



FARM FRESH RHODE ISLAND

# “FARM TO SENIOR”



November 2014

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The “Farm to Senior” project would not have been possible without the cooperation of so many supportive Farm Fresh RI partners. We wish to acknowledge our appreciation to the individuals, organizations and businesses who work alongside us to improve access to local, fresh foods for all Rhode Islander Seniors. Within the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Division of Elderly Affairs, Former Director Catherine Taylor, Health Promotion Coordinator Aleatha Dickerson and their team of Senior Nutrition Directors provided guidance and access to the information needed to frame this local foods promotion project. Chef Paul Leduc of Woonsocket Senior Services and Chef Ray Sinapi of Cranston Department of Senior Services were truly magnanimous in terms of our requests. Each graciously accommodated appeals for menu additions and data on local foods purchases. Without their involvement the project would not have moved beyond the planning stage. Robert’s Pre-Cut Vegetables, Roch’s Fresh Foods and Wojcik & Son’s produce purveyors were helpful in confirming availability of local produce while menus were planned. They all assisted in tracking purchases and supplying data at the conclusion of the harvest season. Of course, none of this could happen without the tireless work of our Rhode Island farmers, who produce the freshest and most delicious foods that enhance our health and community. Our “Healthy Servings for Seniors” partners at URI SNAP Ed have worked with Farm Fresh Nutrition Educator Mikayla Moretti for over three years to develop the successful Healthy Servings for Seniors program. The team joyfully delivers this nutrition education program that positively impacts the lives of many Rhode Island Seniors. Farm Fresh summer VISTA Kelly Hemberger led many of those programs while developing our “Farm to Senior” activities. Kelly spent the summer in senior centers around Rhode Island, leading learning sessions on nutrition, talking about the impact of our food choices on our health and community and promoting RI Grown foods. She gathered inspiration from senior local foods promotions in other parts of the country and documented her research so we can all learn from it. Kelly was instrumental to the success of the project and the writing of this report. We deeply appreciate her contribution, as well as Americorp VISTA for sponsoring her participation. We are grateful for the time Julie Waller of Maine Senior Farmshare, Maria Langlais of Seattle & King County Farm to Table and Katherine Sims of Green Mountain Farm Direct took to teach us about their experience in Farm to Senior programs. Finally, we sincerely appreciate the staff members and participating seniors at each of the Rhode Island senior centers we were blessed to visit. Your generosity with your time and enthusiasm for our programs made the work of this project a true pleasure. Thank you!

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# FARM TO SENIOR PROJECT

FARM FRESH RHODE ISLAND

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## INTRODUCTION

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Farm Fresh Rhode Island is a 501c3 non-profit food hub, working to grow a local food system that values the environment, health and quality of life of RI farmers and eaters. Since 2004, Farm Fresh has been connecting local growers to local eaters, promoting farm viability and healthy food choices for all. This work has focused primarily on low-income, urban populations, whose access to fresh fruits and vegetables is limited by cost and proximity.

Among Farm Fresh Rhode Island's activities that increase access to fresh, nutritious foods for low-income consumers is a specialized nutrition education program for seniors. The "Healthy Servings for Seniors" program offers hands-on educational opportunities and incentives to buy fresh, healthy food. "Healthy Servings for Seniors" began in 2011 and now works in partnership with URI SNAP Ed in the communities of Providence, Woonsocket, West Warwick and Pawtucket to provide nutrition education and increase access to delicious, nutritious food.

As the success of the "Healthy Servings for Seniors" program has grown, Farm Fresh's "Farm to Cafeteria" initiatives have been taking hold in school, college and hospital cafeterias around the state. This new "Farm to Senior" project is a natural combination of our efforts to build demand for healthy, local food among consumers while advocating for local food among institutional purchasers.

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## PROMOTING LOCALLY GROWN FOOD TO SENIOR MEAL SITES

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### WHO WE PARTNER WITH

- The Department of Human Services, Division of Elderly Affairs Director and Administration, Senior Center Directors, Nutrition Services Directors, Wellness Coordinators, Chefs, Caterers, Produce Distributors, Local Growers and URI SNAP Ed.

We enlist support from state agencies participating in Rhode Island's Interagency Food and Nutrition Advisory Council by looping them into our communications: Department of Environmental Management Director Janet Coit, Chief of Agriculture Ken Ayars, Department of Health Director Dr. Fine and Department of Administration Director Licht

*Note: Farms with a social mission or community farms are excellent partners to engage.*

### WHAT WE DO

- Create a "Map" of service providers, caterers, distributors, decision makers, and champions within the Senior Meal site landscape.  
*Understanding the players one needs to deal with to influence decision-making within an organization is critical.*
- Identify appropriate local products that are affordably priced, desirable among purchasers and diners, available through existing supply chains and plentiful throughout the growing season.  
*Understanding the supply chain is imperative; knowing which farms the produce distributor sources from, if product is available in a processed form and that the delivered product will be high quality are important factors to consider when encouraging local purchasing.*
- Assist in promoting the meal by hosting activities at senior centers that raise awareness and enthusiasm for local produce among diners  
*Our activities include local foods trivia games, fruit and vegetable bingo and cultural awareness crafting sessions focused on food. Samples of local produce are offered during activities. Competitive activities feature local food prizes.*

### WHERE WE WORK

- In meeting rooms with Division of Elderly Affairs administrators.  
*Meeting with regional Senior Services Directors allows for efficient communication. They relay information to their nutrition service providers and center directors about the opportunity to work with us to promote their meals.*
- In kitchens and produce distribution warehouses during menu planning sessions with nutrition service providers and their produce distributors.  
*We assist in identifying appropriate products to ensure that locally grown is on the menu when available.*
- In senior center activity rooms, where we build relationships with nutrition education program participants and center staff.
- In senior center dining rooms, where we expand our reach to others in the center by engaging them in games, activities and tasting fresh, local food.
- In the media, where outreach with press releases helps us to bring our message further out to the community.

