

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Flint River Fresh Produce Box Program in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic Continues with Community Support

Albany, Georgia — The Produce Box Program launched by Flint River Fresh on April 4th in response to the COVID-19 pandemic is continuing its community impact thanks to support from stakeholders in the Albany area, including local businesses and foundations. This success has propelled the initial 14-day long pilot program into its seventh week of operation. To date, more than 700 fresh produce boxes and 430 locally sourced hot meals have been delivered in Dougherty and Lee County.

The Fresh Produce Box Program has created a collective community initiative that weaves together local food producers, businesses, first responders and healthcare professionals, essential workers, and community members to increase resilience during and after the COVID-19 crisis. Collaborative planning and partnering with local restaurants, soliciting input on program recipients from local business owners, and communications that uplift community heroes are elements of the program's design to facilitate impact.

"On behalf of Los Vaqueros, we want to thank you for supporting hospital staff," says Supreeya Lopez, an owner of El Vaquero Mexican Restaurant and Los Vasqueros in Albany, who selected Phoebe ICU nurse staff as recipients of the program. "Thank you so much for supporting local restaurants"

A recent grant from the United Way of Southwest Georgia enabled the program to partner with more local restaurants and keep healthy foods on the tables of at-risk neighbors and community heroes. A generous donation from Syngenta has also funded this continuing effort.

Other community supporters include the donors of the previously scheduled Green Nose Day campaign, including Fleming & Riles, Hayes LTI, SRJ Architects, Place on the Pointe, LRA, Hughey & Neuman, Logo's Plus, and other anonymous businesses and individuals, who unanimously voted to put forward donations despite the cancellation of the campaign due to COVID-19. Stewbos, a locally owned restaurant and hospitality business, remains a key partner assisting in logistics coordination of providing meals and identifying local restaurant business recipients for this pilot program. Produce donations from Southern Valley in Norman Park will also support ongoing efforts. Most produce boxes include harvest directly from Flint River Fresh community farm sites located in Albany, with an emphasis on Georgia Grown supplemental produce.

In addition to the Fresh Produce Box Program, Flint River Fresh's response to COVID-19 remains a conduit between local farmers, vulnerable neighbors, and the community-at-large. In adherence of all federal and local mandates or guidelines, Flint River Fresh enforces safety protocols that enable Community Farm Markets to serve as connectors to healthy food. To ensure safety, the community can

pre-order from a list of Georgia Grown harvests and take advantage of the drive-up and pick-up of prepackaged orders.

Please visit www.flintriverfresh.org/covid19 and more about Flint River Fresh's response to COVID-19 and learn how to support the Fresh Produce Box Program and Community Farm Markets.

In addition to monetary donations, sanitation supplies including disinfectants, gloves, and face masks are needed to support these programs. Please contact info@flinriverfresh.org to arrange delivery or pick-up of donations. Businesses who may benefit from these program should email info@flinriverfresh.org.

Flint River Fresh is a 501(c)(3) organization that aims to make fresh, locally grown produce accessible and affordable for people throughout the Flint River Region while empowering community and youth through education and outreach opportunities. Visit www.flintriverfresh.org to learn more.