

Patrick Administration Awards Agricultural Grant to Sustainable CAPE

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources announced the seven winners of a recent grant to enhance buying local efforts in Massachusetts. Sustainable CAPE - Center for Agricultural Preservation & Education, a Truro non-profit with 6 years of experience supporting local agriculture across the Cape, will receive \$35,000.

Sustainable CAPE's program entitled, *Farm Fresh Year-Rounders: Connecting Children, Elders and Low-Income populations to the Outer Cape's Farmers, our Local Harvest and Farmers' Markets* will enable the organization to more deeply root its work within the Cape community. Sustainable CAPE runs after-school and summer Children's Gardens, Farmer-in-the-School Programs, an Educational Farmers' Market and the annual Truro Agricultural Fair.

"We are honored to be one of seven recipients of this funding," states Francie Randolph, Sustainable CAPE's Founding Director. "MDAR has been incredibly supportive of our organization since the very first Ag Fair when they drove down to meet with us. Their important collaborative support will enable us to pilot new programs and further extend the reach of our local food access work." Specifically the grant will support a program coordinator and education targeted towards children and elders.

"Sustainable CAPE has been a leader in developing local food programs that are fun, educational and result in real and systemic community change," states Senator Dan Wolf. "Where else would you find a Zucchini 500 racetrack thousands of people gather around on Labor Day Weekend?"

In 2012 Sustainable CAPE was awarded a USDA Grant for an EBT (electronic benefits transfer) machine. The machine enables the Truro Farmers' Market and Agricultural Fair to accept both SNAP (Supplemental Assistance Nutrition) cards and credit cards. "Then in 2013 we raised private funds to double SNAP purchases ourselves," explains Randolph.

In essence the doubling program gives away free money (i.e. tokens) to double all SNAP card purchases, turning \$10 into \$20 worth of tokens to spend on fresh, local food. The program drives USDA funds to local harvesters, yields an economic multiplier boost for the local economy, and improves the health of our community. "Everyone should feel encouraged to shop outdoors at farmers' markets while listening to live music, connecting with neighbors and/or stopping by the kids art table," Randolph adds.

"Buy Local groups create and foster a successful, personal relationship between regional agriculture and their communities," said MDAR Commissioner Greg Watson. "The Patrick Administration is thrilled to support these organizations."