



# Genesee County Health Department

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## PRESS RELEASE

Date: October 21, 2011  
Release Date: For Immediate Release End Date: October 29, 2011  
Contact Person: Dorothy Wicks, R.S.  
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RE: **Genesee County Celebrates Food Day**

Food Day, the nationwide grassroots mobilization for healthier diets and improved food policies, is gaining momentum as organizers plan thousands of events big and small on October 24, 2011. "One of the best things you can do for your health is to cook and enjoy family meals made with fresh, colorful seasonal ingredients," said chef and author Ellie Krieger, host of *Healthy Appetite* on the Food Network and a member of the Food Day advisory board. "Food Day is a chance to celebrate the power good food has to nourish us and bring us together."

Genesee County will celebrate Food Day with a week long celebration of healthy eating and healthy food policies organized by the Genesee County Health Department and its community partners. These activities will be centered at the Flint Farmers' Market. Tuesday, October 25, 2011, the Genesee County Health Department will present its "Healthy Menu" Awards from 3:00-5:00 pm at the Flint Farmers' Market. These awards

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recognize food service owners who have added low fat, lower sodium, vegetarian and smaller portion options to their menus. Twenty eight awards will be given out to deserving applicants.

The awards presentations will be followed by a reception to will give the restaurateurs an opportunity to meet local farmers. This “meet and greet” opportunity encourages the use of local farm products in local restaurants. Mark Valacak, Health Officer of the Genesee County Health Department said, “We encourage local restaurants to take advantage of the products produced by local farmers and to provide healthier options on their menus. Taking advantage of our local resources is a win-win for everyone. “

On Thursday, October 27, 2011, the Flint Farmers' Market will be the site of nutrition education and food safety presentations. From 11 am-1 pm, local experts will be on hand to provide helpful hints, healthy recipes and healthy eating resources in a tent on the lawn of the market. Dorothy Wicks, Food Sanitation Program Manager with the Genesee County Health Department said, “It is just as important to prepare foods safely to avoid foodborne illness as it is to choose healthier options.”

On Saturday, October 29, 2011, Healthy Halloween events will take place at the Flint Farmer's Market from 9 am-1 pm. There will be nutrition education and food safety presentations along with healthy eating resources. The SPROUT (Steering Prevention – Reducing Obesity- Utilizing Teamwork) Coalition will sponsor a Healthy Trick- or- Treat for children from 10 am-12 noon. There will be twelve trick- or- treat stations throughout the market. The SPROUT Coalition organizations will be paired with market vendors, assuring that the children and their families will see the wide variety of produce available at the Flint Farmers' Market. The SPROUT Coalition, Genesee County's childhood obesity prevention coalition, hopes the experience will encourage children and their families to include more fruits and vegetables in their diets.

Besides events in public places, Food Day organizers are encouraging families to have healthful potluck dinners with friends, and to use these gatherings as opportunities to talk informally about food and our nation's food system. For inspiration, FoodDay.org has posted a number of delicious recipes from well-known chefs and cookbook writers. These recipes will be available at all the Genesee County Food Day activities. The Genesee County Health Department encourages everyone to take advantage of these local Food Day activities to think about their food options and to make healthier food choices. Our motto is better life, through better health. For more information, visit [www.gchd.us](http://www.gchd.us).

**## END ##**