

FY 2014

\$100,000 to Maryland Farmers Market Association, Gambrills, MD, to foster a robust network of farmers' markets in Maryland, expand direct-to-consumer markets, and engage new customer bases.

Final Report

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)
Final Performance Report**

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your FMPP award objectives. As stated in the FMPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future FMPP or Local Food Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by FMPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to FMPP staff to avoid delays:

FMPP Phone: 202-690-4152; Email: USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-690-4152

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact FMPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

Report Date Range: <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2014- September 29, 2016
Authorized Representative Name:	Amy Crone
Authorized Representative Phone:	410-929-1645
Authorized Representative Email:	acrone@marylandfma.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Maryland Farmers Market Association
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Building a Robust and Cohesive Network of Farmers Markets in Maryland
Grant Agreement Number: <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	14-FMPPX-MD-0800
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Baltimore, Maryland
Total Awarded Budget:	\$100,000

FMPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

- Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).
 Different individual: Name: _____; Email: _____; Phone: _____

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0287. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable sex, marital status, or familial status, parental status religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

i. Goal/Objective 1: Sustaining and growing the Maryland Market Money program

a. Progress Made:

- Program implementation at 22 farmers markets in six Maryland counties during the 2015 season and 21 farmers markets in five Maryland counties in 2016:
 - While the five markets in Allegany County determined that they did not have capacity to continue the program after the 2015 market season, we added four new markets in three counties (Baltimore City and Anne Arundel and Prince George’s Counties) to the program in 2016. All new markets are located in LI/LA areas. This included ongoing TA, site visits and mid-season individual market manager meetings, a post-season meeting for all participating market managers, and completion of financial closeout;
- Completion of 2015 Maryland Market Money summary report (Appendix A);
- Establishment of a Advisory Committee to inform program development;
- A post-2015 season program review and development of revised program guidelines, in concert with the Advisory Committee (<http://www.marylandfma.org/resources/offering-mmm-at-your-market/>);
- Two post-2015 season meetings, grouped by region, to debrief successes and challenges and devise strategies for regional coordination in 2016;
- Individual pre-season conversations with all 2016 participants to discuss program implementation, fundraising, and data collection procedures;
- A pre-season market managers meeting to explain the new procedures for MMM and to strategize regarding collective fundraising efforts;
- Introduced new reusable scrip (tokens) and print receipts for the 2016 season to streamline program operations for participants, farmers, and market managers;
- Revision of the data tracking tool based on market manager input; and,
- Developed survey tools to conduct a robust program evaluation with Johns Hopkins University’s Center for a Livable Future in 2016;
- Conducted monthly check-ins with and provided progress summaries to all 21 managers of participating markets during the 2016 season.

b. Impact on Community:

- 6,855 food-insecure households— approximately 17,163 food-insecure individuals—utilized MMM to access fresh, locally-produced foods in 2015, a 42% increase over the prior year;
- Participants utilized \$172,445 in MMM and spent an additional \$220,061 in combined SNAP, WIC FVC, and FMNP benefits, resulting in \$391,896 in additional revenue for local producers;

- Farmers Market Manager Certification Program:
 - o Over the grant period, MDFMA continued research and conversation with content experts to develop a farmers market certification program based on established models and input from regional partners. These included project partners Future Harvest-CASA, the Town Creek Foundation, and farmers and market managers. In March 2016, two MDFMA staff attended the Michigan Farmers Market Association's (MIFMA) annual conference to learn about MIFMA's successful farmers market manager training & certification program.
 - o Over winter and spring 2016, MDFMA developed and launched a "Starting a Farmers Market" series (see Appendix B), which spanned three months and included 22 participants. These events consisted of a monthly webinar paired with "office hours," providing participants with a broad overview of topics in the former and an opportunity for one-on-one consultation in the latter. This series served as the launch of MDFMA's formal training programs for farmers market managers.
 - o Additionally, MDFMA provided trainings for market managers at a number of conferences and workshops, including: the FH-CASA Annual Conference, Wholesome Wave Summit, Allegany County Farmers Markets Annual Meeting, Southern Maryland Fruit and Vegetable Meeting, and the Maryland Farmers Market Conference.
- Technology & Innovation Fund:
 - o Prior to the 2016 market season, MDFMA designed and implemented the mini-grant application (Appendix C), received eight applications, and was able to fund 6 of those received.
 - o Funded projects included: 1) the purchases of three laptops: one for shared use among the Takoma Park, Kenilworth, and Catonsville markets, one for the Park Heights market, and one for the Edmondson Village market, all to facilitate on-site data entry during the markets; 2) the purchase of an iPad mini for the Govanstowne market, to assist with market data management, recipe searches, and newsletter sign-ups at market; 3) the purchase of three iPads for Crossroads to better manage Fresh Checks (their name for Maryland Market Money) distribution data; and, 4) the purchase of mobile ads to promote the Annapolis farmers market via multimedia platforms.

