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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PENN STREET MARKET ANNOUNCES RETURN OF BERKS FARM BUCKS

READING, PA (May 3, 2016) - Penn Street Market announces the return of the Berks Farm Bucks incentive match program in 2016 to support all shoppers who use Food and Nutrition Service plans.

Penn Street Market, in partnership with the Friends of the Reading Hospital, will host the Berks Farm Bucks Program for the 2016 season. Berks Farm Bucks supports all shoppers who use Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Programs like the Access Card (formerly Food Stamps) as well as the Women, Infant and Children's program of Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and Senior FMNP vouchers on behalf of the entire market and qualifying vendors. The Berks Farm Bucks program empowers the spending of our community members who have limited access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and highly nutritious foods.

This season the Penn Street Market will see an expansion of the Berks Farm Bucks program with the increase of generous support by the Friends of Reading Hospital with a total of \$11,250.00, targeted for the expansion of the program. The request will match other funding sources already secured to enhance our downtown narrative, stabilizing and expanding the Penn Street Market, such as the generous matching grant of the Hawley and Myrtle Quier Fund of the Berks County Community Foundation.

"The purpose of the program is to encourage higher rates of consumption of fresh produce, which has been shown to correlate to better health outcomes, as well as support other new Farmers Market in our community and provide bilingual educational support to our target consumers," said ReDesign Reading's Food Systems Director Lucine Sihelnik.

"Our efforts to revitalize Reading through Community and Economic Development are being noticed, and other organizations are supporting our cause." The Food Trust of Philadelphia is one of those organizations. This year, they have pledged an additional \$1,000.00 through The Food Trust's Food Bucks Network, providing an additional \$2.00 on every \$5.00 of SNAP spending. The total incentive program available this year at the

Penn Street Market will be \$20.00/person/market day for community members who use SNAP & WIC. The Food Trust will continue to host nutrition education programming 2016. Each child who attends a demonstration on healthy cooking will leave with a recipe and \$5 token to shop at the market.

The 2016 Penn Street Market Berks Farm Bucks Program will feature:

- A pilot of Berks Farm Bucks with the Pottstown Farmers Market
- Local purchasing, marketing, and education to individual consumers
- Technical tools including new wooden tokens and a wireless hotspot
- An educational video in English & Spanish, created by local interns from Albright and Kutztown Universities, sponsored by The People Chronicles.
- Food Bucks program in Berks County by The Food Trust of Philadelphia.

“These incentive programs focus on supporting our most vulnerable populations with dignity and respect: our children, our expecting and new mothers, and our older adults. As a community, we can work together to make sure every person has the ability to access fresh, local and nutritious food.”

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ABOUT

Penn Street Market supports local food systems, engages healthy community initiatives and fosters economic development in Reading, PA.

Penn Street Market is a project of the Regional Reading Food Policy And Action Council (RRFPAC), hosted by ReDesign Reading CDC.