## WHEN ACTIVITIES TAKE PLACE

- In December and January, planning for sourcing produce begins as growers are deciding on seed purchases and their planting schedule for the season.  
*Meeting facilitators should consider:*
  1. *Meetings often take a long time to schedule, winter weather interferes with plans.*
  2. *Successful meetings include an enthusiastic champion from within the organization as well as the chef/food purchaser, their produce distributor and the farmer.*
  3. *Chefs/food purchasers should bring examples of their summer and autumn menus to reference.*
  4. *Follow up with participants consistently through the planning process ensures good communication and develops relationships. Calendar reminders keep facilitators on track.*
- In April and May, planning for summer promotions and programs takes place as the growing season gets underway.  
*Outreach to center directors to schedule activities coincides with updates on progress to DEA administrators to ensure inclusion in newsletters. Flyers, point of sale marketing and press releases are also drafted so that details can be dropped in when events and menus are confirmed.*
- June, July and August are when summer promotions take place.  
*Marketing materials and flyers announcing activities are distributed to centers for posting press releases are sent to local newspapers and activities take place in senior centers. DEA administrators are made aware of progress.*

## WHY “FARM TO SENIOR”?

Rhode Island has 194,533 residents age 60 and older. This is 18.2% of the population. Of these, 8.2% live in poverty and 14% are threatened by hunger. In 2012 alone, Meals on Wheels delivered 360,299 meals to 2,650 clients through the state according to the Providence Journal. Congregate senior meals are served at 75 sites across Rhode Island.

According to the RIDEA, participation in the congregate meal sites is declining, while a stagnant RI economy means that elderly hunger is not in decline. Younger seniors seek healthier and more engaging meals, and those with metabolic diseases require greater access to fruits and vegetables. Interviews with caterers and dieticians from senior meal sites indicated that not many fresh fruit and vegetable options are available. These issues are inspiring the Department of Elderly Affairs to energize the senior meal system with fresher, healthier choices. For 2014, The Senior Nutrition Program rolled out a new look for diners in response to requests for a greater range of menu offerings and healthier fare. Farm Fresh RI is supporting the RIDEA in this effort by assisting their meal providers in sourcing RI Grown fruits and vegetables and promoting the fresh offerings to diners.

Senior congregate meals are an untapped market for local growers. As larger RI farms seek to secure wholesale markets, the RI Senior Nutrition Program represents a viable outlet for Rhode Island produce. Farm Fresh hopes that this season’s activities generate enthusiasm among diners and demand by meal providers so that RI Grown items will appear regularly on Café menus. This win-win situation improves the freshness of senior meals and increases senior access to fresh fruits and vegetables while the RI agricultural economy benefits from an expanded institutional customer base.

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## FARM FRESH SENIOR PROGRAMS

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In fulfillment of our objective to build healthier communities and increase access to fresher, tastier food, Farm Fresh Rhode Island (Farm Fresh) has developed programs specifically for the elderly community. In collaboration with The University of Rhode Island SNAP Education (URI SNAP Ed) and in cooperation with The Department of Human Services, Division of Elderly Affairs (DEA), we offer a senior nutrition education program at five senior housing sites and senior centers in the state. Also in cooperation with the DEA, we offer a local foods promotion program designed to inspire both nutrition service providers and diners to purchase fresh, local fruit and vegetables in the meals at senior centers.

### HEALTHY SERVINGS FOR SENIORS

Since 2011, Farm Fresh has been presenting Healthy Serving for Seniors (HSS) nutrition education programs. For three years this program has served seniors throughout the state, specifically targeting low-income seniors at senior housing sites and senior centers. HSS is a six week series that is co-taught with URI SNAP Ed educators. Participants in the program learn fundamental principles of nutrition including the five food groups, portion sizes, and food safety, as well as understanding the local food system and the importance of local farms and foods. By participating in at least four out of six HSS sessions, seniors have the opportunity to earn a farmers market incentive of \$15, doubling the value of their Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition (SFMNP) checks. The program series includes a visit from a local farmer who sets up an on-site farmers market. This element of the program allows seniors easy access to fresh produce as well as the opportunity to spend their incentive money. Farm Fresh also arranges transportation for participating seniors to travel to farmers market. The program increases seniors' access to healthy foods by providing them with the knowledge and resources to choose and obtain that food.



HSS PARTICIPANTS FROM PILGRIM SENIOR CENTER IN WARWICK. Groups attended field trips to farmers markets and shopped at “pop up” farmers markets hosted at their center



## FARM TO SENIOR

The success of Healthy Servings for Seniors has enabled Farm Fresh to develop an excellent relationship with the RI Division of Elderly Affairs (DEA). This affiliation has allowed us the connections necessary to plan a local foods promotion program that includes technical assistance to congregate meal sites in sourcing, marketing and celebrating Rhode Island Grown produce.

In spring 2014, Farm Fresh collaborated with DEA administrators to plan our “Farm to Senior” program. The first step was to map out a “lay of the land” and understand which agencies and caterers administer senior meal programs throughout the state. When it was clear who the decision makers were within the five administering agencies and what centers were served by which of three caterers, we began outreach. DEA Regional Directors were made aware of the opportunity, so they could encourage their Nutrition Directors and Chefs to take advantage of the technical assistance offered to source RI Grown produce. Further meetings with Regional Nutrition Directors and Chefs resulted in RI Grown produce on July and August menus in Cranston, the East Bay and Woonsocket regions of RI. Once the sourcing and menu-ing of RI Grown produce was assured, Farm Fresh coordinators contacted senior center directors in those regions to schedule activities. Farm Fresh created and shared promotional materials to raise awareness of the program.

