



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Justin Lockhart
Office: 417-888-2020 Cell: 417-770-0878
Email: jlockhart@cpozarks.org

Community Partnership of the Ozarks Announces New Program Providing Free, Locally Grown Food to Communities

September 21st, 2023: Community Partnership of the Ozarks is excited to announce a new program, Nourish the Ozarks, that will distribute free, locally grown food to communities in need. Through a collaboration with Springfield Community Gardens and other community partners, CPO is bridging the gap between farmers and underserved communities by purchasing fresh food directly from farmers in our region and distributing it in communities lacking access to high-quality, nutritious food. This innovative program aims to build a strong, sustainable local and regional food system by purchasing foods directly from local farmers while ensuring that communities have access to nourishing and locally sourced food options, regardless of their income.

“We are really excited about the impact that Nourish the Ozarks will have across our region. We will be providing fresh healthy food for those in need that is purchased from local farms. Buying food grown here in the Ozarks to distribute across the region will have a widespread impact for families and farmers alike.” Janet Dankert, President/CEO of Community Partnership of the Ozarks.

CPO is the sub-recipient of a USDA Cooperative Agreement Local Food Purchase Assistance Grant that is managed through the State of Missouri’s Office of Workforce and Community Initiatives. Approximately \$1.7 million of funding will be provided over three years to purchase directly from socially disadvantaged farmers and then distribute the purchased products to underserved communities in seventeen counties in Southern Missouri.

Maile Auterson, Founding Executive Director with Springfield Community Gardens shared, *“Our vision is a community where everyone has access to healthy, local food and it can only happen if we all work together. We are happy to work with CPO for this program. It takes working partnerships like this one to re-localize our food system.”*

In the first month of the program, Nourish the Ozarks purchased and distributed 4,657.25 pounds of produce from four local farmers. The program has served an estimated 3,605 families at 27 different sites within Greene and Webster County. The program will expand to serve 17 counties in Southern Missouri and will distribute a range of local food products including meat, poultry, dairy, eggs, and produce.

Those interested in staying up to date with Nourish the Ozarks and learning more about resources and upcoming food distributions are encouraged to visit www.cpozarks.org/nourish or click this [link](#) to sign up for our email list.

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ABOUT COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP OF THE OZARKS

The mission of Community Partnership of the Ozarks is to facilitate and promote the building of resilient children, healthy families, and strong neighborhoods and communities through collaboration, programming and resource development. For more information on the Partnership’s collaborative efforts and programs, visit www.cpozarks.org.