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Seattle Tilth

GOOD FOOD BAGS BOOST NUTRIENTS & ACCESS

May 24, 2014 · by Seattle Tilth · in Seattle Tilth

By Jessica Bitting, Seattle Tilth's Food Hub Coordinator

Within five miles of Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands, our educational farm in Southeast Seattle, 51% of the population has low access to fresh food, according to the USDA's Food Access Research Atlas.

That scenario is why Seattle Tilth is working to make healthy food more accessible and affordable. Our Good Food Bag program is doing exactly that — delivering fresh, local and organic produce to communities in South Seattle and King County, where families often lack adequate access to grocery stores.



Who's Getting Good Food?

Parents of young children take home Good Food Bags when they pick-up their kids from places like Tiny Tots Development Center, a childcare facility where 85% of the families are eligible for free or reduced childcare. East African elders receive Good Food Bags in a work trade helping out at Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands, a partnership with Horn of Africa Services. In 2013, we distributed 1,500 bags and more than 5,000 pounds of nutrient-dense produce to 200 families through youth employment programs, after-school programs, youth summer camps, senior centers, community kitchens, churches and others.



What's In a Bag?

In addition to increasing access and affordability, Good Food Bags makes preparing and eating fresh produce exciting and culturally relevant. Our weekly bags contain a variety of fruits, vegetables, greens and an aromatic — a culinary herb or something from the onion family. Each week, we include a recipe with nutrition information. Countless members have shared how excited they are to try the recipes each week, or to cook vegetables they'd never eaten before! Here's a story from Tiny Tots:

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” When doing outreach, I bring a blender and make green smoothies to share with potential customers. It’s always a huge hit with the kids, even though they see me putting kale and spinach into the smoothies! A few months later, a grandmother was trying to decide if she could still afford the \$5 GFB in her weekly budget. She was taking a walk with her granddaughter who saw a kale plant in someone’s yard and her granddaughter asked “Grandma, can we make smoothies?” At that point, the grandmother knew that she had to keep purchasing the Good Food Bags for her family.



Where’s the Food From?

The food in our Good Food Bags comes from two of Seattle Tilth’s educational farms: [Seattle Tilth Farm Works](#) in Auburn and [Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands](#). We also source some food from other regional organic producers in order to provide a diverse selection each week. Purchasing food from Seattle Tilth Farm Works **supports training and support for new, immigrant and limited resource farmers**. At Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands, produce is grown by **volunteers, interns, neighbors** and participants in our East African Elder Farming program. Diverse connections like these deepen client interest in the program and community benefit.



2014 STFW farmers.

What’s Next?

We’re committed to continue offering Good Food Bags at a **price point that’s accessible to people with limited financial resources**. By keeping the costs low, and maintaining a reliable delivery schedule and consistent quality, our customers can depend on fresh, delicious food every week. Soon, we will be offering an **EBT/SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) payment option**, which will make Good Food Bags available to even more people. The Good Food Bag program is just one component of the [Seattle Tilth Produce](#) food hub, which works to increase access to healthy food for everyone.





Our staff is **working to grow the Good Food Bag program** by participating in a rapid development course in Sustainable Food Agriculture and Sustainable Business offered by The Health Enterprise Development Initiative (HEDI). The course is a training program for entrepreneurs creating companies that promote healthy eating and active living, along with other organizations that support health for consumers, suppliers and communities. [Find out more](#) about what we're working on with HEDI on Slow Money NW's blog!

Get Involved

Interested in helping out with the Good Food Bag program? Contact Jess Bitting at jesscabitting@seattleilth.org.



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