b. Impact on Community:

The Technology & Innovation Fund provided needed funds to markets to improve their data management systems, as well as additional options for improved communication and improved on-site tools for engaging community on market day. The equipment purchased with the provided funds simplified the process of entering and submitting essential program data for several market managers, allowing them to devote more time and energy to market day tasks such as creating a meaningful experience for their market customers. This fund provided managers with much-needed funding to purchase equipment to help them keep complete, orderly market records. For several markets these funds enabled them to better manage their Maryland Market Money programs, and ensure that they had adequate technology to be able to continue to accept SNAP at their market.

2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.
 - i. Number of direct jobs created: n/a
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: n/a
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: n/a
 - iv. Number of markets expanded: 26
 - v. Number of new markets established: 2
 - vi. Market sales increased by \$392,956 and increased by 34% in the 2015 to mid-2016 season.
 - vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 200
 - a. Percent Increase: No baseline data was collected in 2014, so there is no means to calculate this percent increase. Between 2015 and 2016 approximately 200 farmers benefitted from the project, so while difficult to assess percent increase, the total number of farmers reached was the majority of those participating in farmers markets in Maryland.

3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?

The Maryland Market Money program, which provides matching funding to market patrons receiving federal nutrition benefits, enabled the 26 markets participating in the program over the course of the grant period to broaden its customer base to low-income/low-access individuals. Over the grant period, approximately 12,818 households receiving federal nutrition benefits—or approximately 38,454 low-income Maryland residents-- shopped at MDFMA’s MMM partner markets. While MDFMA and its partner markets do not collect participant demographic data for to minimize burden on MMM participants and market managers, we know that a number of the MMM markets—particularly those located in Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties—cater to a large Latino population; the Montgomery County MMM markets are frequented by Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean shoppers, particularly older adults; the Montgomery County markets and one Baltimore City market (Park Heights Community Farmers Market) serve a large population of Russian seniors. In both 2015 survey data and anecdotes from participants and market managers, these shoppers indicate that MMM is a significant factor in their decision to patronize local farmers markets. The new MMM markets that joined the program in 2016 are all located in LI/LA communities and primarily serve Black and Latino residents. MDFMA also built strategic relationships to facilitate outreach to potential program participants. The most notable of these partnerships included a collaboration with Amerigroup in the 2015 season to conduct outreach events at WIC clinics throughout Baltimore City and with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to fund SNAP incentives at two Baltimore City markets in 2016.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners?

As a statewide organization working to support a diverse group of constituents, community and institutional partnerships are integral to MDFMA’s work. For this FMPP project, our primary partners included: MMM partner markets and, where applicable, their affiliate non-profit organizations or local government agencies; Johns Hopkins University Center for a Livable Future (CLF); Union of Concerned Scientists; University of Maryland Extension (UME), the Baltimore Partnership to End Childhood Hunger (Partnership); Future Harvest CASA; Farm Alliance of Baltimore City; Wholesome Wave; Share Our Strength/No Kid Hungry; International Rescue Committee Baltimore (IRC); Baltimore City Health Department; University of Maryland Center for Integrative Medicine; Johns Hopkins Hospital; Sinai

Hospital; Amerigroup; Baltimore City WIC & Johns Hopkins WIC; Maryland Department of Agriculture; Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene; Maryland Department of Human Resources.

ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?

