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Food Matters: YouthLaunch's Urban Roots program, JR's Corner Bar-B-Que now open

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Teens turn produce into community lunch

School is out for the summer, but the work isn't over for local high school students who are part of YouthLaunch's Urban Roots program. This year, 30 teens made the cut to work on Urban Roots' East Austin farm, which will yield 30,000 pounds of produce that the students sell at local farmers' markets and give to area nonprofits. During the past few weeks, some of the food they've grown has gone to community lunches that the students prepare with the help of a local chef.

On an early morning last week, a handful of teens met in the kitchen of La Condesa restaurant downtown with chef René Ortiz, who helped put on his first community lunch last year. "I call it a community chaos dinner," Ortiz said jokingly as he maneuvered between stations, guiding his new cooks in how to chop chives or cut up eggplant that they had grown on the farm just east of U.S. 183.

"This is what everybody looks forward to," said Garza High School student Leffler Ramey as he plucked leaves off New Zealand spinach plants in the cool restaurant kitchen. "It's a nice change to be working inside instead of on the farm."

With the addition of a few other ingredients donated by Bastrop Cattle Company and Farm to Table, Ortiz and the students made enchiladas, chiles rellenos, fried okra, quinoa salad and jalapeño poppers that they served a few hours later under the shade of trees near rows of tomato and okra plants that the student workers will continue to harvest from until the end of July when this year's program comes to a close.

Ethan Holmes of Snap Kitchen will work with the students for the final community lunch of the summer on Friday, which sold out a few weeks ago, but you can still support the students by signing up for their community-supported agriculture program or by seeking them out at the farmers market on Saturday downtown and at the Triangle on Wednesdays. You can also volunteer on the farm or donate farm supplies or money. To find out more, go to youthlaunch.org/programs/urbanroots.php.

- Addie Broyles

Now open: JR's Corner Bar-B-Que

There's no fancy A-list architect or designer attached to the building. The food isn't served out of a vintage Airstream. And the only thing hip about the place is the owner's surgically replaced one.

JR's Corner Bar-B-Que is old school. Like, 1937 old school.

That's how long the piece of property has been in the family of proprietor Ben Dukes, the 75-year-old grandfather figure behind the new-again old place in East Austin.

After hip problems forced Dukes to close his restaurant - housed in a former gas station and convenience store - he rented to several tenants over the years. His mobility fully restored, Dukes is back with his

son-in-law, Louis Green, working at his barbecue pit.

From a walk-up window, J.R.'s serves sausage, brisket, chicken and pork ribs, smoked over pecan and post oak, along with sides of beans and potato salad. A chopped-beef sandwich costs \$2.25, a rib plate is \$8.50, a three-meat combo is \$9.75. Gospel music mingles with the smoke, serving equally divine purposes.

You can take the food to go or step inside the small dining room, which feels like part thrift store, part hunting lodge and part family museum - with mismatched furniture, mounted hunting trophies and photos of him with past Texas governors Dolph Briscoe, Ann Richards and George W. Bush sharing space with newspaper clippings and pictures of his daughter, state Rep. Dawnna Dukes.