During July and August, eight senior center cafes in the East Bay and Woonsocket regions hosted local food promotion activities. Two sites were so receptive to the program that they requested we return for a second activity. The objective of the promotional activities was to engage seniors around the subject of local food and farms. Educational games such as “Local Foods Trivia” and “Fruit & Vegetable Bingo” teach participants the environmental, economic, community and health benefits of supporting local agricultural producers. Events were designed to build demand for more local food in the senior meals by celebrating the RI Grown on the menu, offering samples of fresh local produce and awarding game winners prizes of local blueberries and peaches.

Another activity presented as part of the project offered seniors the opportunity to reflect on the role food plays in their daily lives. “What Food Means To Me” is an activity that challenges the writer to create a sentence, in ten words or less, that captures the essence of what food means to them. Participants take the time to reflect on the ways they enjoy food with family and community, how their health benefits from the food they eat, what impact their food choices have on the world and the myriad of ways food intersects our lives. The activity gives participants a new perspective on these topics as they consider and discuss with their peers. Each participant writes their sentence on a colorful piece of paper and has their picture taken with their sign. A collage is created with all of the photos, which is then displayed in the senior center. The collage serves as a reminder of the joy and community food can create, as well as of the day spent enjoying the locally grown food in their meal.

Cranston, the East Bay and Woonsocket regions continued to menu and serve RI Grown produce through the autumn months. While the HSS programs and “Farm to Senior” events have ceased for the season, flyers promoting the locally grown food in the meals continue to remind diners of the initiative. As we move into the autumn months, “Farm to Senior” activities will consist of follow up with chefs and nutrition directors to encourage the serving of RI Grown potatoes and the distribution of flyers promoting the meal when centers serve local food.



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## FARM TO SENIOR RHODE ISLAND CASE STUDIES

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### PILGRIM SENIOR CENTER

Farm Fresh, URI SNAP Ed and the DEA selected Pilgrim Senior Center in Warwick, RI to host a “Healthy Servings for Seniors” program in summer 2014. The program at Pilgrim was among our most popular, with sixty three seniors participating in the nutrition education programs. As the HSS series progressed and participants became more engaged, Farm Fresh began promoting our “Farm to Senior” activities. The activity “Local Foods Trivia” was selected by Pilgrim center directors and all center attendees were invited to play immediately following lunch on a Friday.

Seniors who took place in either or both the nutrition education programs and activities provided very positive feedback. Many reported enjoying the educational aspects of the trivia game, as well as loving the local food samples provided. All of the participating seniors reported appreciating the opportunity to come together with their peers to learn about the local food system and their own personal nutrition.

The last session of HSS at Pilgrim Senior Center took place on August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014. Mayor Scott Avedisian of Warwick made an appearance to demonstrate to the seniors how important he believes the nutrition program is to their community. Mayor Avedisian mentioned how pleased his administration is that Blackstone Health of Cranston, RI is incorporating fresh, Rhode Island grown produce in the senior meals. He said a special thank you to Farm Fresh RI and SNAP-Ed for joining together to do a six week Healthy Serving for Seniors course over the summer to raise awareness of the importance of senior nutrition.



## WOONSOCKET SENIOR CENTER

In Woonsocket this summer, a coordinated effort by Chef Paul Leduc and Executive Director Barbara Waterman of Senior Services, and “Farm to Cafeteria” staff at Farm Fresh RI raised awareness of a senior nutrition program that features the freshest produce from RI farms. Chef Paul, working with his produce distributor Wojcik & Sons, planned seasonal menus featuring Wojcik Farms zucchini, squash and peppers. With their considerable purchasing power, Woonsocket Senior Services helps support a local farm while ensuring that all of the seniors who dine at any of their 12 meal sites are able to enjoy RI Grown produce.

On August 18<sup>th</sup>, the seniors’ lunch menu featured Wojcik Farms zucchini and tomatoes. The same day that RI Grown produce was served, Farm Fresh Nutrition Educator Kelly Hemberger played a local food and nutrition trivia with a group of seniors before the meal. The seniors broke into groups of four to six, named their team and assigned a Captain. The game consisted of two rounds of ten questions related to RI agriculture, food and lore. In between rounds, a bonus question was presented. The question focused on the nutritional benefits of purple and blue fruits and was accompanied by a sample of fresh Jaswell’s Farm blueberries. Woonsocket seniors are obviously sharp and

eating their purple and blue fruits, because all the players knew that purple and blue fruits can help improve brain function. The winning team “Oh My Goodness” took first place and each member won a pint of the fresh blueberries.

Woonsocket Senior Center Director of Senior Wellness Linda Thibault, RN joined game participants in the celebration. As well as encouraging healthy eating, Linda focuses on providing opportunities for her seniors to stay active. She is passionate about the fitness and dance classes she facilitates at the senior center, as well as the trips she arranges to the local pool for water aerobics. Linda said “It is so important for the seniors to get a well-balanced meal and stay active.” She takes pride in implementing programs to promote the healthiest lifestyles for Woonsocket seniors.

Produce distributor Tom Wojcik also joined in on the trivia game, addressing the seniors to tell them about his brother’s farm where the locally sourced produce is grown. Wojcik & Son’s donated extra produce for the event, so that all participating players were able to take home 2 pounds of zucchini. A good time and a good meal were had by all, as evidenced by the survey given to seniors during the event. In response to the question “Do you believe the addition of RI Grown produce to the café menu has a positive effect on the meal?” 93% answered YES!



