBOOK

Q-C FACES

These Q-C Faces were seen at **Gallery Hop** in The District of Rock Island, May 1.



Jim and Sue Swanson



Tiffany Lundberg and Patrick McNamara



Katie and Dan Johnson



Paul and Mary Roberts



Gail Ray, and Bob and Barb Braun



5 Calendula. In front of the Food Hub you'll find community gardens sponsored in part by a Scene Grant from Eastern Iowa Community College District. The gardens are designed for hands-on learning for aspiring gardeners and are filled with heirloom and organic plants. The calendula — a bright orange and yellow pot marigold from the daisy family — are lovely this summer. Also sweet are the hand-painted wooden signs adorning the raised-bed gardens.



6 Cute kids' clothing. Leo & Lola is a local label best known for colorful, clever, and all-around adorable children's clothing. Also available at Mint Green/Adventure Orange and a few other locations regionally, you'll find select designs and sizes at the Food Hub market.

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7 Honey. We're fortunate to have a handful of honey producers in the area who sell honey in varying quantities at the Food Hub market. Crandall Farms, for instance, produces raw honey, which means the product is pure, unpasteurized, and unprocessed, thus preserving all of its natural vitamins, enzymes, and other nutritional elements. Honey, like many other foods we have access to during this season's outdoor markets, is available at the Food Hub year-round.

Each month in *The Gold Standard*, Leslie Klipsch, a freelance writer and editor based in Davenport, shines a spotlight on the gems of the Quad-Cities area — for *Gold Book* readers. She enjoys reading, cooking, spending time with her husband and three young children and exploring all that the Quad-Cities has to offer. Read more of Leslie at leslieklipsch.com.



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