

For Plethora Of Healthy Food Options And Family Fun, Visit Local Farmers Market

CHANHASSEN, Minn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--It's well accepted that fresh vegetables and fruit are welcome additions to your plate. For those without a backyard garden or who simply would like to bring a little variety to the shopping experience, visit a local farmers market. The United States hosts more than 8,000 farmers markets annually according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, representing growth of 370 percent over just the past 10 years. That increase was supported by an estimated three million consumers, who drove an average of 12.8 miles to their nearest market in pursuit of healthy nutrition options.

"Farmers markets provide the ideal opportunity to stock up on fresh, local and nutrient-dense produce that is minimally or completely unprocessed," says Megan Stinchfield, RD, MSH and nutrition program director, Life Time Foundation. "With the goal of quality family time and an ongoing focus on improving diets, we encourage parents and children alike to regularly visit a local farmers market, which also can teach habits kids can build upon for the rest of their lives."

Stinchfield offers these tips to make the farmers market an entertaining outing for the entire family:

- **Know what's in season.** When you arrive, take a lap around the market to try samples and scope out the best prices and best-looking produce. Current, in-season items include: Avocados, Bell Peppers, Beets, Berries, Cantaloupes, Cherries, Corn, Grapes, Green Beans, Herbs, Nectarines, Peaches, Rhubarb, Tomatoes and Watermelons.
- **Support local farmers.** Shopping at farmers markets supports your local farmers and promotes small businesses. Use this opportunity to create relationships with farmers in your area. Ask them about their farming practices and how they like to prepare their produce. Encourage your children to ask farmers questions as well to help them learn how their food gets from the farm to your kitchen table.
- **Educate your kids.** Farmers markets are a great opportunity to educate your children on how to eat healthy by introducing them to local farmers and have them try both familiar and new foods.
- **Engage kids in the process.** Give them a small budget so that they can purchase a bit of their own produce. Play a farmers market treasure hunt game and have your child pick out their favorite fruits and vegetables or a fruit or vegetable from each color of the rainbow.
- **Keep the learning going at home.** Invite your child to help prepare the produce you've just purchased. It is a great way for them to experiment with different foods and understand the benefits of fresh, whole foods. For example, add your vegetables to eggs, hot or cold whole grain pasta or a bed of spinach. Farmers market fruits make a perfect summer snack. For a sweet crunch, cut jicama into small sticks and toss with your favorite citrus fruit, snow peas and olive oil.
- **Cash and carry.** Be sure to have cash handy as some farmers can only accept cash exchanges. Bring your own reusable bags for convenience.

The Life Time Foundation currently partners with more than 560 schools and impacts more than 345,000 students each year on its mission to inspire healthy people and a healthy planet by improving children's nutrition—one school meal at a time. The organization aims to donate \$1 million in 2015. For more information about the Life Time Foundation, visit ltffoundation.org.

To find a Farmers Market near you visit www.localharvest.org or www.usdalocalfooddirectories.com.

About the Life Time Foundation

As a private operating foundation of Life Time – The Healthy Way of Life CompanySM, the Life Time Foundation is on a mission to inspire healthy people and a healthy planet by improving children's nutrition – one school meal at a time. By eliminating seven highly processed and unnatural ingredients, including high fructose corn syrup, artificial colors, artificial sweeteners, artificial preservatives, trans fats and hydrogenated oils, hormones and antibiotics, and bleached flour from school lunch menus, we believe we can help every child have a healthy start in life. Unlike many other charitable organizations in which a portion of donations is consumed by administrative costs, 100% of every dollar donated to the Life Time Foundation directly supports its mission because Life Time covers all administrative costs. For more information, visit ltffoundation.org.

About Life Time – The Healthy Way of Life CompanySM

As The Healthy Way of Life Company, Life Time Fitness helps organizations, communities and individuals achieve their total health objectives, athletic aspirations and fitness goals by engaging in their areas of interest — or discovering new passions — both inside and outside of Life Time's distinctive and large sports, professional fitness, family recreation and spa destinations, most of which operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Company's Healthy Way of Life approach enables customers to achieve this by providing the best programs, people and places of uncompromising quality and value. As of July 29, 2015, the Company operated 117 centers under the LIFE TIME ATHLETIC® and LIFE TIME FITNESS® brands in the United States and Canada. Additional information about Life Time centers, programs and services is available at lifetimefitness.com.

"Farmers markets provide the ideal opportunity to stock up on fresh, local and nutrient-dense produce that is minimally or completely unprocessed"