

# On the Road to Health in Franklin County



North Country  
HEALTHY HEART  
NETWORK, INC.

## North Country Healthy Heart Network, Inc.

The North Country Healthy Heart Network, Inc. (Heart Network) and the Joint Council of Economic Opportunity (JCEO) are working to ensure healthy, affordable foods reach northern Franklin County neighborhoods in need.

Healthy food is out of the reach of many people living in Franklin County New York. People in rural communities like Chateaugay, Burke, and Constable, must travel significant distances or pay high prices for often wilting vegetables and overripe fruit. These challenges diminish the health and well-being of residents as well as the commercial vitality that makes neighborhoods livable and helps local economies thrive.

## On the Road to Health

In 2017, the Heart Network and JCEO started a stationary farm stand at the Franklin County Courthouse, Franklin County Department of Social Services, and Alice Hyde Medical Center. While this stand gave some residents access to fresh fruits and vegetables, there were still many across Franklin and Clinton Counties who had none. A combination of funding and other support from Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC), Cornell Cooperative Extension's Senior's Health Improvement and Nutrition Education Program, and an Excellus BlueCross BlueShield Community Health Awards grant permitted the Heart Network and JCEO to take the show on the road by converting a minibus into a mobile farm stand. The minibus is furnished with Department of Health-permitted kitchen equipment and salad bar that lets staff offer healthy, on-the-go meals in addition to an assortment of whole fruits and vegetables.

This year, the mobile market stopped at 10

community-based stops throughout Franklin and Clinton Counties to sell locally grown produce including broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, leaf lettuce, peppers, potatoes, radishes, scallions, spinach, tomatoes, yellow squash, and zucchini.



The Mobile Farmers Market parked at the Franklin County Department of Social Services

The management of the mobile market is a true community partnership. JCEO oversees the maintenance of the minibus and staffing, which includes volunteers. The produce is grown locally as part of JCEO's Food Services Program. The Heart Network provides ongoing technical support, including marketing, grant-writing, and logistics.

*"JCEO is the perfect community-based organization to grow the idea of a Mobile Farmers Market. They have made a natural transition in the past few years from providing onsite farmers' markets at three sites to now reaching ten sites across northern Franklin County. This dream is becoming a reality and the Heart Network could not be more proud and excited to be a part of this initiative."*  
*Andrea Goff, Program Coordinator, North Country Healthy Heart Network, Inc.*

CHSC funding has been instrumental to the improved access to fresh fruits and vegetables in Franklin and Clinton Counties. An average of 50–70 customers shopped at each stop during this first year. Customers have indicated that they like the variety of vegetables available, but the best measure of the program's success has been the demand for additional stops in other Franklin County communities.

JCEO and the Heart Network want to continue to improve access to healthy food in all communities of Franklin and Clinton Counties. As partners try to sustain and potentially expand the program, they will need to ensure that there are people who are willing and able to harvest the produce, drive the minibus, complete transactions, and monitor sales. Currently, proceeds from the market are used to purchase seeds and equipment for the next growing season. However, until there are systems to ensure long-term sustainability, JCEO will continue to manage the program and the Heart Network will explore the possibility of seeking private funds like donations and foundation grants.



Customers on the new Mobile Farmers Market peruse the produce and salad bar



**to learn more**

**visit:** [www.heartnetwork.org](http://www.heartnetwork.org)

**email:** Ann Morgan at [amorgan@heartnetwork.org](mailto:amorgan@heartnetwork.org).



## Creating Healthy Schools and Communities

*The places where we live, learn, work, and play all contribute to our ability to become and stay healthy. Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC), a five-year (2015-2020) New York State Department of Health-funded initiative, is helping build stronger, healthier communities.*