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Friends of the Rochester Public Market Recognized as Healthy Heroes

Friends of the Rochester Public Market, a group of 25 volunteers, implemented a Market Token program where clients of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or food stamps) can redeem their benefits electronically for tokens to purchase items at the Rochester Public Market. This has increased the amount of fresh produce that clients have been able to include in their family diets. Greater Rochester Health Foundation has acknowledged this team as Healthy Heroes.

To further help families improve their nutrition, Friends of the Rochester Public Market offer several programs. President Andrew Johnson says, “Starting this year, the Friends will offer the Market Bounty program in which a tour of the market will be promoted through school food service departments. The educational component will be enhanced, acquainting children with seasonal local produce, introducing them to new items and providing them with healthy recipes that incorporate items available at the market throughout the year. We welcome additional volunteers to help with tours and to help with a demonstration kitchen to tie in with existing “Chef Days at the Market” to teach techniques for preparing local produce into healthy, nutritious meals.”

Greater Rochester Health Foundation president and CEO John Urban says, “The Friends of the Rochester Public Market have shown that when people care about their neighbors and their community, they really look at what’s going on, identify problems and can be remarkably creative. These volunteers did not wait for a policy change; they initiated a change and developed a system that works for consumers and local growers.”
Each month, Greater Rochester Health Foundation recognizes people who are helping kids stay healthy. These are individuals or groups that have gone above and beyond their normal duties to successfully impact children's nutrition and/or physical activity. Healthy Heroes are awarded $500 that is to be donated to the organization of their choice in the spirit of improving the health of children through increased physical activity and improved nutrition. People interested in nominating Healthy Heroes may visit www.beahealthyhero.org.

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Media may reach Andrew Johnson at the Market Office at 325-5058 or evenings at 381-3989.