1900 Rosewood Ave. Hours: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesdays-Fridays.

- Matthew Odam

Food and wine briefs

- Asti Trattoria is holding its yearly Lobster Fest this Thursday through Saturday at the restaurant, 408-C E. 43rd St. During the event, lobster fra diavolo or lobster risotto will anchor a \$75 three-course dinner for two. 451-1218, www.astiaustin.com/asti/reservations .
- Restaurants from Burnet, Marble Falls and Spicewood along with a handful of Central Texas wineries will supply the "taste" portion of Taste of the Hill Country in Burnet from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Friday . Tickets \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door. Galloway Hammond Recreation Center, 1601 S. Water St., Burnet. www.tasteofthehillcountrytx.com .
- "Take the Cake," a new show on the Food Network hosted by "Next Food Network Star" runner-up Adam Gertler, will feature two South Austin sweets in its first episodes. The show debuts at 7 p.m. Monday with Gertler visiting Holy Cacao, the cake ball trailer at 1311 S. First St. At 7:30 p.m. July 19, the host discovers the wasabi vanilla milkshake at Big Top Candy Shop, 1706 S. Congress Ave.
- Holy Cacao gets another national TV appearance at 8 p.m. July 18 on "Food(ography)," a show hosted by Mo Rocca on the recently launched Cooking Channel. To celebrate the exposure, the trailer will be hosting a benefit at 7 p.m. August 3, during which it will unveil a new cake ball flavor and give away some signature treats. They'll also be screening the TV clips and the movie "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory." Admission is bottled water, which will go to local nonprofit Mobile Loaves and Fishes.
- If you stop by the museum store and cafe at the Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza in Dallas this summer, keep your eyes peeled for coffee from Austin's Casa Brasil. The company is providing the beans imported directed from Brazilian growers for the museum's espresso as well as bags of coffee sold under the Sixth Floor Museum Coffee label.
- The Cancer Project, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, is hosting a four-class cooking course at Table, 5201 Rico Cove. Local cooking instructor Melissa Mouton will lead the classes, which take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays starting this weekend. She'll explain how making changes to your diet can help prevent cancer and help the recovery of those already diagnosed. The series costs \$100 or \$25 per class. Register online at http://support.cancerproject.org/Cooking_Austin_071010 . For questions, please e-mail Melissa@nutritionwell.com.
- Get a primer on raising backyard chickens from Carol Ann Sayle of Boggy Creek Farm at a free class at the Natural Gardener, 8648 Old Bee Cave Road, at 9 a.m. on Sunday. www.naturalgardeneraustin.com .

- A.B., Mike Sutter

Openings, closings and coming soon

- Open: SoCo to Go, a downtown lunch service and catering company that delivers Southern comfort foods such as chicken fried chicken, brisket sandwiches and hash brown casserole. 970-8646, www.socotogo.com .
 - Open: Dos Batos, a tacos and tortas place open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily at 252 W. Anderson Lane, Building 1, Suite 175. 452-0001, www.dosbatos.com .
 - Opening soon: Green Mesquite BBQ & More, the second location of the popular Barton Springs Road barbecue place, at 9900 S. Interstate 35, Suite M700, in South Park Meadows . 282-7100, www.greenmesquite.net . (Wait, wasn't there already a second location in Oak Hill? Read on ...)
 - Closed: The Green Mesquite BBQ & More location at 7010 Texas 71 W. in Oak Hill.
 - Coming soon: Zandunga Mexican Bistro, 1000 E. 11th St.
- Mike Sutter, A.B.

Ordering dessert Easy as Raw Pie for new line

Many bakers take the summers off because turning on the oven is the quickest way to heat your already hot house, but not Arielle Webb. The Austin chef/owner specializes in making pies, puddings and other raw, gluten-free, vegan desserts that aren't cooked and she just launched her company, Yummy Living Foods (www.yummylivingfoods.com). You can buy her agave-sweetened treats like banana cream pie, the crust of which is made with coconut and nuts, and puddings that taste like cheesecake and chocolate mousse online or at Daily Juice Cafe. From 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday at Marigold's Gateway to India (2200 S. Lamar Blvd.), Webb and several other business owners are hosting an event featuring a variety of samples and information about the benefits a raw, low-glycemic diet.

- A.B.

Organic Baby Food delivered to your door

If you don't have time to make your own baby food and purées, a new Austin company will deliver fresh, handmade, organic dishes for your infant or toddler. Commercially jarred baby foods often contain preservatives to extend their shelf life, but Little Vittles Organic makes jarred dishes like puréed peas or beet and white bean hummus that have to be refrigerated and only keep for a few days. Place orders by Saturday for Monday or Thursday morning delivery. Fruit and vegetable purées start at \$2 per serving, and soft foods like hummus, lentils, quinoa or rice cost \$3. www.littlevittlesorganic.com .

- A.B.

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