Woonsocket kitchen staff pictured with the meal they prepared to feature RI Grown zucchini, squash and tomatoes

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## FARM TO SENIOR CASE STUDIES

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### MAINE SENIOR FARMSHARE PROGRAM

The Maine Department of Agriculture Senior FarmShare program is its 14<sup>th</sup> year of connecting Maine seniors with farm fresh, high quality, Maine grown produce. FarmShare eligible seniors receive a benefit of \$50 to spend on produce grown by a FarmShare participating farm. The seniors are responsible for contracting with a farm of their choosing from a list of FarmShare farmers, and the parties are able to arrange their purchases as they wish over an 8 week harvest season. Participating farms are paid up front, in the spring, before harvesting begins. Program Manager Julie Waller explains that the USDA funded program began in 2000 as a partnership with the Maine office of Elder Services, the Maine Nutrition Network, UMaine Co-Op Extension and a few farmers. It has grown to include over 16,650 seniors and 105 farms.

The Maine Senior FarmShare program includes a nutrition education component, managed by the UMaine Co-op Extension. UMaine Students are dispatched to Senior Centers where they present workshops that engage attendees in discussions about food. Seniors sample local food and learn more about local farms and local product availability.

Julie Waller mentions that the most challenging part of the program has been the decrease in

funding for Maine Senior FarmShare over the years. Decreased funding has stymied program expansion plans and disappointed seniors who have learned of this program and cannot be accommodated as new participants. Dwindling funding has also created a feeling of un-certainty among participating farmers and made it difficult to retain them in the program. When the farmers cannot depend on the number of contracts they will get from one year to the next it becomes difficult for them to plan for the upcoming season. Despite the struggle of managing the program with a shrinking budget, Julie notes that the program is very successful. One of the triumphs of the work is being able to infuse local farmers with funds during a tough time of their year. The pre-payments farmers receive in the spring for the shares help them to afford the equipment and the labor they need to start their season.

At the conclusion of each season, participating FarmShare seniors are surveyed to determine their overall satisfaction with the program. Questions such as “Do you feel your diet has improved as a result of your FarmShare?”, “Are you pleased with the farmer?” and “Are you satisfied with the produce?” are designed to plan the future of the program. Maine Senior FarmShare plans are to continue optimistically while maintaining a steady number of both participants and farmers in the program.





## **GREEN MOUNTAIN FARM DIRECT**

Green Mountain Farm Direct in Newport, Vermont is a regional food distribution system that serves Vermont schools and institutions. As well as facilitating the purchase of locally grown food, Green Mountain Farm Direct (GMFD) runs a Farm-to-School program that connects Vermont farms and schools through food and education. Executive Director Katherine Sims explains that she used the Farm-to-School model to guide the creation of a Farm-to-Senior program at GMFD. About 3 ½ years ago, GMFD partnered with the Agency on Aging, farmers, and food service professionals to expand their work from schools out to senior centers and meal sites.

GMFD was well positioned to expand their local foods promotion and education work to senior meals since they already had a well-established food hub. Relationships with farmers and connections to the partners that administer the meals and sites were already made. It wasn't a difficult transition to take the lessons learned promoting health, well-being and local foods from the school to the senior center. In the past three years the Farm-to-Senior program has grown to serve 9,000 meals a month at 11 sites in Vermont.

Katherine Sims cites communication as among the most challenging aspects of the

Farm-to-Senior program. The coordination of delivering food and serving meals with a multitude of partners requires diligent communication and follow up. Possibly even more challenging than seamless communication is navigating the variety of dietary restrictions among the diners at the senior centers. So many seniors have specific dietary needs based on medical conditions and interactions with medications that planning a meal everyone can eat is very difficult. A high percentage of the senior population served at the meal sites is taking blood thinners, which requires the careful planning of serving vegetables that contain Vitamin K. Meeting the dietary restrictions of the senior population makes menu planning and vegetable serving a daunting task.

Katherine focuses on the many successes of the Farm-to-Senior program, including the joy she takes from working with the seniors. Building relationships, learning about their cultural traditions and trying the recipes the seniors grew up with all create a positive environment for everyone involved in the meals program. Katherine says that making friends with the seniors and the farmers is key to the success of the Farm-to-Senior program. While GMFD does not typically market the Farm-to-Senior program, sometimes they will have an article in the Harvest of the Month local newsletter. They also visit senior centers to share recipes, taste test local produce, and model how to prepare certain meals. The future plans of the program are to continue with the promotion and education activities and keep the connections and satisfaction of all professionals involved.