Farmers market partners and their affiliate organizations/agencies implemented the Maryland Market Money program, including on-site operations, data collection and reporting, outreach to potential participants, and participation in requisite trainings. State and City agencies shared program information with participants, farmers, and market managers through direct mailers and social media. Future Harvest CASA, Farm Alliance, and UME provided information about MDFMA's programs and services to farmers and consumers and collaborated on trainings and workshops. UME coordinated Market to Mealtime materials development, volunteer recruitment and training, scheduling, and evaluation. CLF oversaw development of the MMM evaluation materials and protocol. Union of Concerned Scientists, Wholesome Wave, and the named hospital partners informed the development of an FVRx program for implementation in Baltimore City through content expertise, access to national partners operating similar initiatives, collaborative grant writing, and ongoing discussion of an optimal program model. The Partnership and Share our Strength helped publicize Market to Mealtime. Amerigroup and Baltimore City/Johns Hopkins WIC collaborated on promoting MMM to WIC participants in 2015; IRC supported MMM for SNAP participants in 2016.

iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?

The majority of the project activities will continue beyond the grant period, with ongoing involvement of partners in the manners outlined above. The primary exception is Market to Mealtime (M2M), with which MDFMA will continue to collaborate but will not assume a leadership role. While exact parameters of our partnership with Extension will be determined closer to the 2017 market season, we envision that MDFMA will continue to connect partner markets interested in M2M with Extension and that Extension will assume all program management responsibilities. Additionally, because extensive research has led MDFMA to the conclusion that FVRx program is optimally managed by a healthcare institution rather than farmers market organization, future FVRx activities will be led by the hospitals and not MDFMA. MDFMA continues to support interested hospitals in exploring program design and funding, and will collaborate as a subcontractor should any program come to fruition.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project?

Yes, FHCASA contributed to the results achieved so far by providing space for MDFMA's educational programming at their annual conference in January 2016; this served as the public kick-off for the MDFMA educational *Starting a Farmers Market Series*.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?

MDFMA published our 2015 MMM report electronically in March 2016, posting it on our website for public access. We also shared the link to the website link via social media.

ii. To whom did you publicize the results?

Our website is available to the public so that anyone may access our 2015 MMM report. We also shared the report with our market partners so that they could communicate information to their sponsoring organizations and/or community partners.

- iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? We reached 372 people via Facebook by sharing the link to the annual report as a post. This post was also shared by a partner market organization with an estimated level of reach twice that of MDFMA. There were 67 page views of the report via our website.

*Send any publicity information (brochures, announcements, newsletters, etc.) electronically along with this report. Non-electronic promotional items should be digitally photographed and emailed with this report (do not send the actual item).

- 7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?
 - i. If so, how did you collect the information?

In 2015, MDFMA developed an MMM participant survey, which was conducted at seven markets. Towards the latter part of the 2016 market season, MDFMA's AmeriCorps VISTA began collecting testimonials and feedback from MMM participants, farmers, and market vendors. Additionally, MDFMA's staff—particularly our MMM Program Manager—are in ongoing communication with program partners and stakeholders to receive feedback about our work.
 - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

Results from the 2015 survey affirmed that the program does increase fruit and vegetable consumption among the vast majority of participants, is a primary reason for their spending their federal nutrition benefits at farmers markets, and enables them to access higher quality foods. 2016 testimonials are still in development, but a sample is attached (Appendix D).
- 8. Budget Summary:
 - i. As part of the FMPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report:
 - ii. Did the project generate any income? No
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? N/A

- 9. Lessons Learned:
 - i. Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).

Maryland Market Money (MMM): Appropriate training on how to collect and report MMM data (MMM distributed, spent, benefits spent, # of customers, etc.) is critical to receiving timely, accurate data. Of the five new market managers participating in the MMM program in the 2016 season, four received detailed training on data collection and reporting procedures. The market whose team did not participate in a full training repeatedly submitted inaccurate data, requiring more intervention on behalf of the MMM program coordinator. In contrast, the managers who received the full training consistently reported reliable data in a timely manner. Along a similar vein, MDFMA learned the importance of working with managers to develop data tracking sheet options and reporting methods that fit individual market management styles. Prior to the 2016 MMM season, we reworked existing data sheets to allow managers to choose which tracking layout worked best for them. We allowed managers to choose between three different reporting methods. This flexibility and level of accommodation proved

successful with most markets improving their data accuracy and reporting consistency compared to past seasons.

