



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



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For Immediate Release

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SNAP at Market Program Grows

Farmers Markets Receive Grant to Support Much Needed Expansion

Fairfax County Farmers Markets have received two grants to support expansion of the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) at-market benefits program, formerly known as food stamps. The 2014 awards will allow for an expanded program which will make farmers markets more accessible to low income families shopping for fresh, locally produced food. The number of locations that will accept SNAP benefits has increased to four, and a corporate partner has provided funding for a summer intern who will coordinate community outreach and education for the program.

Locations accepting SNAP benefits include the Reston, Lorton and McCutcheon/Mount Vernon farmers markets, as well as the Farm Stand at Frying Pan Farm Park. Expansion of the program was made possible through partnerships with Cornerstones, Arcadia, INOVA and the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. The summer internship will be funded through the ExxonMobil Community Summer Jobs Program.

Also received in February was a scholarship from the Wal-Mart Foundation and MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, which enables Farmers Market Coordinator Mae Carroll to attend this year's National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference. "This conference is a great opportunity to learn from SNAP outreach and advocacy programs across the nation," said Carroll.

Three Fairfax County Farmers Markets will offer matching dollar programs, in which the amount of money spent by SNAP recipients will be matched up to ten dollars for fruits and vegetables. The intent of the matching program is to enable recipients to choose healthier options without spending more of their SNAP funds. Reston, Lorton and the McCutcheon/Mount Vernon markets are all funded for matching dollar programs. The Farm Stand at Frying Pan Farm Park accepts SNAP but will not participate in the matching dollar program this year.

The matching dollars programs at Lorton and McCutcheon/Mount Vernon markets are supported by Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food and Agriculture. The matching dollars program at Reston is supported by INOVA. Fundraising efforts continue through other community organizations and grant opportunities to expand this program.

Fairfax County's 11 Farmers Markets, including a new location this year at the Fairfax County Government Center, are supervised by the Fairfax County Park Authority through the Community Horticulture office at Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria, VA. Volunteer Market Masters manage daily operations of the markets. For more information call 703-642-0128 or visit online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets.

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