



CONTACT: Amy Klein
(518) 274-8685

FOR RELEASE: Immediately
Thursday, April 19, 2007

**CAPITAL DISTRICT COMMUNITY GARDENS LAUNCHES
VEGGIE MOBILE; PROGRAM MAKES LOW-COST, FRESH VEGETABLES
MORE ACCESSIBLE TO INNER-CITY NEIGHBORHOODS**

**Veggie Mobile will make stops today at Kennedy Towers Senior
Housing Development and Carroll Hill Elementary School in Troy;
Stops Scheduled in Schenectady and Albany on Friday and Saturday**

Capital District Community Gardens (CDCG) today launched the Veggie Mobile, a new program designed to bring low-cost, fresh produce to inner-city residents in Albany, Schenectady, and Troy.

Every week the Veggie Mobile sells a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables at wholesale prices to people with limited access to fresh produce in their neighborhoods. The specially-outfitted vehicle, which is retrofitted with refrigeration and shelving units to simulate a produce aisle, will operate year-round. The produce sold will come from local growers, including Blackhorse Farms and Buhrmaster Farms, when available. The produce can be purchased by anyone in the community; food stamps are accepted.

“There are many people who don’t have a grocery store nearby or access to a car. Their options for healthy produce are limited and very expensive,” said Amy Klein, Executive Director of Capital District Community Gardens.

“The Veggie Mobile will make healthy foods more accessible to inner-city residents by selling direct to them at affordable prices. We are excited to partner with the NYS Department of Health for this much-needed project, and we thank our many sponsors and local leaders for their generous support,” she added.

The vehicle is fueled with bio-diesel and its refrigeration units and sound system are powered by solar panels, making it truly a green machine. The solar panels allow staff to turn off the engine when the vehicle is stopped and residents are shopping for produce, keeping the vegetables refrigerated while saving energy and reducing pollution. Batteries store solar power on days that the vehicle is not in operation to conserve energy for cloudy days.

CDCG officials unveiled the Veggie Mobile at a press conference at their Troy headquarters; they were joined by Assembly Majority Leader Ronald Canestrari, the State Department of Health, other elected officials and key members of the community.

The neighborhoods targeted in this new program include Arbor Hill in Albany, Hamilton Hill in

-more-

Schenectady and North Central Troy. These areas were selected based on the percentage of low-income residents at or near the poverty level, percentage of children eligible for free lunch, and lack of availability of full-service supermarkets with fresh produce in the area. The first stops of the Veggie Mobile will be today in Troy, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Kennedy Towers Senior Housing Development and 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Carroll Hill Elementary School parking lot.

The Veggie Mobile is modeled after a mobile grocery market in Oakland, California; two new staff have been hired to run the program. The Veggie Mobile is funded through a five-year \$500,000 grant from the New York State Health Department through its Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program and private support from the Community Foundation for the Capital Region's Standish Family Fund; the Wright Family Foundation; the Carlilian Foundation; E. Stewart Jones; the Ten Eyck Group and other generous donors.

"Once again Capital District Community Gardens is taking an innovative approach to helping people in need deal with the basic element of living and this is good food and nutrition," said Assembly Majority Leader Ronald Canestrari.

"Eating more vegetables and fruit is a critical component of a healthy lifestyle. Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables coupled with increased physical activity helps to prevent obesity and related chronic diseases. The Veggie Mobile is a positive step in improving access to healthy foods in the Capital District," said Commissioner Richard F. Daines, MD, NYS Department of Health

"This unique venture by Capital District Community Gardens is to be commended," Mayor Harry Tutunjian said. "The Veggie Mobile will provide a unique service to our residents, giving many the opportunity to purchase fresh produce for their homes. We wish CDCG the best of luck and pledge our support for this tremendous idea."

The Veggie Mobile will stop at the following locations every week:

Troy:

- Kennedy Towers Senior Housing Development, 2100 Sixth Ave. Thursdays from 2 – 3 p.m.
- Carroll Hill Elementary School, 112 Delaware Ave., Thursdays from 4 – 5 p.m.
- Rainbow Community Center, 847 River St., North Central Troy, Saturdays from 3 – 4 p.m.

Albany:

- St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church, 440 Whitehall Road, Fridays from 1 – 2 p.m.
- 200 Henry Johnson Blvd. (Albany Police Station parking lot), Arbor Hill, Saturdays from 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

Schenectady:

- Yates Magnet School, 725 Salina St., Goose Hill, Fridays from 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.
- Hamilton Hill Arts Center, 409 Schenectady St., Hamilton Hill, Saturdays from 10 – 11 a.m.

Capital District Community Gardens has supported a number of programs to help low-income men, women and children gain access to healthier food options. In 2004, the organization launched the

Squash Hunger Program to encourage gardeners to donate their extra produce to help fight hunger in the Capital Region. Through this program, more than 24,000 pounds of produce have been donated to food pantries throughout the Capital Region.

Extra produce from the Veggie Mobile will also be donated to local food pantries. In addition, the Veggie Mobile will visit public housing projects to offer residents a taste of vegetables they may not be familiar with and an opportunity to take home what they want for free. For more information about the Veggie Mobile or any of Capital District Community Gardens programs, call 274-8685 or e-mail info@cdcg.org.

About Capital District Community Gardens

Capital District Community Gardens is a private, nonprofit organization started in 1972, dedicated to cultivating a sense of community in inner-city neighborhoods through a variety of gardening and urban greening activities. The organization manages 45 neighborhood food gardens in Albany, Schenectady and Rensselaer Counties, plants hundreds of trees in urban neighborhoods annually, and works with individuals, organizations and municipalities to improve the quality of life and appeal of our cities.

###