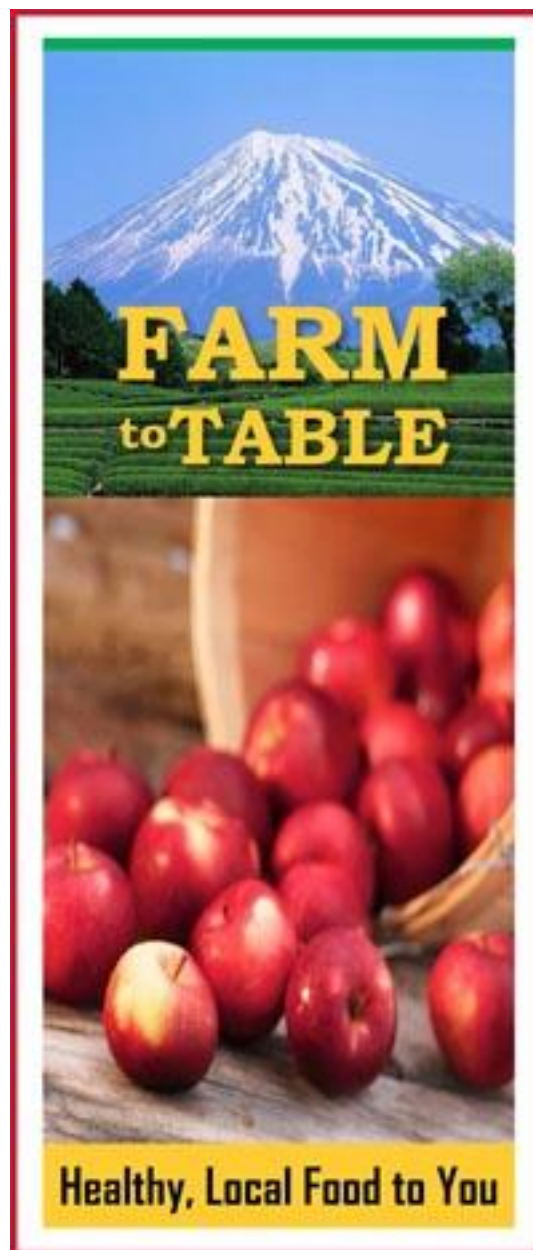


## SEATTLE & KING COUNTY FARM TO TABLE

Seattle and King County Farm to Table began connecting Washington senior centers with fresh, locally grown produce in 2010. The program focuses on facilitating procurement and preparation of local produce for programs that serve seniors and children so that healthy food is affordable and easy to access. Maria Langlais, Planning and Development Specialist, launched the project with a "Communities Putting Prevention to Work" (CPPW) grant through the Aging and Disability Services Agency. The CPPW grant was originally limited to childhood obesity prevention, however senior health was added to the grant as a way to compare and test models for system change. The initial grant ended in 2012; however the program was so successful and well received, that the City of Seattle continues to fund the work.

Maria credits the collaborative nature of all the partners on the Farm to Table project with the success. Partners include: The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Farm to School programs, Puget Sound Food Network (PSFN), a division of the Seattle Human Services Department, and the Aging and Disability Services funded senior nutrition providers including Catholic Community Services, Lifelong Aids Association/ Chicken Soup Brigade, and Senior Services. Maria explained that since there are many organizations involved in the project that it runs less like a "program" and more like a partnership. The primary goal of program was to make it easier and cheaper for the 50 meal sites and 9 agencies that administer senior nutrition programs to purchase fresh and nutritious local produce.

Programming started in the centers where leaders and the community were most interested in making improvements to the food. Educators worked with seniors and the meal providers to teach them about local foods. Lessons include cooking classes and demonstrations, kitchen skills building sessions and understanding the seasonality of local vegetables for menu planning. Farm to Table recipes were provided to the seniors so they could try the dishes at home.



Maria mentions that the major challenge of the program is changing the way food is produced and prepared on a daily basis. Maria says “There is not a one-size-fits-all that works for older adult programs.” Depending on the centers food service, supply chains and constituency, changing the procurement and preparation of food requires customization. Many centers were unfamiliar with scratch cooking and faced challenges sourcing fresh product in the correct amounts, determining the cost of production, cooking amounts that were consistent volumes, and yielding correct portion sizes. Staff turnover and capacity are key considerations in changing food production from reheating to scratch cooking. Training staff on receiving and preparing raw food, as well as on food safety and meeting the nutritional requirements of the meals were all steps in the process for making change.

The Farm to Table project learned that change happens over time and there is always room for improvement. Maria noted that the successes of the program are the increased market demand for local produce and stable contracts between growers and purchasers. New farmers emerged as they recognized the opportunity, and they grew more and different products which allows for more variety now in the meals.

Seattle & King County Farm to Table plans to continue working to increase the health and well-being of the community’s most vulnerable populations. Marias role has now evolved from working on the ground to focusing on identifying opportunities for partners and connecting them to those opportunities. Maria recommends that as you begin a new program in local foods advocacy, you “keep your definition of success open as things will shift. It may not go as planned, but may still have a positive impact.”

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## RI FARM TO SENIOR RESULTS

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### Senior centers experienced enhanced engagement among seniors at their sites.

- **10** “Farm to Senior” promotional activities at 8 different senior centers
- **5** Healthy Servings for Seniors nutrition education series at 5 different senior centers
- **257** seniors participated in local foods promotion activities
- **16** items offered as samples/prizes for participation, including things such as:
  - Bonus Bucks redeemable at RI Farmers Markets
  - Veggie Boxes full of fresh, local produce
  - Green Bell peppers
  - Cherry tomatoes
  - Peaches

### Senior Centers purchased more food from local producers, supporting the local agricultural economy.

- **40** RI senior centers served RI Grown produce during July, August, September and October of 2014, including:
  - Zucchini and Summer Squash
  - Tomatoes
  - Cucumbers
  - Bell Peppers
  - Potatoes
  - Butternut Squash
- **\$4000+** of local food purchased by Senior Centers during the 2014 harvest season

### Seniors engaged around the importance of healthy, local food.

- 51% of seniors surveyed knew that Rhode Island is home to over 1200 farms
- 93% of seniors surveyed were aware of the multiple benefits of purchasing local food, including supporting the local economy, helping protect open space and the environment and building community
- 98% of seniors know that the freshest fruits and vegetables come from Rhode Island farms

### Seniors’ experience at meal sites was improved by the addition of locally grown.

- 93% of seniors surveyed believe the addition of RI Grown produce to the cafe menu has a positive effect on the meal.