Market to Mealtime (M2M): Through this collaboration with FSNE, we learned a great deal about what does not work with regards to nutrition education at farmers markets. M2M is structured as a static display, intended as an accessible resource at the point of sale with limited commitment required of passers-by. Volunteers who have undergone a short training but who otherwise often possess limited nutritional background staff the table; in hindsight, FSNE's one-hour training was not sufficient preparation for volunteers to sufficiently learn the content and to develop comfort approaching and interacting with shoppers at market. Despite extensive outreach to potential volunteers, MDFMA received inquiries from 31 potential volunteers in 2015, 11 of who completed FSNE's training. Moreover, it was extremely difficult to ensure that the volunteers were reliable and meeting program expectations; namely, appearing on their scheduled dates, actively engaging market shoppers, and soliciting the required evaluation forms from participants. In 2015, we received only two evaluation forms, demonstrating that a successful volunteer-based nutrition education program will require greater staff investment. MDFMA does not currently have the resources or staff capacity to oversee a significant volunteer program, but would gladly revisit such an initiative if adequate resources were secured. As noted in the 2nd interim performance report, MDFMA conducted a thorough cost-benefit analysis and determined that, based on the 2015 challenges and limited capacity, it would not be strategic to continue with M2M in 2016. FSNE continues to oversee this program, and we are in ongoing dialogue with them about its direction and opportunities to support. Lastly, MDFMA brought on an AmeriCorps VISTA in August 2016 whose primary responsibility is developing nutrition education and/or local, seasonal food promotion for delivery at farmers markets. She is surveying the local landscape of nutrition education programs, researching successful national farmers market-based programs, and is surveying Maryland farmers market shoppers, managers, and vendors to determine an appropriate approach for the markets within our network.

Farmers Market Manager Certification Program: Over the grant period, we have come to realize that curriculum development, recruitment & promotion, and implementation for a robust certification program will be extremely labor-intensive. MDFMA does not have adequate staff resources at present to implement such a program. We have worked in earnest towards this objective, however, by coordinating and offering training and education for market managers over the course of the grant period (detailed earlier). We are currently in the process looking to survey the market managers throughout the off-season to determine what are the most pressing needs and to prioritize what would be included in such a training program.

- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving: Detailed above
- iii. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project: Detailed above

10. Future Work:

- i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future

community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of your project.

The success of our efforts to work closely with managers as a means of gathering feedback and input on the implementation of Maryland Market Money encourages us to continue developing a collaborative environment with these constituents. Empowering these same managers with a host of tools and resources for data collection and reporting provided them the opportunity to improve both external and internal tracking, greatly bolstering market administrative capacity. We will continue striving to reduce administrative burden on markets participating in MMM, as we recognize this is a barrier to participation, especially for smaller markets with limited staffing. We will build upon the success of these past seasons by continuing to brainstorm in tandem with our market partners about best practices in market data management and how to streamline the collection and reporting processes. As we reduce the program's administrative burden, we hope to introduce new markets to the program. There are currently 46 farmers markets in Maryland where customers can use their SNAP benefits to purchase fresh, local food; 26 (or 56%) of these markets provide match to eligible customers. Our goal is to increase this percentage to 70%.

As noted earlier in this report, MDFMA has conducted extensive research and development for an FVRx program. We are continuing to explore the optimal partnerships for implementation and will seek funding as these partnerships are confirmed.

MDFMA will also continue to modify and build upon Market to Mealtime to more effectively meet the needs of market farmers, managers, and customers. MDFMA's AmeriCorps VISTA is currently conducting an in-depth assessment of the aforementioned market manager and constituents' interest in farmers market-based nutrition education and/or resources touting the benefits of eating locally and seasonally. Based on her findings, MDFMA will collaborate with UME to modify and build out Market to Mealtime, and to develop separate but complementary programming/resources as appropriate.

- ii. Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals?

MDFMA is currently engaged with Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future in the development of a thorough program evaluation for Maryland Market Money. This evaluation will shed some light as to how customers are utilizing MMM at market, the total impact it has on their overall food budget and on their household's level of food security, and the impact it has on farmers' incomes. Data collection will begin this fall and continue through the early months of market season next year. Full analysis and assessment is not expected to be complete until the winter 2017. The analysis will provide us with a richer understanding of MMM's effectiveness and whether we will need to adjust the program model and parameters to have greater impact.



