



6930 Carroll Avenue  
Suite 426  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

[info@crossroadscommunityfoodnetwork.org](mailto:info@crossroadscommunityfoodnetwork.org)  
[www.CrossroadsCommunityFoodNetwork.org](http://www.CrossroadsCommunityFoodNetwork.org)

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Contact: Christie Balch, Executive Director  
Email: [cbalch@crossroadscommunityfoodnetwork.org](mailto:cbalch@crossroadscommunityfoodnetwork.org)  
Phone: 608.843.0580

Takoma Park, MD – The Crossroads Farmers Market has just received an “Apple”-level sponsorship from an unexpected but welcome source: Another farmers market. Crossroads received the \$500 gift from the Bethesda Central Farm Market to support Crossroads’ food access work.

“We’re honored to receive this donation from a fellow farmers market in the greater Montgomery County community,” said Michelle Dudley, manager of the Crossroads Farmers Market. “This gift will double farmers market purchases for two families who use SNAP for the entire 2014 market season, as well as boost sales for local farmers who sell at market.”

Gifts from sponsors like the Bethesda Central Farm Market will double families’ purchases through Fresh Checks, a program that matches federal food assistance dollar for dollar. These coupons may be used to purchase additional fresh, locally grown fruits, vegetables, meat, eggs, honey, and herbs. To date, Crossroads has distributed about \$250,000 in Fresh Checks to nearly 7,000 low-income shoppers. The double coupon model has received national attention from policy-makers, farmers market companies, and the press, and it has been replicated in more than 500 farmers markets in 30 states and D.C.

Mitch Berliner, Founder of Central Farm Markets, said, “One of Central Farm Markets core missions is to support our community in a way that enriches their lives and helps fight hunger. We are excited about our new partnership with Crossroads Community Food Network, which is doing a fantastic job of bringing high quality local food and unique services to its own community. Good food should be accessible to all and we are proud to help make that happen.”

The Crossroads Farmers Market, which opened in 2007 and operates from June to November, has become a hub for fresh local produce, locally made international recipes, live music, education, and events like Kid’s Day/Día del Niño and cultural heritage days. It all takes place in the diverse Takoma Langley Crossroads neighborhood.

Approximately 90 percent of the Crossroads market customers use some form of federal assistance to buy food, including SNAP and WIC. Central Farm Market has been operating since 2008 and is guided by a similar mission to offer local food, music, and activities at its markets. In addition to markets in Bethesda and Rockville, they will open their third market this year in Fairfax, VA.

### **More about the Crossroads Community Food Network**

Crossroads Community Food Network’s mission is to improve access to fresh, local, healthy food through innovative programs and models mutually supportive of those who grow our food and those who eat it. While our models are replicated in communities throughout the country, our

primary focus is on the residents of Maryland's Takoma/Langley Crossroads, a diverse, largely immigrant area at the Montgomery County and Prince George's County border.

The Crossroads Community Food Network:

- 1) Helps low-income residents improve food security and nutrition by providing access to fresh, local fruits and vegetables through our Fresh Checks program in addition to other health and well-being programs;
- 2) Operates the weekly Crossroads Farmers Market from June to November, providing a marketplace for local prepared food vendors and farmers to sell their products;
- 3) Educates low-income individuals, children, seniors, and families on healthy eating in a community-based, culturally appropriate framework; and
- 4) Trains unemployed and underemployed area residents planning to start a food-related business in our Microenterprise Training Program, in collaboration with a soon-to-be constructed commercial kitchen.

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