### FEEDBACK FROM SENIORS ON WHY INCLUDING RI GROWN IN THE MEAL IS A POSITIVE CHANGE

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| • The produce is fresh from the farm | • It’s good for us!                                   |
| • It tastes better!                  | • Fresh taste better                                  |
| • More nutritious                    | • We all benefit from the fresh fruits and vegetables |
| • “Fresh” is the magic word          | • It’s healthy  |
| • Healthier for you                  | • The meals look and taste better                     |
| • Adds flavor to the meals           |   |



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations



Department of Human Services  
Division of Elderly Affairs

**RELEASE:** December 12, 2013

**BY:** Catherine Taylor, Director, Rhode Island Division of Elderly Affairs

**A FRESH LOOK FOR SENIOR NUTRITION IN RHODE ISLAND**

Do you want to attend a “congregate meal site”? Although the venues are friendly and inviting and the food is healthy and delicious, the name conjures up something old-fashioned and, to many potential diners, not entirely appealing.

Welcome to the Café!

The Senior Nutrition Program in Rhode Island is rolling out a new look for 2014 that reflects how we are already catering to the changing appetites of older Rhode Islanders. Each regional nutrition program now has a new name: Blackstone Café, East Bay Café, Westbay Café, Northern Rhode Island Café (run by Senior Services, Inc. of Woonsocket) and Capitol City Café (run by Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island).

Our five programs are delivering three meal choices daily to your local community or senior center for your noontime dining enjoyment. The “spa option” for the health conscious features lighter fare such as a main course salad. The “pub option” offers a sandwich for those who want a traditional, wholesome lunch. And the “hearty option” provides a full, hot dinner for those who prefer their main meal at midday.

Our diners have been requesting more flexible dining hours, a range of menu offerings and healthier fare, and we are responding by extending the popular Café concept statewide to all senior meal sites. This new initiative is complemented by Meals on Wheels’ growing cooperative arrangements with select local restaurants that honor vouchers to seniors, expanding the geographical reach of senior dining as well as offering occasional breakfast and dinner opportunities.

-more-

**Director Taylor’s January 2014 column-page 2**

The Café welcomes all diners 60 and over (in the case of a married couple, only one spouse must be over 60), regardless of ability or income. Lunches are served five days a week. There is a suggested participant donation of \$3 per meal to help sustain the program, which is funded by federal Older Americans Act dollars. SNAP beneficiaries may use their SNAP benefits to contribute toward their meal. And the Cafés can always use your help as a volunteer.

During the year ending September 30, 2013, senior community meals sites served nearly 338,000 meals. States receive an incentive payment from the U.S. Administration on Aging for the number of meals we report – so, the more diners that join us, the more we can serve!

For more information, or to find the most convenient Café, call the Division of Elderly Affairs at 401-462-0931. At least 24 hours' notice is required for reservations. (We need to balance serving everyone who wants to join us with avoiding expensive waste.) Transportation to the nearest meal site and/or senior center is available through the RIdE program, at a cost of \$2 each way.

Refresh with a chef salad after a Zumba workout at Blackstone Café at Leon Mathieu in Pawtucket. Relax in front of the fire with soup and sandwich at Westbay Café at The Center in South Kingstown. Dig into Yankee Pot Roast on a winter's afternoon at Northern RI Café in Woonsocket. Whatever your taste, come find it at the Café!

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## **APPENDIX B: WOONSOCKET & CRANSTON SENIOR SERVICES PRESS RELEASE**

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Release: August 13, 2014

Contact: Kimberly Clark, Farm to Cafeteria Coordinator, Farm Fresh RI [kimclark@farmfreshri.org](mailto:kimclark@farmfreshri.org) cell 646 541-0952

### **Locally Grown Fruit and Veggie Trivia on the Menu for Woonsocket Seniors**

Woonsocket:

Farm Fresh RI and the RI Division of Elderly Affairs are collaborating to promote RI Grown produce in senior cafes throughout the state this summer. In Woonsocket, a coordinated effort by Chef Paul LeDuc and Executive Director Barbara Waterman of Senior Services, and “Farm to Cafeteria” staff at Farm Fresh RI is raising awareness of a senior nutrition program that features the freshest produce from RI farms. Chef Paul, working with his produce distributor Wojcik & Sons, has planned seasonal menu featuring Wojcik Farms zucchini, squash and peppers for August 18.

While the kitchen prepares the freshly harvested produce, Farm Fresh RI Nutrition Educator Kelly Hemberger will be in the dining room to celebrate the featured RI Grown produce with seniors. Kelly will play games with attendees such as “Local Foods Trivia” and “Fruit and Vegetable Bingo”. These fun and competitive activities will complement the meal, while delivering information on the nutritional, community and environmental benefits of supporting local agriculture.

Local Foods Trivia and Fruit & Vegetable Bingo games have been enjoyed by seniors throughout the East Bay this summer, and will also be presented at the Lincoln Senior Center on August 25 at 11:00 a.m.

Over 18% of Rhode Islanders are age 60 and older, of which 14% are threatened by hunger. The Rhode Island Department of Elderly Affairs hosts regional nutrition programs throughout the state to address elderly hunger. Last year in RI, senior community meals served nearly 338,000 meals. For 2014, The Senior Nutrition Program rolled out a new look for diners in response to requests for a greater range of menu offerings and healthier fare. Farm Fresh RI is supporting the RIDEA in this effort by assisting their meal providers in sourcing RI Grown fruits and vegetables and promoting the fresh offerings to diners.

As larger RI farms seek secure wholesale markets, the RI Senior Nutrition Program represents a viable outlet for Rhode Island farmers. Farm Fresh hopes that this season’s activities generate enthusiasm among diners and demand by meal providers so that RI Grown items continue to appear regularly on Café menus. “Consistent purchases by institutional customers such as Rhode Island’s Senior Nutrition Program are what our agricultural producers need to assure their investments in expansion. These sustainable purchasing relationships are a win-win for everyone. Our seniors benefit by enjoying the freshest and most delicious food as our agricultural economy thrives. This kind of activity fosters the development of a secure and sustainable local food system”, notes Farm Fresh Co-Executive Director Sheri Griffin.

