

health
happens
here



In Neighborhoods

BUILDING A HEALTHY SACRAMENTO

CalFresh Recipients Welcome at Farmers Markets

BY EDGAR SANCHEZ

The call for artists went out last May: A striking design was needed for two Sacramento billboards announcing that CalFresh — also known as food stamps — are welcome at farmers markets.

Stacy Almy, an artist from Arden-Arcade, learned about the entry deadline just a day prior.

“I had 18 hours to put an idea together,” said Almy, 34. “I worked until 10 minutes before deadline and I sent it off.”

A special panel that received input from CalFresh recipients named Almy’s the best among four submissions, earning her a \$2,500 commission.

On Jan. 17, a coalition of nonprofits, led by the Sacramento Food Policy Council (SFPC), unveiled the waterproof billboards — one in English, one in Spanish. They stand on a cement foundation at Oak Park Art Garden, a 1/3-acre plot at 14th Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard that is privately owned and leased by Alchemist, a coalition partner.

Depicting newly harvested produce and a CalFresh electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card, the 9-foot-by-6-foot billboards say: “Use CalFresh EBT at Farmers Markets.”

The installation is part of SFPC’s ongoing campaign to increase CalFresh utilization at nearly 15 Sacramento County farmers markets.

In November, the county had 93,508 CalFresh households, but many are unaware their benefits are accepted at farmers markets, a coalition press release said.

Forty people witnessed the unveiling.

“It’s not often you get art folks and food folks in the same room, but we’ve done it with this project,” Adrian Rehn, of coalition member Valley Vision, told the guests. “This art piece will advance an equitable farm-to-fork economy while furthering our robust art scene.”

The project was funded in part by a \$5,000 grant from the City of Sacramento’s Creative Economy Program, Rehn said.

“PEOPLE LITERALLY GO HOME, OR KIDS GO TO SCHOOL, AND THEY’RE HUNGRY. [THIS IS] NOT ACCEPTABLE!”

Darrell Steinberg
Mayor, Sacramento

Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg, who was also present, noted the billboards combine “public art and public good.”

“People literally go home, or kids go to school, and they’re hungry,” Steinberg said. “[This is] not acceptable!”

City Councilmember Jay Schenirer, Sacramento County Supervisor Phil Serna and SFPC President Brenda Ruiz also spoke.



Stacy Almy designed two billboards for a busy Oak Park corner, with identical English/Spanish messages: Farmers Markets welcome Food Stamps. Photo by Edgar Sanchez

“Our mission statement at SFPC is to propel collective action towards an equitable and sustainable food system” said Ruiz, whose agency is supported by The California Endowment.

At Oak Park Farmers Market, CalFresh recipients can double their benefits: For every \$1 of CalFresh EBT benefits, they receive \$2 to shop for produce at the market.

Considering the billboards’ message, Market Manager Joany Titherington expects to see more CalFresh participants at the Oak Park Farmers Market when it reopens for the season on May 4.

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

In 2010, The California Endowment launched a 10-year, \$1 billion plan to improve the health of 14 challenged communities across the state. Over the 10 years, residents, community-based organizations and public institutions will work together to address the socioeconomic and environmental challenges contributing to the poor health of their communities.

ZIP CODE
95219
Life Expectancy
73



ZIP CODE
92657
Life Expectancy
88

Your **ZIP code** shouldn’t predict how long you’ll live — but it does. Staying healthy requires much more than doctors and diets. Every day, our surroundings and activities affect how long — and how well — we’ll live.

Health Happens in Neighborhoods. Health Happens in Schools.
Health Happens with Prevention.

PAID WITH A GRANT FROM THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT

Learn more about the
Sacramento Food Policy Council
by visiting
www.sacfoodpolicy.org

The HUB
Building Healthy Communities
www.SacBHC.org