

For Immediate Release
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Contact: Erica Smith, Public Relations
217-544-6464 ext. 44307

**St. John's Hospital, Sangamon County Department of Public Health and
Downtown Springfield Incorporated open East Side Farmer's Market**

SPRINGFIELD – St. John's Hospital, the Sangamon County Department of Public Health (SCDPH) and Downtown Springfield, Inc. (DSI) have opened the East Side Farmer's Market for the 2013 season. The East Side Farmer's Market is located in the parking lot of the SCDPH parking lot (2833 South Grand Ave East). Fresh produce will be sold on Mondays from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. from now through September 23. WIC Coupons, Link, Debit and Credit cards are accepted.

The East Side Farmer's Market is a collaborative effort among St. John's Hospital and SCDPH, as well as local farmers from the Downtown Farmer's Market. The initiative is designed to offer East side residents and businesses access to fresh produce, as well as encourage greater participation in a program that provides a free \$15 voucher for WIC clients to buy produce at either the Old Capitol Farmers' Market or Illinois Products Farmer's Market in Springfield.

"Eating fresh fruits and vegetables is essential to good health. While farmers' markets are growing in popularity, there are still some who do not have easy access to existing locations. We want to encourage our WIC families and other east side residents to visit our local markets and incorporate fresh produce into their meals," said Terry Brusnighan, RD, WIC Coordinator, SCDPH.

WIC provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

"For the last four years, St. John's Hospital and the SCDPH have teamed up to increase the redemption rate of WIC coupons. While our programs have been successful, we know there is still the barrier of transportation prohibiting many from taking advantage of our local farmers' markets. In order for more people to benefit from the WIC coupons, we need to bring the Farmer's Market a little closer to home," said Kim Luz, Director of Community Outreach, St. John's Hospital. "Last year the East Side Farmers Market was a great success, and we're looking forward to another good season."

In addition to the East Side Farmer's Market, cooking classes will be provided at the SCDPH every Monday from 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Participants learn to clean and prepare fresh fruits and vegetables sold at the East Side Farmer's Market. Participants can sign up for up to four cooking classes. Interested parties should call 217-814-4308.

ABOUT HOSPITAL SISTERS HEALTH SYSTEM

Hospital Sisters Health System is a Roman Catholic health care mission founded to continue the healing ministry of Jesus Christ. Sponsored by the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, HSHS provides state-of-the-art health care framed in traditional values taught by St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi. It is dedicated to serving all people, including the poor and the needy, at each of its 13 Local Systems in Illinois (Belleville, Breese, Decatur, Effingham, Highland, Litchfield, Springfield and Streator) and in Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Sheboygan and two in Green Bay). For more information about HSHS, visit www.hshs.org.

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