Senior Café’s serve lunch 5 days per week to all diners 60 and over (in the case of a married couple, only one spouse must be over 60) regardless of ability or income. There is a suggested participant donation of \$3 per meal to help sustain the program, which is funded by the Older Americans Act dollars. SNAP beneficiaries may use their SNAP benefits to contribute toward their meal.

For more information about senior dining, or to find the most convenient Café, call the Division of Elderly Affairs at 401 462-0931.

For additional information on Farm Fresh RI’s “Farm to Cafeteria” initiative, contact Farm to Cafeteria Coordinator Kim Clark at 401 312-4250 or [kimclark@farmfreshri.org](mailto:kimclark@farmfreshri.org) #

Release: August 13, 2014

Contact: Kimberly Clark, Farm to Cafeteria Coordinator, Farm Fresh RI [kimclark@farmfreshri.org](mailto:kimclark@farmfreshri.org) cell 646 541-0952

## **Locally Grown Fruit and Veggie Bingo on the Menu for East Bay Seniors**

Bristol and Newport Counties:

Farm Fresh RI and the RI Division of Elderly Affairs are collaborating to promote RI Grown produce in senior cafes throughout the state this summer. In the East Bay, a coordinated effort by Chef Ray Sinapi of Blackstone Health, EBCAP Nutrition Coordinator Karen Emmes and “Farm to Cafeteria” staff at Farm Fresh RI is raising awareness of senior nutrition programs that feature the freshest produce from RI farms. As Chef Ray plans seasonal menu items and prepares freshly harvested produce, Farm Fresh programs celebrate the featured RI Grown produce in dining rooms. Games such as “Fruit and Vegetable Bingo” and “Local Foods Trivia” engage seniors in fun and competitive activities. These entertaining programs complement the meal, while delivering information on the nutritional, community and environmental benefits of supporting local agriculture.

Local Foods Trivia games have been enjoyed by seniors at the Warren and Tiverton Senior Centers already this summer, and additional events are planned for the following dates:

- Middletown Senior Center, August 14 at 11:30
- Tiverton Senior Center on August 15 at 11:15
- Edward King House in Newport on August 19 at 12:15
- East Providence Senior Center on August 27 at 12:15

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# JOIN US FOR A CELEBRATION OF THE SEASON ON AUGUST 18th!

Play Local Foods Trivia from  
10 – 11 am with guest Kelly  
Hemberger from Farm Fresh RI

*WIN FABULOUS PRIZES!!*

Enjoy a delicious  
**LUNCH at 11:30**  
featuring Wojcik's Farm fresh  
squash, zucchini and peppers!



# TOMATOES



## ***SURVEY***

1. How many farms are there in Rhode Island?

- A. 50
- B. 100
- C. over 1200



2. Purchasing RI Grown fruits and vegetables:

- A. Supports the local economy
- B. Helps protect open space and the environment
- C. Builds a strong sense of community
- D. All of the above

3. The freshest fruits and vegetables come from:

- A. The grocery store
- B. The farmers market

4. Do you believe the addition of RI Grown produce to the cafe menu has a positive effect on the meal?

- A. Yes, because \_\_\_\_\_
- B. No

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5. The freshest fruits and vegetables come from:

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- B. The farmers market

4. Do you believe the addition of RI Grown produce to the cafe menu has a positive effect on the meal?

- C. Yes, because \_\_\_\_\_
- D. No



# Veggie Bingo





## APPENDIX F: LOCAL FOODS TRIVIA GAME COMPONENTS

### Nutrition and Local Food Trivia #1

Clue	Name
1. This type of melon that has a thick, rough, outer skin (called a rind) and bright orange flesh. It has a very sweet taste and grows on a vine. We harvest it here in RI in September. It is packed with vitamins A & C	cantaloupe
2. This vegetable is planted in the autumn and harvested in the summer. It stores well and is used year round. It is a bulb. It is protected by a white, papery covering. It is used in cooking to add flavor to many dishes.	garlic
3. About how many farms are there in RI?	a. 50 b. 100 <b>c. Over 1200</b>
4. This person plants, grows, and harvests food.	Farmer
5. This yellow fruit is the most popular fruit in the United States. High in potassium and Vitamin A & C, this fruit must be peeled. It does not grow in Rhode Island	Banana
6. The 1# agricultural product in RI ( Hint: this is not something we eat)	Turf/ grass
7. We eat the leaves of this vegetable. It can be green or purple, and is the main ingredient in coleslaw. It is a good source of Vitamins C & K	Cabbage
8. This is the first vegetable Rhode Islanders harvest in the springtime, usually around Mid-May. We eat the long, green stems, which are stalks with pointy buds on top.	Asparagus
9. This fruit is often mistaken for a vegetable, though it is actually the fruit part of the plant. Snack on small ones, or slice a larger one and add it to sandwiches or make it into a sauce. This fruit is packed with vitamin C.	tomato
10. Name 3 types of produce harvested in RI in the summer. Hint: Think about items that contain seeds	Tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, cucumbers, watermelon, zucchini, summer squash, peaches & berries
<b>Intermission***</b>	<b>Ask bonus question while tallying first round points BONUS:</b>
11. This is the most popular vegetable in the United States. It grows underground and is packed with potassium. It's in the top five revenue generating agriculture products in RI	potato
12. About how many farmers markets are there in RI?	a. 5 <b>b. 50</b> c. 150

