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## **Ger-Nis plans grand opening gala for its Culinary & Herb Center**

March 10, 2010

Ger-Nis International will hold a grand-opening gala April 10 for its new Gen-Nis Culinary & Herb Center in Brooklyn, NY.

Nissa Pierson, owner and managing director of Ger-Nis International, a supplier of a full line of packaged organics headquartered in Brooklyn, told The Produce News that expanding the company's network to include consumers is something to which she has been dedicated since founding the firm over three years ago.

"It's not just about selling produce and making money," said Ms. Pierson. "We are also very community-involved. We offer nutrition and product information to children and adults, and we offer cooking classes, field trips, sustainability and other projects to the community. These are the value-added things that benefit today's consumers."

The Culinary & Herb Center has been Ms. Pierson's long-time goal. Her passion has always been about healthy lifestyles, sustainability and fair trade.

After earning a bachelor's degree in sustainable and economical development from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN, in 1995, Ms. Pierson worked for an organic retailer in Oregon. From there she moved to Southern California and worked for Herb Line Farm. She also worked for Jacobs Farm/Del Cabo in Pescadero, CA, further increasing her knowledge and experience before relocating to New York and starting her own business at the age of 33.

"My passions have always been natural living and eating healthy food," said Ms. Pierson. "Instead of focusing on just the supplier end, we want to reach out to consumers to help them learn to make wise

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food choices."

The Culinary & Herb Center will offer consumer classes where producers and others in the trade will be able to address attendees and discuss how their products are produced and provide handling, storage and preparation information.

"A representative of our organic fair trade mango supplier, Fairtrasa, in Uruapan, Mexico, will be teaching an upcoming class," said Ms. Pierson. "He will cover the ecological aspects and supply chain information to help attendees to understand what fair trade is. Another class scheduled for the summer will be a children's series that focuses on fruits of the world. We will be covering a different fruit in each class. This will be a wonderful cultural learning process for kids."

Besides staging the gala event, Ger-Nis is promoting the new center through local consumer magazines, on the Internet and by word of mouth. The class schedule will be available on the company's web site in late March. Ms. Pierson will be teaching the first class scheduled for April 24, which is titled Spring Herbal Salads.

The center will also house a cookbook library. Besides donating her own extensive personal cookbook collection, Ms. Pierson said she is asking participants in the center and others to donate new or used cookbooks.

"Educated consumers control the produce business," she said. "If they understand how and where their food is produced and follow it through the supply chain, they will be able to make better choices."

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