MDFMA STARTING A FARMERS MARKET WORKSHOP SERIES February to April 2016

The Maryland Farmers Market Association (MDFMA) presents a new, six-part series covering key topics to consider when starting a farmers market in Maryland. This series combines online learning and in-person sessions where you can take advantage of MDFMA staff's 20 years of combined experience working in food systems to learn tips and tricks for a successful beginning to market operations. The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) will also share key information about the role of federal nutrition benefits programs at farmers markets. Get your market off to the right start and register today!

FEBRUARY 1st & 2nd: Planning for Your Market Launch

Learn what you need to consider when starting your market, including: mission, identifying community assets, finding your farmers, striking the right vendor mix, farmer/vendor agreements, financing, and what to expect as a first-year market.

February 1st from 1pm to 2pm: Webinar

February 2nd from 2 to 5pm: Office Hours at 345 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21201

MARCH 16th & 17th: Market Management

Work on the nuts and bolts of your market management. Topics will include: market location and layout, marketing and promotion, staffing, best practices in farmer/vendor management, banking considerations, and data collection—the how and why.

March 16th from 1pm to 2pm: Webinar

March 17th from 2 to 5pm: Office Hours

APRIL 6th & 7th: Food Access, Sales & Success

Learn about the federal nutrition benefits programs that can be accepted at your market to ensure that everyone can shop. This session will also cover simple market fundraisers, fun events, promoting your opening day, and ideas to keep patrons coming back each week.

April 6th from 1pm to 2pm: Webinar

April 7th from 2 to 5pm: Office Hours at MDA 50 Harry S Truman Pkwy, Annapolis MD 21401

Sign Up Today!
<http://bit.ly/1Uwc9Hs>

Technology & Innovation Fund Request for Applications

* Required

Market Name *

Primary Contact Name *

Who will be responsible for the communicating with MDMFA regarding the utilization of these funds?

Primary Contact Email *

Please provide the email address for the primary contact person.

Requested Funding Amount *

Please provide a dollar amount for the amount you are requesting from MDFMA's Technology & Innovation Fund.

Proposed Purchase *

What will be purchased with these funds? (Please be specific as possible: provide equipment type, make/model, full price, etc.)

Reason for Purchase *

How will the purchase of this equipment facilitate better market management?

Submit

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N: How did you find out about Market Money?

S: I found out from Miss Jill, when I met her. I'd went to the church down here, around the corner, for something else, and she was telling me about it, and I was like wow I got to try it out. I didn't even know it existed.

N: Had you been buying much produce before, or cooking with it?

S: When I can, but honestly, the grocery stores are very expensive to get real food, like you know to buy stuff with a lot of pesticides and things like that on it - it's more affordable than it is to be certified organic...so I was only having a limited amount of fruits and vegetables really that I could use - I was doing a lot more processed foods because that's what I could afford.

N: How do you feel MMM has helped you or changed how you eat?

S: Well, I feel like it's really changed my life (like I had said before). I really feel like it just kind of saved my life - I was sick, I was having a lot of health problems. When I started coming to the markets it made me be able to afford fruits and vegetables, things without pesticides. My daughter, who has autism, she has an allergy to pesticides, so that was also making it really hard for me because I would have to try to buy organic stuff that's so expensive at the market. But once I found out about the farmers market and matching the food stamps, it actually gave me enough to be able to almost completely turn vegetarian. So at this point, I'm mostly just eating fruits and vegetables from the market. And I've quit smoking since June 16th, I haven't touched a cigarette. One of my doctors that I was having some issues told me I don't have to come back anymore. But my symptoms have all just went away. So health-wise it really has made me stronger, healthier, a better person. Like I said, when you start getting healthy, you stop wanting to smoke cigarettes and stuff because you want to run, you want to exercise, and most people feel lazy, they don't want to do this stuff because they don't have the energy to do it because they don't have the real food in their body. And so it's really different - it's like the difference between putting Supreme gas and just like the regular stuff. Your body runs a lot better on market food, I think. I'm a living testimony of that.

N: Have you had any issues with Market Money, or was it hard to figure out at first?

