



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 10, 2016

Contact: Laura McDonald  
Communications Specialist (212) 341-2258

**GrowNYC's Healthy Exchange Project Announces an Increase in SNAP  
Use at Greenmarkets Across the City in 2015**

New York, NY – GrowNYC's Greenmarket program announced today that customers shopping with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits at the city's network of Greenmarket farmers markets purchased over \$918,000 worth of farm-fresh products from the region's producers in 2015. This represents an increase of over \$20,000 from 2014. In addition, \$298,000 worth of Health Bucks was distributed as a SNAP incentive in partnership with the New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene. Health Bucks are \$2 coupons given to shoppers to use on fresh fruits and vegetables for every \$5 they spend in SNAP at a Greenmarket.

"All New Yorkers deserve access to healthy, fresh food," says GrowNYC Executive Director, Marcel Van Ooyen. "By accepting SNAP benefits at 50 Greenmarkets in all five boroughs, we ensure New Yorkers of all income levels can feed their families the most nutritious foods our region has to offer. Additionally, those SNAP dollars provide much needed income for our region's family farmers and help to build our urban and rural economies."

In 2005, GrowNYC's Greenmarkets partnered with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to accept SNAP benefits at three markets. Those markets processed \$1,000 in SNAP transactions in that first year. In 2006, the program was expanded to six markets with funding from the New York City Council and the total sales increased to \$14,000. In 2015, the Union Square Greenmarket alone processed over \$278,000 in SNAP transactions.

GrowNYC's Healthy Exchange Project, made possible by generous funding from the New York City Council and Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, provides the framework for making healthy, regional food accessible to all New Yorkers by overseeing GrowNYC's work to promote and accept SNAP, Health Bucks, the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Checks, WIC Vegetable and Fruit Checks, and Greenmarket Bucks.

GrowNYC also worked with the New York City Coalition on Hunger, Met Council, Structured Employment Economic Development Corporation (SEEDCO), and Food Bank for New York City to hold regular SNAP Screenings in Greenmarkets, which help New Yorkers that qualify for benefits begin the process of enrolling in the SNAP program.

Additionally, the Healthy Exchange Project works with Seniors and other communities to promote healthy eating through cooking demonstrations, nutrition education and tours of neighborhood Greenmarkets. In 2015, the Healthy Exchange Project gave tours to 33 senior groups.

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**GrowNYC** is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization that helps residents make ours the most sustainable city in the world. Reaching millions every year, GrowNYC operates Greenmarket farmers markets, engages New Yorkers in recycling education, and builds and maintains green spaces and engages young people in hands-on education. Learn more at [www.grownyc.org](http://www.grownyc.org).