13. An area of land devoted to raising animals and growing crops.	Farms
14. Our bodies need this component of fruits, vegetables and whole grains to keep our digestive systems clean and regular. It also leaves you feeling full longer.	Fiber
15. Here you will find an assortment of delicious local foods sold by farmers directly to consumers. They sell produce such as fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, yogurt, cheese, and herbs.	Farmers market
16. How can you use your spending money to support RI Farmers and the local economy?	Shop at Farmers Markets & Farm Stands
17. Why is it important to eat an assortment of vegetables?	To get a variety of vitamins and minerals
18. On average how many seeds are on the outside of a strawberry <b>Hint:</b> under 500 and closest to the number without going over	200 seeds
19. This is the best way to get the vitamins and minerals that your body needs	Eat a wide variety of fresh foods
20. Name a blue or purple fruit or vegetable?	Eggplant, blueberries, purple grapes, figs, plums

## Nutrition and Local Food Trivia #2

1. How many food groups are there?	5 food groups
2. What are the food groups?	Vegetables, fruit, dairy, protein, grains
3. You say “calcium” and most people think of milk, but this green small tree like vegetable is rich in calcium as well.	broccoli
4. On average what is the distance food travels in distribution to our supermarkets?	a. 100 miles <b>b. 1500 miles</b> c. 3000 miles
5. Citrus fruits are a good source of what vitamin?	Vitamin C
6. What percent of Rhode Island’s total area is Farm land?	Under 50% closes without going over <b>10%</b>
7. Corn and potatoes are grown mostly in the coastal areas of Rhode Island?	<b>True</b> or False
8. After cars, the food system uses more fossil fuels than any other sector of the economy	<b>True</b> or False
9. What is the official state fruit of Rhode Island?	Greening Apples
10. Name the northern Rhode Island town where the Greening Apple was first cultivated by Roger Williams?	Cumberland

<b><u>Intermission</u></b>	Bonus:
11. What fish dish was recently declared the official Rhode Island State appetizer?	Fried Calamari
12. The number of women Farmers in RI? <b><u>Hint:</u></b> Less than 500 and closest to the number without going over gets the point	277
13. How many cups of vegetables on average do a person over the age of 65 needs? I will except male or female	Male = 2.5 cups Female = 2 cups
14. Carrots and parsnips can spend the entire winter in the ground and be eaten the next spring?	<b><u>True</u></b> or False
15. Name one way farm land benefits the environment.	Air filter, water filter, preserves land,
16. How many RI Dairy Farms are there in the Rhody Fresh Milk Co-Op?	8 = The Baily Brook Farm, Emma Acres, Breene Hollow Farm, Elmrock Farm, Tomaquag Valley Farm, Cottrell Homestead, Wanton farm, Escobar's Highland Farm, Elmrock Farm
17. This is a popular breakfast food. On average Americans consume 173 of these each year. Eating this is a good source of Vitamin D which vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium to help keep bones strong.	Eggs
18. Aquaculture- refers to breeding and harvesting of plants and animals in all types of water. RI's aquaculture farms have increased substantially since the 1990's, generating a reported \$2.5 million in revenue in 2011. This aquacultured mollusk acts as a filter feeder and cleans the water. These can be harvested in RI <b><u>Hint:</u></b> Only 1 in 10,000 will naturally produce a pearl	oysters
19. What RI grown product appeared on the menu on <b><u>DATE</u></b> ?	Fill in for specific site
20. This fruit taste like a mix between a banana and a mango .It is harvested in RI. <b><u>Hint:</u></b> it starts with a P and the word repeats itself in the name	Paw Paw



## Score Sheet

Team Name	Points Round #1	Points Round #2	Bonus Points	Total

**Winning Team Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Score:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Team Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**( Circle One)**

A. 50

B. 100

C. Over 1200

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_



**Score for Round #1:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Team Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

**(Circle One)**

A. 5

B. 50

C.150

12. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_\_

17. \_\_\_\_\_

18. \_\_\_\_\_

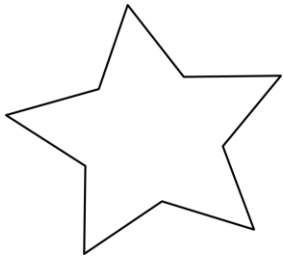
19. \_\_\_\_\_

20. \_\_\_\_\_

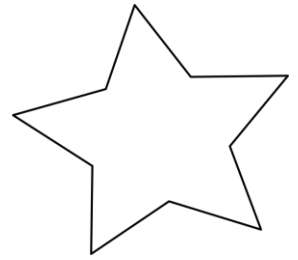


**Score for Round #2:** \_\_\_\_\_





## Bonus Question

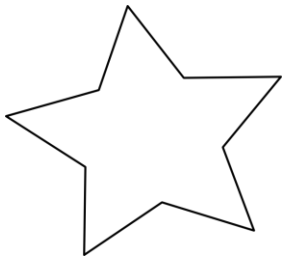


Henry Ford, notorious automobile manufacturer and lover of vegetables, was so devoted to this particular vegetable that he believed it held the secret to longevity. Which vegetable did Mr. Ford dress as and celebrate at a banquet in Detroit in the 1920's when he declared:

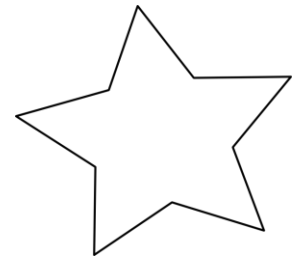
"I am King Carrota! I am full of vitamins, full of iron, full of iodine, full of bottled sunshine. I have no enemy but a bad cook. I am a friend of flappers and the bald-headed, the spindly baby and three-chinned monsters, but who shall mix me with canned peas shall be consigned to outer darkness."

What is the vegetable? \_\_\_\_\_

Team Name \_\_\_\_\_



## Bonus Question



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What is the vegetable? \_\_\_\_\_

Team Name \_\_\_\_\_