Capital Roots’ Veggie Mobile Turns 10
Organization Celebrates by Returning to Where It All Began

TROY, N.Y. - Capital Roots, a 42-year-old nonprofit providing fresh, affordable produce to Capital Region residents, kicked off the 10th anniversary of its Veggie Mobile® last week. A decade after its launch, the mobile market travels to more than 34 inner-city neighborhoods throughout Albany, Rensselaer and Schenectady counties delivering a wide variety of fresh, affordable and local produce to residents with limited access to fresh food.

“Access to fresh food can be challenging for many elderly residents, low-income communities and persons with disabilities,” says Amy Klein, Capital Roots’ Chief Executive Officer. “Through our Veggie Mobile we bring nutritious food directly to their doorsteps in an effort to combat the rise in nutrition related illnesses.”

At each stop, customers step on board this produce aisle on wheels to do their shopping. And while the number of stops has significantly increased since the mobile market’s launch in 2007, customers today are still greeted with the same unique experience as they were a decade ago: lively music announcing its arrival, friendly staff who offer a helping hand, prepared recipe samples and education on easy ways to use produce. The organization celebrated the milestone last week at a special 10th anniversary celebration at the market’s very first stop 10 years ago at Kennedy Towers in Troy.

“Since the first day the Veggie Mobile came to Kennedy Towers, we loved it. The staff is friendly, and we all like to try the samples,” says Jane Williams, a Veggie Mobile customer since 2007. “The Veggie Mobile brings the community together. My husband would go around getting lists from other residents that were unable to do their own shopping. He would head down to the Veggie Mobile with those lists and then deliver the produce right to their doors so nobody would miss out!”

Klein and her team developed the mobile market after recognizing a powerful need in the community that was out of reach for many: easy access to affordable fresh produce. After assessing existing services, Capital Roots decided to bring the produce directly to urban residents, making sure it was affordable and always top quality. Ten years later the concept still thrives, and organizations across the country have now adopted this model to aid their own communities with mobile markets.

“We could never have imagined the response we would get from this program,” Klein says. “The fact that organizations around the country have replicated our model as a best practice is a great accomplishment for our entire region.”
Designed for energy efficiency, the box-truck runs on bio-diesel fuel and has been retrofitted with solar panels, which power the market’s refrigerators and sound. With the help of the organization’s mini mobile market, the Veggie Mobile® Sprout, the Veggie Mobile serves nearly 60,000 people in the region each year, moving hundred of thousands of pounds of produce into Capital Region homes, a service many have called a godsent.

Throughout the year, Capital Roots has plans to continue the celebration of the Veggie Mobile 10th anniversary by participating in community events around the region.

“We are grateful for the success of the Veggie Mobile over the past 10 years,” Klein says, “and are looking forward to many more years to come.”

Capital Roots’ Veggie Mobile is sponsored by CDPHP.

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Capital Roots is a 40-year-old nonprofit organization that nourishes healthy communities with more than 50 Community Gardens, the Veggie Mobile®, Healthy Stores, the Produce Project, Squash Hunger and more. Capital Roots is headquartered at the Urban Grow Center, a regional food hub focused on urban agriculture and produce distribution to four counties, enabling Capital Roots to deliver local food and services to underserved neighborhoods and low-income families. Learn more at www.capitalroots.org.

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Capital Roots’ Veggie Mobile launched in 2007.
Past and present Capital Roots’ Veggie Mobile staff came out to celebrate the 10th anniversary party at Kennedy Towers in Troy on Thursday April 20. From left to right: Audrey Bridge, Eric Krans, Hannah Rosen, Wanda Rivera, Lauren Alpert, Brenna Healy, Brent Irving, Will Malcolm and Amy Klein.

Capital Roots and Veggie Mobile sponsor (since 2010), CDPHP, kicked off the 10th year celebration on Thursday April 20th by heading back to where it all began: Kennedy Towers. Residents and neighbors, including Allen and Ann Kremnitzer (pictured above), joined Capital Roots in the celebration, enjoying freshly prepared treats, swapping stories and of course, shopping on the Veggie Mobile.