



Press Release

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Food Access Fund Established: Local Food and Collaborative Efforts to Feed a Community

Hardwick, VT— Locally grown and produced food will soon be more available at the Hardwick Area Food Pantry, thanks to the recently created Food Access Fund established by the Center for an Agricultural Economy (the Center).

The Center for an Agricultural Economy based in Hardwick, VT, has organized the *Food Access Fund* — encouraging and facilitating the delivery and availability of healthy local food to people in need during the Christmas holiday season and throughout the winter months. Following in a long tradition of the Hardwick community helping each other out, the *Food Access Fund* brings forward the opportunity for the Hardwick Area Food Pantry to directly purchase products from local agricultural businesses, with a pledged donation of \$3,500. Ruth Gaillard, President of the Board of the Food Pantry states that "This donation will make it possible for us at the Food Pantry to provide our clients with wonderful high quality fresh foods and to support our local producers at the same time, as happened recently with the Pies for People project."

The idea for a *Food Access Fund* began with the owner of High Mowing Organic Seeds and Center president Tom Stearns' ability to secure an anonymous donation. With these monies there has been established a fund with the directive that the monies would be for the Food Pantry to expand their service to the community while supporting local agricultural producers and support the Centers other food access projects including the Pies for People project. "The Center for an Agricultural Economy is excited to be able to secure this timely and generous donation to the Hardwick Area Food Pantry," says Tom Stearns. As additional donations are secured, they will be available as a leveraging challenge grant for the community to match over the next few months, and it will be coordinated through the Center. \$1,500 of the pledged amount will be matched on a 1:1 dollar basis. Contributions can be made at the Center office at 41 South Main Street in Hardwick (in- between the Coop and Claire's Restaurant) or mailed to the Center at PO Box 451, Hardwick, VT 05843.

The Center sees this collaborative effort as a way to meet the food security needs of a community using locally produced food products. Many individuals and organizations in the greater Hardwick community over the years have generously donated to the Hardwick Area Food Pantry and other community service organizations, and it is the hope of the Center that the experience of this program will be another on-going inspiration to others to continue and even expand their generosity in the winter months ahead.