

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Food Project to Begin SNAP Accessible Winter Farmers Market in Lynn

Lynn, MA--November 7, 2017--Lynn residents who want to use their SNAP dollars to eat healthier food year-round will soon be able to do just that. The Food Project is pleased to announce that they will be opening a winter farmers market starting on November 18 that will take place at the Lynn YMCA located at 20 Neptune Boulevard. This SNAP/HIP accessible farmers market will operate every third Saturday of the month from 11 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., and run until May 19, 2018. Merchants will include several produce vendors, a fish vendor, a craft/jewelry stand, and a coffee shop. This market is in addition to The Food Project's Central Square Farmers Market—set to start its season in July 2018.

Earlier this year, the state legislature increased funding and made other changes to the Massachusetts' Healthy Incentives Program (HIP). These changes allowed SNAP recipients to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from farmers markets and CSAs, while receiving SNAP matching funds up to \$80 from the state (depending on household size). As a result, The Food Project's SNAP accessible farmers markets in Lynn and Dorchester have seen significant increases in the number of customers who are able to purchase fresh, healthy produce.

"Recent changes to HIP funding have greatly expanded access to fresh, healthy produce for everyone," said J. Harrison, The Food Project's Executive Director. "In 2006, The Food Project became one of the first farms in the state to accept SNAP benefits electronically at our Central Square Farmers Market—SNAP sales were about \$1,000 for the entire year. This season, there were \$1,000 in SNAP sales on the opening day alone!"

The statewide numbers not only bear this out but tell an even bigger story. In 2016, Massachusetts residents spent about \$470,000 in SNAP dollars at farmers markets throughout the state. As of November 1, the MA Department of Transitional Assistance (the agency that manages SNAP/HIP funding) reports that residents had already spent \$2.3 million on fresh produce at farmers markets throughout the state, almost triple the amount budgeted for the entire year. This means that 30,000 households have taken advantage of the benefit, providing their families with healthy food, while increasing direct sales to Massachusetts farmers.

The Food Project is excited to begin this new winter farmers market which will ensure that Lynn families continue to have access to locally grown, fresh, healthy produce throughout the year. This market is in addition to The Food Project's Central Square Farmers Market—set to start its season in June 2018.

To learn more about HIP and find other farmers markets that accept SNAP benefits, visit www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/hip.htm or call 1-800-645-8333.



About The Food Project

Since their founding in 1991, The Food Project has grown into a nationally-recognized non-profit organization that works at the intersection of youth, food, and community. For more than 26 years, The Food Project has brought youth and adults from diverse backgrounds together on their farms to produce healthy food for residents of the city and suburbs to build a local and sustainable food system. The organization believes that food is a unique vehicle for creating personal and social change. The Food Project aims to transform our food system into an equitable and inclusive model that is community-controlled and supports food justice for all.

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