



40 River Street • Troy, New York 12180  
518.274.8685 • Fax 518.272.2744 • info@cdcg.org • www.cdcg.org

**CONTACT:** Amy Klein at 518.274.8685  
media@cdcg.org

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## **Capital District Community Gardens Launches New Initiative** *Organization Continues to Increase Access to Fresh Food*

Albany, N.Y. - Capital District Community Gardens (CDCG) held a press conference at 11:00 a.m. on June 2 at The Corner Store (106 Ontario St. Albany) to introduce a newly launched program, The Healthy Convenience Store Initiative (HCSI.) There to share their remarks were Mayor Gerald D. Jennings, County Executive Michael Breslin and CDCG Executive Director, Amy Klein.

Having expanded services for 35 years, CDCG currently serves more than 50,000 community members each year with programs, such as 47 Community Gardens, The Veggie Mobile and The Produce Project. The HCSI will increase the number of people who benefit from the organization's mission to nourish healthy communities.

"I am extremely proud to celebrate the expansion of the Capital District Community Gardens' programs in the City of Albany," said Mayor Jennings. "Since this project began, the main goal has been to provide our community with healthy, fresh and affordable produce, while also working to educate residents on the benefits of healthier food choices. I am confident that CDCG accomplishes that goal on a daily basis – whether through The Veggie Mobile Project or the latest Healthy Convenience Store Initiative – and I look forward to the continued success of the Capital District Community Gardens in our Capital City."

The HCSI makes fresh, affordable produce available at inner-city 'corner stores.' A grant from the Albany County Strategic Alliance for Health has enabled CDCG to install the program's signature, refrigerated display-units at five locations in Albany since the program began in February.

- The Corner Store – 106 Ontario Street, Albany NY 12206
- Prince Grocery and Deli – 37 Central Avenue, Albany NY 12210
- Ida Yarbrough Convenience Store – 260 N. Pearl St., Albany NY 12207
- SPI Instamart – 699 North Pearl Street, Albany NY 12204
- Safa Market – 1575 Becker Street, Schenectady NY 12304

County Executive Mike Breslin said, “The Healthy Convenience Store Initiative is one of several priorities of the Albany County Strategic Alliance for Health, which is dedicated to promoting healthier living in Albany County. We are proud to be a partner with Capital District Community Gardens and the City of Albany to encourage healthier food options in corner stores. Everyone deserves access to high quality affordable nutritious food and I applaud CDCG’s leadership in implementing this initiative in our community.”

"The Healthy Convenience Store Initiative is part of a multi-pronged approach to provide fresh fruits and veggies to our Region’s neighborhoods in need, said Amy Klein, Executive Director of Capital District Community Gardens. “Access to fresh food is the cornerstone of a healthy life and the key to battling the most prevalent health concerns including obesity, diabetes, heart disease and stroke.”

The initiative benefits both local business owners and inner-city residents.

Chris Gaston, owner of The Corner Store at 106 Ontario Street, says that the HCSI has had a positive influence on business. His store serves as a community center for his neighborhood and the presence of “fresh produce has brought more elderly and children to the store. Even without advertising the HCSI, sales are increasing as customers add produce to their planned purchases.”

At Prince Grocery and Deli at 37 Central Ave customers, James and Kristie Lynch, express their enthusiasm for the program. “Our neighborhood had no options for fresh produce before the HCSI. This program is doing the community a blessing and we hope to see more produce and more locations soon.”

For more information visit [www.cdgc.org](http://www.cdgc.org) , email [info@cdgc.org](mailto:info@cdgc.org) or call 518.274.8685.

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