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Press Release

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East Palo Alto Community Celebrates Successful Farmers Market Season **30 consecutive Sundays, nearly 7000 visits and thousands of dollars in fresh, healthy produce donated back to the community**

East Palo Alto, CA, December 15—The East Palo Alto Community Farmers' Market is celebrating the success of its first season on **Sunday, December 21**, in front of the **St. Francis of Assisi Church at 1425 Bay Road from 2pm to 5pm**, with hot beverages, local performance artists, healthy snacks, raffle drawings, and warm company. Everybody is welcome.

Since its founding just six months ago, the EPA Community Farmers Market has supplied fresh fruits and vegetables to local residents over the past thirty consecutive Sunday afternoons. Community members have made over 7,000 visits to purchase seasonally available local produce, and through a special program, nearly \$10,000 in food has been donated to community organizations.

"We distributed it to families in EPA, and it was a good variety. It was a blessing, very helpful, and the families that received fresh produce were so grateful," Lesia Preston, Interim Director of the Ecumenical Hunger Program said. "But the best part was this: donations from the market came from within the community—and stayed in the community." Her program, EPA's primary food pantry, is one of several local organizations receiving weekly boxes of fresh and healthy produce from the market.

Every Sunday, the market creates a safe and friendly community gathering space along Bay Road. Families shop for healthy food, while neighbors talk about their favorite recipes. Health navigators from the Ravenswood Family Health Center, a lead partner in the project, screen for diabetes, and provide information about how diet affects wellness.

"My husband and I have eaten fresh, healthy and locally grown for many years," regular shopper Keisha Evans said. "So it is wonderful to have the East Palo Alto Farmers Market right here. The crops are fresh and they augment what we have in our garden and trade with friends." Resident Luis Guzmán added, "it has brought some very positive change in our community by bringing people together and offering diverse and healthy fresh products."

The market is supported by Collective Roots, an organization dedicated to encouraging residents to create workable food systems in their community. The East Palo Alto Community Farmers Market Organizing Committee, a coalition of local organizations, residents, and the San Mateo County Health Department provide additional guidance and direction.

"The Organizing Committee, in collaboration with partner organizations, has worked tirelessly to mobilize the community and ensure the smooth operation of the market," committee member Jennifer Gross said. "The winter closure is an exciting opportunity to get feedback from residents about how to engage more community members in the market's continued success."

The East Palo Alto Community Farmers Market will build upon its successful inaugural season with a re-launch in the spring. Stay up to date by visiting our website at <http://www.epafarmersmarket.org>

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