



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FARMERS MARKETS FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT LOW INCOME FAMILIES IN VANCOUVER

A bountiful harvest celebration brings chefs together with local farmers, winemakers, and craft beverage producers to raise funds for the Fresh to Families Project.

VANCOUVER, BC – October 5, 2016 - Vancouver Farmers Markets (VFM), the non-profit organizer of eight weekly farmers markets in the city, is partnering with BC's top farm-to-table chefs and a selection of local farms and producers to present **RIPE 2016**, its 7th Annual Harvest Celebration on Sunday, October 16, 2016 at The Roundhouse.

Funds raised at RIPE will support VFM's operations and programming, with a special focus on its **Fresh to Families Project**, a fresh food program benefiting low-income families in Vancouver. Fresh to Families is an expansion project of the **Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon Program**, a healthy eating initiative that provides fresh food coupons to low income families and seniors that can be spent at farmers markets across the province. RIPE organizers hope to raise enough funds to bring more families into the program for 2017.

"Fresh to Families currently benefits 80 families in Vancouver, including newly landed refugees, food insecure children ages 0-6, and at-risk expectant mothers," says Tara McDonald, VFM's Executive Director. "We're hoping to double that number for next year through fundraising initiatives like our RIPE Dinner. Every \$250 raised provides a family with fresh produce each week, from June-October."

RIPE 2016 will showcase an all-star line-up of local chefs including **Ned Bell** (Chefs for Oceans), **Quang Dang** (West), **Meeru Dhalwala** (Vij's/Rangoli), **Deniz Tarakcioglu** of Café Medina, **Ryan Reed** (Nomad), **Karen McAthy** (Blue Heron Creamery), **Shelome Bouvette** (Chicha), and **Clement Chan** (Torafuku). These farm-to-table chefs will be paired with VFM producers to create eight unique, farmers market-inspired tastings stations, accompanied with BC wine and craft beer, seasonal cocktails and dessert tastings.

The evening will also feature live music by local bluegrass band **Scattered Coals**, and a silent auction with some exclusive prizes that organizers hope will entice guests to open their pocketbooks, including: a **Listel Hotel experience**, a **Staub Cocotte from Cook Culture**, and a **LifeSpace Gardens Condo Farm**. There will also be a live donation drive, lead by guest emcee and Vancouver's Man About Town Fred Lee, with the aim to raise funds for Fresh to Families.

Tickets for RIPE 2016 are on sale now. Visit eatlocal.org/ripe-2016 for tickets and more information.

Additional media info for RIPE: eatlocal.org/ripe-2016/media

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