



## News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



### BRINGING FRESH, LOCAL PRODUCE TO DC SCHOOLS

Washington, D.C., September 16, 2009 – The slice of juicy watermelon on second-grader Jenny Matheson’s cafeteria tray today looks fresher than usual. The fruit comes from a Maryland farmer who Matheson will later get to meet – they’ll discuss how and where the fruit was grown. Matheson and her classmates will even participate in a cooking demonstration with a local chef using seasonal ingredients. A seed is planted in Jenny and her classmates’ minds about how fresh, local produce is healthy, delicious, and good for the environment.

Jenny’s experiences will be a part of Local Flavor Week taking place September 21-25, 2009 in approximately 65 public, charter and private schools across the District of Columbia. Schools will serve seasonal produce grown in the region in their cafeterias, and offer educational opportunities for students including taste tests, cooking demonstrations, farmer visits and nutrition education activities. Local Flavor Week was organized by the DC Farm to School Network and the Capital Area Food Bank, in partnership with the National Farm to School Network, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Whole Foods and other community partners. This event is part of a nation-wide Farm to School movement working to get local produce into school cafeterias and reconnect schoolchildren with where their food comes from.

The Local Flavor Week kick-off event will take place on Tuesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2:00 PM in the Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School cafeteria (2427 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE in Washington, D.C.). The event will feature two prominent local chefs – Peter Smith of PS7’s and Oliver Friendly of Eat and Smile Foods competing to use ingredients from Thurgood Marshall Academy’s school garden to create healthy, delicious dishes for students to taste. Also present will be State Superintendent of Education Kerri Briggs and USDA Food and Nutrition Services Administrator Julie Paradis, among other Farm to School partners.

“Local Flavor Week will build momentum for Farm to School programs in the nation’s capital,” says Andrea Northup, Coordinator of the DC Farm to School Network. “Here we have a great opportunity to improve child health in the District, which has one of the highest child obesity rates in the nation. School-aged children consume most of their daily calories in school meals, so it makes sense that we should connect schools with nearby sources of fruits and vegetables to serve in their cafeterias. The only way the District’s schoolchildren will thrive is if they are well nourished and armed with the skills they need to make healthy lifestyle choices. That is part of the DC Farm to School Network’s vision for a healthy community here in Washington, DC.”

"Understanding where our food comes from is at the heart of the Thurgood Marshall Academy Green Club's mission," says Sam Ullery, Earth & Environmental Science Teacher and Green Club Coordinator at Thurgood Marshall Academy. "We are very excited to be a part of Local Flavor Week, and to expose more students to the importance of eating responsibly."

For more details about participating schools and activities, please visit [dcfarmtoschool.org/localflavorweek](http://dcfarmtoschool.org/localflavorweek).

**The DC Farm to School Network** *is a grassroots coalition of over 200 diverse advocates working to improve the health of schoolchildren, our local environment, and economy by incorporating more local foods and food education into District public, charter and private schools. For more information, visit our website at [www.dcfarmtoschool.org](http://www.dcfarmtoschool.org).*

**The Capital Area Food Bank** *is the largest public, nonprofit food and nutrition education resource in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area. Last year, the CAFB distributed 23 million pounds of food, including 6.6 million pounds of fresh produce, to over 700 partner agencies. The Capital Area Food Bank has served the National Capital Region over 29 years.*

