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## Englewood's Sunday farmers market – more than a market

By Sue Wade Sun Correspondent

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Mark Homer and wife, Jacqueline, hunt for antioxidant-rich chaga mushrooms in New York and sell them in Florida during season.

SUN PHOTO BY SUE WADE

**ENGLEWOOD** – Englewood's Sunday secret is starting to leak out on tendrils of applewood barbecue smoke.

You can smell it from as far as Zeke's. Listen for a flute in the distance. Then follow it down Dearborn and meet the crew of down-home vendors and entertainers at the western end of the street. Ask them, one by one, to tell you their stories.



Venice songwriter James Hawkins comes to jam and sing ballads about Florida history.

They gather every weekend for a nascent patchouli-scented farmers market, selling barbecue, hot dogs, cupcakes and lobster rolls; purveying jewelry, crafts, tie dye, foraged mushrooms, guacamole, CBD, fresh seafood, native veggies, free-range eggs and good cheer.



Come early. Those eggs tend to sell out.

It's all a brainchild of Englewood's Bill Lundgren and Judi Jenkins who, in mid-2019, launched Life Realized, an all-volunteer 501(c)(3), 509(a)(2) public charity for self-actualizers.

Its motto is "Realize your best life by achieving your life's passion"— whether in music, art, life or career.

"That's the intent of everything we do," Lundgren said. "That said, even we were surprised by how many vendors have just started out and are already amazing.

"Incubating small business entrepreneurs is part of our mission. We've already started mentoring several vendors, helping grow their businesses beyond the basic opportunity that the market provides."

Judi Jenkins and Bill Lundgren know a thing or two about turning life around.

On Sept. 11, 2001, Jenkins was in her 14th year working for Verizon. Somehow, its 32-story headquarters remained standing, though gravely wounded, after its next-door neighbor, 7 World Trade Center, pancaked.

No one in the Verizon Building was injured, but Jenkins lost her job, along with all her clients from World Trade Center tenants Morgan Stanley and Fuji Bank.

She managed to live off savings until 2005. By then completely broke, she went on welfare and lived with friends for a while. Shortly after a six-year career as a Department of Welfare caseworker, a car crash ended her work life.



Judi Jenkins and Bill Lundgren started their public charity, Life Realized, in mid-2019. Their Sunday farmers market started in January.

Years later, while proving to herself that she could travel on her own, she met widower and former adman Lundgren while he was putting on his first professional fireworks show on Martha's Vineyard.

Boom! Sparklers!

Life became realized for both of them.

After moving to Englewood three years ago, they volunteered at Englewood's Open Studio, where Jenkins helped artists and fledgling art instructors share their craft. Lundgren honed musicians' confidence at Englewood-wide workshops and open mic events, still ongoing at Mango Bistro, The Blue Pineapple Bistro and Dearborn Street Plaza.

"We simply reorganized under a different banner when we formed Life Realized," Lundgren explained. "When we first came to Englewood, we realized that everything here is geared toward 'season.' The rest of us wanted things to do all year long."

Now Lundgren and Jenkins are making sure that, every Sunday, all year long, Englewood has a weekend farmers market.

The Life Realized farmers market is from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. every Sunday of the year at 501 W. Dearborn Street (across from Comadre's), Englewood.



New to the market, Karissa Cumberland of Englewood's KC Cakes receives help from son Ryder, 5.

SUN PHOTOS BY SUE WADE  
Don Bush waits to perform at the Sunday farmers market open mic. "Open mic is just fun," he said. "It creates a community of friendship among musicians. And the thing about Bill Lundgren's open mics is that he makes sure you sound good."





The new Life Realized farmers market is a weekend community gathering place.



SUN PHOTO BY SUE WADE

"We have more new vendors every week," said Life Realized program development Director Judi Jenkins.



SUN PHOTO BY SUE WADE

Shay Vercher pitmaster of Shay's Legendary BBQ, built his smoker from Hurricane Katrina salvage. Behind him, the market's open mic jams.



SUN PHOTO BY SUE WADE

Buster Havey, of The Shrimp Man, is well-known around Englewood for his fresh fish, scallops, and shrimp.