S: Not at all. Everybody has been wonderful. I've been to several markets. Everybody has been wonderful, they've been helpful. Everybody explains it to me if it's my first time at their particular market - they take the time to explain things to me. All of the materials are usually laid out right there when you walk up to the table to turn the stamps into the coins. People have flyers and pamphlets, and they also tell you about other community events, like free yoga classes, stuff like that. It's really cool, it really has enriched my life not just by eating healthy but actually getting me into the community and helping me to meet people because I'm new to the Maryland area, and also having lots of activities for my children and places and things that I

wouldn't even know about if it wasn't just there. It's a really great community, and community is really important. It's like something I said the other day, on Facebook: you have to love your community, and if you don't nobody else will. Why will they not love your community? Because they live in another one. You know what I mean? So if you don't care about it, who's going to?

N: What other markets do you usually go to?

S: I never miss this Saturday market, it's my favorite. There's a couple vendors here, that, I really love them.

N: What are your favorite things to buy here?

S: I don't know what their farm name is, they don't have it up [Calvert Farm], but I like, they have \$5 boxes, they're variety boxes, that's probably one of my favorite things because for \$5 sometimes you can get tomatoes, apples, corn, bananas, potatoes, all of it in a box for \$5. It's a pretty good deal. I also like the Druid Hill Market on Wednesdays. It's great. They have the pony rides for the children, and you've got all kinds of different stuff up there, music sometimes, entertainment, sometimes they do free movies. It's just really a community thing, and everybody up there is nice. And I found some really good vendors - good prices, you'd be surprised. They've probably got the best prices out of the markets that I've found so far. Not to say that they're the best, that I've found so far. I can go up there and get a thing of tomatoes - it'll be \$5 at another market, I'll get it for \$2 on Wednesday market. It's really great. Also, the Wednesday markets, they bring a beekeeper, and that's really amazing. Recently I found out I have a tumor in my throat, and the doctor did a procedure, at John Hopkins - he could see it in there, so finding out that that was going on - I had a lot of soreness in my throat and I didn't really understand why. But walking into the Wednesday market and meeting the lady that keeps the bees - honey is like one of the best natural resources to do medicine for a sore throat. So I got a bunch of honey from her. I told her she's gonna take all my money.

N: Have you been telling other people about the program?

S: Yes, I've actually brought people. And another thing that's really cool is that some of the markets will allow people from out of state to come and use their SNAPs, their food stamps, so I've brought some friends that visited from New Orleans, they had never been to Baltimore really, brought them to a farmers market, they changed their dollars, spent 60 bucks, had a great time. My friend said all the way back to New Orleans she was eating peaches, cucumbers, and apples, on the front seat, just driving down the road - she got all from the market out here in Maryland. So that was pretty cool. And then I had another friend come up from Virginia, and they don't have this program in Virginia, so she was really excited, and she spent \$120 at the market. She just got so much stuff and took it all home with her. So I'd say, everyone I've told about it is like really like wow I gotta check it out.

Profile (October newsletter):

Sarah Steel says shopping at farmers markets has saved her life. Before she heard about the Edmondson Village Market from its manager, Jill Harrison, she had been very sick, and many of her health problems were related to her diet. She was eating mostly processed food because it was the most affordable, and she didn't want to buy the cheaper, non-organic produce at grocery stores because her daughter is allergic to pesticides.

Since she found out she could use her nutrition benefits at farmers markets and receive matching dollars, Sarah never misses an opportunity to come to Edmondson Village. Each Saturday she picks up fresh fruits and vegetables for her and her family, and now she feels healthier and more energetic than ever. For Sarah, "it's like the difference between putting Supreme gas and just like the regular stuff. Your body runs a lot better on market food...I'm a living testimony of that." She's gone almost completely vegetarian, and she even quit smoking.

Sarah also appreciates her local farmers markets for their sense of community.

"Everybody has been wonderful," she says, "they take the time to explain things to me." She has her regular vendors, like Calvert Farm at Edmondson Village - their \$5 variety boxes with "tomatoes, apples, corn, bananas, potatoes" are some of her favorite things to get at the market; and she loves going to the honey stand at Druid Hill: "I told her [the beekeeper] she's gonna take all my money." There's even fun activities for her whole family, from music and free movies to pony rides for her children.

Sarah has already brought friends to the markets, and she plans to bring many more. "It really has enriched my life."