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TAMMY RYAN, MARKET MANAGER



The Farmers Market at Springfield Technical Community College, now open on Wednesdays, is a collaboration between the college and community organizations, offering fruit and vegetables grown at locally owned farms. The market features fresh produce, prepared foods, crafts, and live music. (DON TREGGER / THE REPUBLICAN)



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SPRINGFIELD

## Fresh, affordable food for all

By NATASHA ZENA  
Special to The Republican

Springfield Technical Community College’s farmers market has returned, marking its fourth year in working with local organizations to bring fresh, affordable produce to the Upper Hill neighborhood.

Market manager Tammy Ryan says organizations such as Live Well Springfield, the Go Fresh Mobile Market, City Soul Market and Gardening the Community are having a positive impact. “Residents are having more access to fresh food and it makes a huge difference in people’s lives,” Ryan said.

Consumers who receive SNAP benefits can also take part in the healthy incentives program which provides a dollar-for-dollar match for each SNAP dollar spent on targeted fruits and vegetables purchased. The market is

just one in a number of initiatives to help bring fresh produce to the Upper Hill neighborhood after it was declared a food desert several years ago.

This year, in addition to fruits and vegetable vendors, candy and barbecue will also be sold. Ryan says a new meat and cheese vendor, based out of Hadley, will also offer community supported agriculture (CSA) where participants can buy shares and get a box of goods each week. She adds CSAs not only benefit consumers but are a great way to support local farms

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as well.

“Traditionally, it’s a way to support farmers because it’s a very precarious profession,” Ryan says. “If people (purchase) a box then the farmer has money straight (away) and they know how much they’re going to make.”

New additions at the market this year also include vegan offerings and a vendor who will offer consultations on going vegan. Veganism has risen in popularity in the last few years, with “The Econo-

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mist” dubbing 2019 “the year of the vegan,” reporting that a quarter of 25- to 34-year-old Americans say they are vegans or vegetarians.

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