

## Bancroft Farmers Market opens for the season

By Kaitlin Sylvester

As the summer approaches, the team behind the Bancroft Farmers Market is gearing up for another fresh season. Located in Riverside Park, every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., through the Thanksgiving weekend, the market is a community hub that brings together residents and visitors alike. Emmie Clare, one of the market managers, describes the unique ambiance of the Bancroft Farmers Market: "It's very much a community hub. People will spend a couple of hours hanging out, having a coffee, chatting with one another. There's such a vibrancy, such a lovely atmosphere that makes people want to stay." The market's location next to the community gardens also fosters a natural synergy between various community food groups and the market. This proximity encourages a seamless crossover, creating a cohesive environment where local food initiatives can thrive. "We have a community that works together," says Clare. "We have a lot of collaboration between vendors. They try to use their own and each other's products where possible." One hit from last year, the maple bacon ice cream, was made through such collaboration. "We used bacon from our vendor Kathy and maple from the folks at Lavender Farms," Clare recalls. Such innovative products highlight the market's commitment to fostering a sustainable ecosystem where vendors support one another and contribute to the market's unique offerings. Diversity and uniqueness are core principles of the Bancroft Farmers Market. Each vendor is expected to bring something different to the table, ensuring that the market remains a dynamic and engaging place for visitors. "We like to have a diverse offering, so you won't find too many crossover vendors. Each of our vendors is unique," Clare emphasizes. This careful curation honors the market's core vendors while maintaining its integrity and authenticity. To participate in the market, vendors must adhere to strict guidelines ensuring that all products are made or grown by them in the region. This commitment to authenticity helps protect the integrity of the market and supports local artisans and farmers. "We want to protect the integrity of the market as well as our vendors, which is why it has to be your own work, grown or made," Clare explains. The market features a dedicated group of core vendors who have been with it since its reopening in 2022. Alongside these mainstays, seasonal and drop-in vendors add variety and excitement throughout the market season. This blend of consistency and novelty keeps the market fresh and engaging for regular visitors and newcomers alike. This year, the Bancroft Farmers Market has rebranded, unveiling a new logo that reflects its commitment to community and sustainability. The market is also launching a new website, aiming to better connect with its vendors and customers. "We'd love to get a bit of a blog going on too, talking about the Bancroft food scene," Clare shares, hinting at exciting developments in the digital space. In addition to the vibrant market atmosphere, the managers, Fraser Young, Mark Carter, and Clare plan to create a market kitchen that offers dishes made from local ingredients sourced from market vendors and other local suppliers. The goal is to ensure that visitors not only enjoy fresh produce and handmade goods but also savor meals that represent the best of Bancroft's local food scene. The Bancroft Farmers Market aims to build community spirit through local food sustainability. It's a place for people to come together to celebrate the bounty of the region, support local producers, and enjoy the unique vibrancy that defines the market.