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## Scholarship shopping: Organic market holds day to benefit education foundation

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The McKinney Education Foundation is getting some help this week from outside the community it serves.

Whole Foods Market in Fairview will give to the foundation 5 percent of Wednesday's net sales through its Community Giving Day. Residents who shop at the store between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. will provide an extra boost to the foundation.

"We're thrilled to be part of this," said Michele Garrison, MEF marketing and communications manager. "Any amount helps."



Chris Beattie/Staff Photo - True Tidwell works the checkout line Tuesday night at Whole Foods Market in Fairview. The store will donate five percent of Wednesday's net sales to the McKinney Education Foundation, which annually awards college scholarships to McKinney high school seniors.

Whole Foods Market, the world's leading provider of natural and organic products, has stores all over Collin County. When the Fairview store opened at 105 Stacy Rd., it provided an immediate example of its belief that "corporations, as well as individuals, must be good tenants of the planet." The store's first five days served as "1% Days," through which one percent of its net sales each day went toward a nonprofit organization.

The store now takes part in the Community Giving Day, also called "Community 5% Day," four times a year. It aims to raise funds through one of four different categories each time -- Farms & Harvest, Environment, Hunger & Homelessness and Back to School.

"We do these days to give back to our community," said Cookie Rudnick, marketing coordinator for the Fairview store. "We've been trying all year to give to the education foundations in the area."

Whole Foods Market-Fairview already held a "5% Day" that benefited a similar foundation in Allen. About two months ago, the store agreed to feature MEF as a beneficiary.

The giving day is a prime example of why the MEF was created in 1991. Local businesses wanted to give scholarships to high school graduates who wished to attend college, but they had no central avenue through which to do so.

The nonprofit organization centralizes and simplifies the process of raising money for and awarding scholarships to McKinney ISD high school graduates. Seniors apply for possible college scholarships every January, after which an MEF committee determines the recipients and amounts for each scholarship.

Donors include individuals, other organizations and businesses, and some have certain specifications for their donations -- they want the money given to a student planning to attend a specific college or pursue a certain degree.

Garrison said that since she started at MEF in 2009, the foundation has more frequently partnered with area businesses to increase the scholarship money available each year. One such partnership is with FC Dallas, the area's professional soccer team. The MEF will receive a portion of ticket sales through "McKinney Community Night" on Saturday, Oct. 15 at the FC Dallas game at Pizza Hut Park in Frisco.

The money raised at Whole Foods throughout today will go toward the MEF's annual scholarships, which it will award to chosen recipients at a banquet in May.

Rudnick said that no two "5% Days" are alike but that most of their beneficiaries are pleased with the extra funds.

"You never know what sales will be," she said. "It jumps from a regular day to an unbelievable amount."

Members of MEF will be taking flyers by Whole Foods during the day so that shoppers know what their grocery purchases are benefitting. Garrison encouraged frequent Whole Foods shoppers to make today their monthly or weekly trip to the store.

"We hope anyone in McKinney and friends outside of McKinney come," she said. "They can stock up on wine and organic foods and benefit students."

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