

Karelen Takara  
Saint Francis

Be sustainable and buy local.

Every Saturday morning, I go to the KCC farmers market with my mother to pick up any vegetables that we may use throughout the week. The prices there are so cheap I don't understand why anyone wouldn't take advantage of it. Sadly however, the farmers market isn't as crowded as it should be, so farmers go back home with a lot of unsold crops. This is one of the problems in the state of Hawaii; we depend on imported food too much. Instead, we should be buying our food locally. The Clarence T.C. Ching Foundation could support Hawaii by helping us be more sustainable and keep our money within the state.

The Clarence T.C. Ching Foundation could open a local market that would act as another supermarket, such as Times, Foodland, or Safeway. The difference between this market and all the other "big named" markets is that our local market would only sell crops from Hawaii's local farmers. This would make buying local more convenient for people, so they wouldn't need to wake up early or wait till the weekend to buy their food. Instead, they would have the convenience to go, at any time of the week, to one of these local markets. By opening this market, we would be keeping our money within the state and dispersed among our local farmers instead of being sent back to the mainland.

The Clarence T.C. Ching Foundation could also donate money to local farmers. If not money, the foundation could donate tools or even buy land and donate it specifically for cultivation and harvesting. With this land, farmers could expand or work together to grow different crops. My friend's family owns a Waimanalo corn farm. I know that they would love to have more land to expand their farm. If the Clarence T.C. Ching Foundation donated this land, there would be a larger variety of crops and a larger number of crops being grown here. That way, we wouldn't need to depend on the mainland to ship it in.

By buying local, we will know that whatever we buy was put on the shelf fresh. We would know that it was never frozen and packaged to travel across the Pacific. We would trust our farmers that they serve us only the freshest of their crops. With the way we get our food right now, how can we trust who or where our food comes from? How can we tell if they are poisoning our food or altering it so that they can grow mass amounts of it? We can't. This is why we should be supporting our local farmers that we trust. In the Honolulu Advertiser, there

was a statement about Clarence after his death saying he “worked hard all his life. He proved that a humble beginning is no barrier in life...” Well our farmers are doing hard, humble and honest work, so lets give them the support they deserve. Be sustainable and buy local.