

# Life & Leisure

Woman tells of Wyandotte in the '30s — Page 3-E.



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Paul Rodman

## Spring heralds mulch madness

One of the garden topics I'm most asked about is mulch. Why do I need it, what kind should I buy, is it expensive and how much do I need are some of the questions I get regarding mulch.

I'll answer these and give you some guidelines.

Mulch serves two main purposes and, to a lesser extent, a third purpose. It suppresses weeds, retains moisture and adds an attractive appearance to the garden.

The two types of mulch are organic and inorganic. Organic is primarily composed of byproducts of trees and a couple of other sources.

Inorganic are some types of rock or stone and a fairly new product made from recycled tires.

Organic mulches are much preferred, as they break down and add nutrients to the soil. Mulch is an ideal organic way to suppress weeds.

Weed control is accomplished in two ways. Most annual and some perennial weeds are simply smothered when covered by a 3-inch layer of organic mulch.

The second method is a process called allelopathy. This is accomplished when organic mulches release compounds that are toxic to weeds as the mulch decomposes.

Each year replenish mulch with a 1- to 2-inch layer, and the beds will stay weed-free.

Mulch also retains moisture and keeps the soil temperature at a fairly constant level. Watering can be reduced by up to 50 percent when gardens are mulched to a depth of 3 inches.

With the rising cost of water today, anything that can conserve water is a good thing.

Mulch is sold in two ways — by the bag in garden centers and big-box stores, and in bulk by garden centers. If you have a fairly large area to mulch, bulk purchase is the most economical.

To determine how much bulk mulch you will need, follow these steps.

- Determine the square footage to be mulched. (For example, 4 feet by 25 feet = 100 square feet).

- Determine the depth of the mulch you need — usually no less than 3 inches (1/4 of a foot).

- Multiply the square footage in the first step by the fraction in the second step. (100 square feet times 1/4 foot = 25 cubic feet.)

- If buying bulk, one cubic yard equals 27 cubic feet. Bagged mulch usually comes in 2-cubic-foot bags. So if you want to cover 25 cubic feet you need 12 1/2 bags of mulch.

You have a wide selection when it comes to

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Capuchin Soup Kitchen Manager Alison Costello (center) of Wyandotte works with volunteers Kirstin Tannas (left) and Stacey Malasky.

# Healing from the inside out

Soup kitchen chef is the queen of green

Alison Costello

BY LAURA HIPSHIRE

For the past five years, Wyandotte resident Alison Costello has been cooking for approximately 600 people every day as chef and kitchen manager for the Capuchin Soup Kitchen in Detroit.

"We've served up to 800 in a two-hour period during the summer," Costello said.

She holds a fine arts degree from the University of Michigan, a culinary school degree from New York, and has taken master classes in pastoral

ministry, so her job at the Soup Kitchen suits her well.

Besides preparing and serving fresh, hot meals every day for hundreds of people, Costello, 44, has managed to transform the kitchen into an environmentally friendly atmosphere.

"With a few small changes we became a green building," she said. "We brainstormed alternative materials and resources. We use wooden coffee stirrers and earth-friendly cleaning products."

Traditionally, the Capuchin Soup Kitchen provides meals

for clients with limited resources, including chronic substance abusers, senior citizens and mental health patients.

"Most of our folks are on foot," Costello said. "I've got an obligation. This is a much-needed service. We have a commitment."

Costello, along with an assistant manager, kitchen maintenance workers and a "huge group of volunteers" at the Meldrum Street site, provide both breakfast and lunch for guests. The soup kitchen's doors open at 7 a.m. every day.

"You get to know people," Costello said, noting the building is a "lovely place."

The site also operates a shower program.

According to Costello, she runs a "from-scratch kitchen."

Little by little, she has introduced healthier, more organic foods into the daily meal program.

"We love doing roasted red pepper soup, and they love it!" she said.

She also uses spring mix

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## Mom takes 'great strides' to fight cystic fibrosis

BY PAULA EVANS NEUMAN  
THE NEWS-HERALD

Scott and Jennifer Albanys hope the initials "CF" will stand for "cure found" someday soon.

For now, though, CF stands for "cystic fibrosis," a genetic disease that affects 30,000 Americans, including the Albanyses' daughter, Alayna, who will be 2 years old in June.

The little girl suffered terribly as an infant, unable to digest anything she ingested, but is thriving today despite her disease, her mother said.

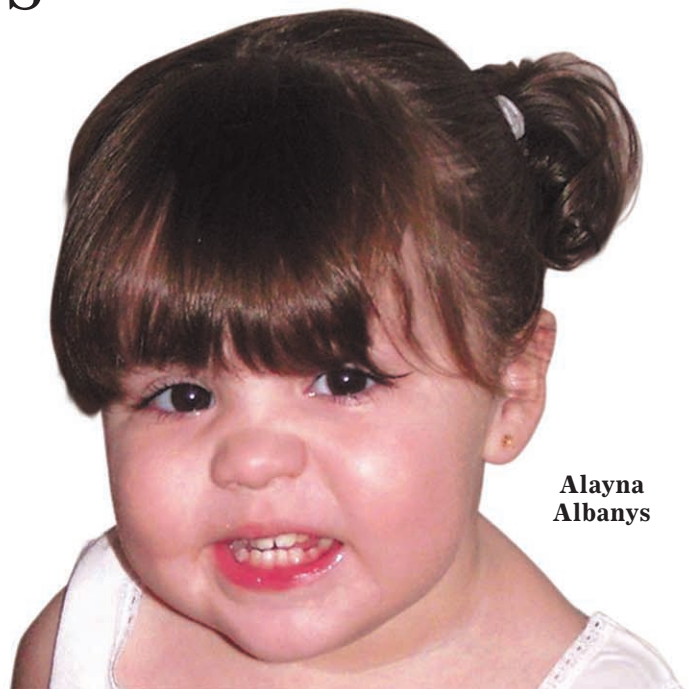
"She is truly an amazing baby," Jennifer said. "Her happy demeanor, carefree spirit and incredible zest for life and learning are just contagious. Her lungs continue to be clear and she is gaining weight."

"We marvel at her ability to take enzymes before every meal and sit through breathing treatments. She is currently taking 15 pills per day and is on four breathing treatments per day."

Cystic fibrosis affects the respiratory and digestive systems.

A defective gene causes the body to

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Alayna Albanys