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VEGFEST IS MARCH 27 AT SUBURBAN COLLECTION SHOWPLACE
Celebrity chef Tal Ronnen headlines popular vegetarian tastefest & expo

ROYAL OAK, Mich., Feb. 18, 2011 – In response to growing interest in a plant-based diet, **VegFest**, metro Detroit's premier vegetarian tastefest and expo, has once more outgrown its location and will move to Suburban Collection Showplace, formerly known as Rock Financial Showplace, for its annual event on March 27.

Presented by VegMichigan, the event features notable local and national speakers, including Oprah's vegan chef and author **Tal Ronnen**, and former Detroit Piston and NBA champion **John Salley**, back by popular demand. Visitors can hear talks on the health, environmental and/or ethical benefits of a plant-based diet and enjoy tasty vegan cuisine from two dozen local restaurants along with national brand samples, food demonstrations, exhibits, children's activities, door prizes and more.

Major sponsors are Whole Foods Market, The Medicine Cabinet Pharmacy of Southfield, Blue Care Network of Michigan, Henry Ford Hospital West Bloomfield and Meijer. Media sponsors are 93.9 The River radio, Metro Times and Natural Awakenings magazines.

"The event is designed to give people real tools and resources for changing their diet for the better," says event chair Wendy Jones.

Last year's VegFest, held in Ferndale, drew more than 2100 attendees. The 2011 event is expected to draw upwards of 3000.

Keynote speaker **Tal Ronnen** is one of the most celebrated vegan chefs working today. In addition to preparing vegan meals for Oprah Winfrey's 21-day vegan cleanse, he catered the vegan wedding of Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi as well as the first vegan dinner at the U.S. Senate. Chef Tal's new cookbook, "The Conscious Cook," is a New York Times best-seller. He has worked at several of the nation's top vegan restaurants and conducts master vegetarian workshops at Le Cordon Bleu College campuses nationwide. At VegFest, Chef Tal will speak and prepare delicious vegan recipes at noon and sign copies of his book.

NBA champ and TV personality **John Salley** returns to VegFest, having drawn record-breaking crowds to the event the past two years. Salley helped lead the Detroit Pistons, Chicago Bulls

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and L.A. Lakers to NBA championships before retiring to host the Emmy-nominated “Best Damn Sports Show Period” and has since appeared in films and TV shows. Salley is vegan – meaning he neither eats nor uses animal products – and he passionately believes that this diet choice improved his game and his life. He speaks at 2 pm.

Also speaking at VegFest are **Nathan Runkle**, executive director of the national Mercy for Animals; **Joel Kahn, MD**, corporate director of wellness for Detroit Medical Center Hospitals and director of preventive cardiology and cardiac rehabilitation at DMC Cardiovascular Institute; **Jim Corcoran**, co-founder of VegMichigan, Plant Peace Daily and VegFund; **Harry Pianko**, president of VegMichigan; and others. **Chef George Vutetakis**, author and founding chef of Royal Oak’s Inn Season Café, will present a cooking demonstration and tasting, as will **Chef Steven Delidow**, culinary wellness representative at Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital and **Celeste Ivey**, proprietor of Patisserie Ci in Southfield.

VegFest takes place from 11 am until 5 pm on Sunday, March 27 at Suburban Collection Showplace, located at 46100 Grand River Ave. in Novi. Parking is free.

Admission is \$10 at the door; \$5 for students; free for children under 6 and VegMichigan members. For memberships, discounted tickets and information on sponsorship, exhibiting, volunteering or the day’s schedule, contact VegMichigan toll free at 877-778-3464 or visit www.vegmichigan.org.

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