



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alameda County's Successful Farm Stand Program Expands to Fourth Location This Week

Alameda County's successful "Farm Stand" program, which brings locally grown fresh produce to neighborhoods where this kind of healthy food may not be readily available, is expanding this week with the launch of a fourth weekly Farm Stand in the County.

The new Farm Stand, which starting this week will operate on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., will be located in front of the County Administration Building at 1221 Oak Street in Oakland.

The Farm Stand program was launched last year through a unique partnership involving the Alameda County Social Services Agency and Dig Deep Farms and Produce. Dig Deep Farms is a venture started by the Alameda County Deputy Sheriffs' Activities League (DSAL) that aims to prevent violence and crime through the creation of jobs, access to healthy food and community revitalization.

The Dig Deep Farm team grows vegetables on local land, harvests fruit from abundant backyard fruit trees, purchases organic produce from other local farms and then sells and distributes this healthy food in a venture that provides fresh produce and sustainable employment to people in the community.

Dig Deep has found a logical partner in the Social Services Agency, which has worked for years to resolve the conundrum caused by the desire to encourage healthy eating habits among clients who live amid "food deserts" in neighborhoods where grocery stores are non-existent and access to fresh and nutritious food is limited.

The Farm Stand program was launched to resolve this problem. Over the past year, weekly Farm Stands have been launched at three County facilities where they provide fresh, locally grown produce at "dirt cheap" prices: the Eastmont Self-Sufficiency Center in East Oakland (Mondays); the Eden Area Multi-Service Center in Hayward (Thursdays); and the Thomas Berkeley Self-Sufficiency Center on San Pablo Avenue in Oakland (Fridays).

The fourth Farm Stand in the plaza area of the County Administration Building is being launched in collaboration with Alameda County's New Beginnings Initiative, which provides vocational training, on-the-job experience and mentorship to local at-risk youth. Among other ventures, New Beginnings operates several Fresh Start Cafes in Alameda County that employ youth from the juvenile justice and foster care systems. Local youth from both New Beginnings and Dig Deep Farms/DSAL are expected to be involved in operating the new Farm Stand. In addition, the Social Services Agency will continue to utilize the Farm Stand program to provide employment and job training opportunities to CalWorks participants.

The Farm Stands are open to the public. Cash, credit cards and EBT cards are accepted.

"The new Farm Stand will provide a great new option for purchasing top-quality fresh grown produce in the neighborhood around the County government complex in Oakland," said Susan S. Muranishi, Alameda County Administrator. "We are hoping our neighbors will be strong supporters of this project and will seize the opportunity to eat healthy, support our workforce development and youth initiatives and embrace the County's commitment to healthy living for our employees and the diverse communities we serve."