

# All Eyes On: Keith McHenry

## Activist inspires students to start organization

BY BURGUNDY RAMSEY  
Staff Reporter

Keith McHenry is trying to save the world. He doesn't wear a cape or possess any superpowers other than a good heart and a strong will. Instead, this do-gooder is saving the world in his own way: feeding one person at a time.

McHenry, cofounder of Food Not Bombs, recently spoke to the Truman community about the program. This small organization began in Boston in the

early 1980s and has grown into a worldwide phenomenon with approximately 1,000 groups around the globe.

"When we started, the Soviet Union was existing, Ronald Reagan was coming to be and I was 23," McHenry said. "It never occurred to us that it would become a worldwide thing."

McHenry studied art at Boston University and held many odd jobs, such as a produce man and a mover. After one of his friends was arrested during a protest against a nuclear power station, he saw a sign that said, "Wouldn't it be a beautiful day if the schools had all the money they needed and the pentagon had to hold a bake sale to buy a bomber?"

This sign inspired McHenry

and his friends to find a more creative way to protest. They protested the Bank of Boston's support of nuclear power and formed a soup kitchen at the event. McHenry used his connections at a local market to get food that otherwise would have been thrown away and invited a group of homeless men to attend. This first meal was the beginning of Food Not Bombs.

The program continued to grow in Boston until McHenry moved to San Francisco in 1988, bringing the movement with him. He was arrested for the first time for peaceful protesting on Aug. 15 1988.

"To me, it was quite a shock," he said. "I had been doing this pretty much all the time for eight years, then all of a sudden to have a problem with that."

McHenry said he was one of more than 100 volunteers who were arrested during the protest, sparking community interest and an influx of new volunteers in the Food Not Bombs program, growing past anything McHenry could have imagined.

The program's sudden growth inspired the program's leaders to clarify the core principles of Food Not Bombs. McHenry said there were three very simple principles: Food Not Bombs would promote and serve vegan and vegetarian food that would be free for anyone, without restriction.

**"Every day I will have another amazing story about Food Not Bombs and what it's achieved in some place. And I'll meet amazing volunteers. It's really, really inspiring"**

**Keith McHenry**  
founder of Food Not Bombs



Krista Goodman/Index  
Founder of Food Not Bombs Keith McHenry speaks to a group of Truman students Nov. 3. His visit inspired several Truman students to begin working to create a Truman chapter of the organization.

Each local group would be independent, with no leaders, and would use the consensus voting style. Also, the movement would be completely nonviolent. These values were readopted in 1995 at a rally with more than 600 people in attendance.

McHenry continues to head the movement. He stays busy with writing projects and events speaking at colleges across the country. He visited Truman's campus Nov. 3. Jerry Jones, a 2008 Truman graduate, and junior Kate Seaton, vice president of Students for Social Change, were key to bringing McHenry to campus.

Jones said he called Food Not Bombs to learn more

about its governing style for emulation in his project, the Kirksville Permaculture Education Center, and that, to his surprise, McHenry answered the phone. Jones said McHenry mentioned he would like to talk to the Kirksville community. Jones contacted Seaton to set it up.

"I think our goal, and kind of a lot of what those organizations do, is just awareness," Seaton said. "We just want to bring events and movies and speakers and people and opportunities so that people can be more aware, because we live in a really small town where there are not a lot of issues, and it's easy to forget about the world existing as a whole

around us."

Seaton spent the day with McHenry during his visit.

"He was definitely a character," Seaton said. "I think he's good at getting people emotionally involved in a movement and to care about it. What I was hearing from people is that they enjoyed listening to him speak, and they enjoyed the presentation. He was an exciting and engaging speaker."

Seaton said that after the presentation, 30 to 35 people showed interest in starting a Food Not Bombs group at Truman. Jones said he plans to implement the new group through the Permaculture Education Center.

McHenry said he looks for-

ward to seeing what Kirksville does with its own program. Despite all of his current health problems resulting from police brutality, McHenry said that updates from local chapters are what keeps him going.

"Every day I will have another amazing story about Food Not Bombs and what it's achieved in some place," McHenry said. "And I'll meet amazing volunteers. It's really, really inspiring."

For more information on Food Not Bombs, visit [foodnotbombs.net](http://foodnotbombs.net) or contact McHenry through the information on the site. He said that he loves talking and answering questions, and he hopes to speak at Truman again sometime soon.

## ECO offers reusable containers

BY KELLY KIESEL  
Staff Reporter

A new project by the Environmental Campus Organization attempts to discourage the use of Styrofoam containers by renting reusable containers to carry food.

The containers, called clamshells, cost five dollars and have three compartments made out of polypropylene, a recycled, plant-based plastic material. The project began this semester to get students to rent the eco-friendly containers for use in the Student Union Building. Students can e-mail ECO to rent a clamshell container and will then be given delivery options through e-mail.

Junior Ben Winter is the leader for the project and said the idea came from Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Fla., where they already use clamshells, named for their shape.

Winter said if that using the clamshell twice a month pays for itself. The clamshells are sturdy and durable

with a lifespan of years, while Styrofoam can only be used once.

Winter said ECO plans on getting the local restaurants involved, including Steve's Deli and Greek Corner Gyros.

"Millions of Styrofoam containers get crammed into landfills every year without being able to biodegrade," Winter said.

Winter said the group will focus on getting students signed up for the clamshells by increasing publicity. He said members also are planning on working with the Office of Residence Life to instruct students in residence halls to use the containers in the cafeterias. Winter said ECO's first hope is just to cut down on Styrofoam. If it can implement the project on a larger scale, it can keep the University from

buying Styrofoam altogether, he said. "It is a cheap and efficient way to take advantage of resources that are available today," Winter said. "We can make campus more sustainable and eco-friendly by making a difference

one step at a time."

Dennis Markeson, director of Dining Services, has been talking with ECO about the idea for a year. Markeson said \$200 of the funding for the clamshells came from the Student Senate.

"Anything to reduce waste is good in my book," Markeson said.

President of ECO junior Emily Love said she wants to see the University as an example of sustainability on college campuses and hopes to see more people supporting the cause.

"By renting a clam container and using it instead of Styrofoam, you are making a statement to the University that you want to see sustainable practices implemented across campus," Love said.

Love said ECO wants to see the University become an example of sustainability on college campuses and hopes to see more people supporting the cause.

Sophomore Aaron Chisum bought a clamshell because he said he understands the benefits and sees it as a step in the right direction toward becoming a green campus.

"The container has a lot of perks," Chisum said. "I no longer worry about all the waste I generate whenever I eat at the SUB, the packaging is durable and trendy, and Sodexo staff seem willing to accommodate."

**"We can make campus more sustainable and eco-friendly by making a difference one step at a time."**

**Ben Winter**  
ECO clamshells project leader



Krista Goodman/Index  
Ben Winter, ECO clamshells project leader, shows off the fruits (and veggies) of ECO's labor, the reusable clamshell.

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