

Farm Truck 912 Delivering Affordable and Healthy Food Options to Savannah Communities

AT A GLANCE

In Savannah, Georgia, one in five adults and one in four children are food and nutrition insecure. Those residing in food apartheid areas, or locations where food is scarce due to inequities, are prone to nutrition insecurity. There are organizations in Savannah that are dedicated to increasing access to healthy food. Among them is Farm Truck 912 (FT912), the mobile version of Forsyth Farmers' Market. FT912 brings a variety of fresh produce to twelve stops each week around Savannah and accepts and doubles SNAP benefits. The growth of this initiative was evident from 2021 to 2022 in its community reach with an increase of its number of shoppers, including SNAP beneficiaries. Farm Truck will continue to thrive and expand into the community, especially with the addition of its newest truck, Peaches.



PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGES

Approximately 35,000 people in Savannah, Georgia struggle with food and nutrition insecurity. A variety of factors are contributors contribute, from distance to grocery stores, lack of transportation options, and systemic issues, such as poverty and historical discriminatory housing practices. Communities where residents experience food and nutrition insecurity are known as food apartheid areas. The term food apartheid acknowledges that social injustice is the primary creator of the barriers to healthy food access. Consumption of the unhealthy food options that are prevalent in food apartheid areas leads to the development of diet-related chronic diseases—such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease—which disproportionately effect marginalized populations, particularly communities of color.

"They are going into areas that may be food deserts, that don't have grocery stores. So they're bringing fresh fruit and produce to local neighborhoods that might not have access to that type of food."

- Najah Abdullah (A Regular Customer)

APPROACH

Making healthy foods more accessible to food scarce areas can improve health outcomes. Forsyth Farmers' Market, a farmers' market that sells fresh, locally grown produce each Saturday at Savannah's Forsyth Park, launched a mobile version of the market called FT912 in 2013. After receiving funding from Gulfstream Aerospace, FT912 was specifically designed to deliver fresh produce daily and serve communities where residents lack access to healthy food. Funding from the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant, awarded to Healthy Savannah and the YMCA of Coastal Georgia in 2018, allowed FT912 to :

- Increase its stops to twelve locations weekly.
- Offer educational opportunities including "A Taste of African Heritage" cooking classes and nutrition lessons, and meal planning tips.
- Double SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits for participants, becoming one of the highest redeemers for SNAP benefits in the state of Georgia.

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RESULTS

There is a lot of local interest in FT 912. 75% of respondents to the 2022 Healthy Savannah Community Survey expressed interest in purchasing food there. 2022 was a great year, FT 912 served over 2,500 people and did an estimated \$103,269 in sales, compared to 2,200 people served in 2021. Of the \$103,269, \$16,247 were SNAP sales and 450 unique SNAP beneficiaries were served, compared to \$8,200 in SNAP sales and 350 unique SNAP beneficiaries served in 2021. More than \$350 in produce was moved into Savannah's communities each day. Despite the pandemic, FT 912 is on track to have similar success in the up coming year.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

With the produce sales powering and sustaining FT 912, the committed to providing healthy produce to communities is unwavering. Part of sustaining success has been the adoption of a more reliable truck that ensures that weekly goals are met. A capital campaign to raise \$150,000 for the new truck, was launched in January 2022. Forsyth Farmers' Market reached their fundraising goal through support from local charitable foundations and community members, allowing way for "Juicy" to be introduced as the official FT912 Truck. FT912 is a beloved and successful service that will continue to aid communities for years to come.



FIND OUT MORE

To learn more about the Healthy Savannah coalition and the organization's partners, visit

<https://www.healthysavannah.org/about/partners>.

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