



## STUDENT INITIATIVES

# How Does Your Garden Grow?

Students meld sustainability and entrepreneurship with a project that puts food on University tables.

By Melissa Greco Lopes

WHEN ANNALISE KJOLHEDE '10 AND CAITLIN Smigelski '10 hung up their graduation gowns this May, they picked up their hoes and shovels. The two broke ground on a new garden that will provide food to the University community at the Meliora restaurant on the River Campus. They've taken on the horticultural project during a fifth year at Rochester as KEY scholars, and while they're cultivating beets, toma-


▲ **BUSINESS GROWTH:** Caitlin Smigelski '10 (left) and Annalise Kjolhede '10 are selling their produce to the Meliora restaurant.

atoes, and arugula, they're also tending to the business end of their nonprofit venture. "Farming starts from the neck up, as they say," Smigelski says. "There's so much science and planning that goes into it."

The pair worked with Dining Services, the College, the Gandhi Institute, the Sustainability Council, and other campus groups to establish the garden. They worked with Dan Scheid, the University horticulturist, to scout locations, eventually settling on a plot near Whipple Park, a housing complex for graduate students. They also consulted with Justin Ramsey—an assistant professor and researcher in the biology department, who shared in-

formation about Rochester's ecology and land-use history—and executive chef Tony Pignagrande to discuss the kinds of foods and herbs that would meet his needs.

Student volunteers work at the garden alongside Kjolhede and Smigelski, and the two plan to turn the project over to other students when they leave campus after the next growing season.

"I loved the enthusiasm and the way the students tackle issues and challenges relating to the farm," says Cam Schauf, director of Campus Dining Services and Auxiliary Operations. "We think of Dining Services as a department that can provide a laboratory for students to work in and be able to help ideas like this come true." 

*Melissa Greco Lopes writes about student affairs for University Communications.*