

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A FRESH Look for Project FRESH!

Coldwater, MI. There is nothing better than taking a bite of a fresh, juicy peach on a summer afternoon, or a forkful of sugary-tartness from a just-baked strawberry-rhubarb pie after dinner. Hmmmmm! The tastes and aromas of a Michigan summer are filling the warm days and nights. Peaches, strawberries and rhubarb are only three of the many Michigan grown fresh fruits and vegetables young women and children can enjoy when they participate in the WIC Project Fresh program. And to help them enjoy them even more, the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is teaming up with MSU Extension this summer to offer special classes that will help participants learn how to buy, clean, store and cook with fresh produce.

Project FRESH is a program that makes fresh produce available to low income, nutritionally-at-risk women and children who participate in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. Project FRESH is unique because food coupons can be used at local participating Farmers' Markets to purchase fresh Michigan grown produce. Beginning in June, interested WIC participants can receive a \$30 booklet of fifteen \$2 coupons which can be used through October 31st to buy fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables at authorized farmers' markets and roadside stands. Participating farmers markets have a laminated yellow poster stating: "Project FRESH Coupons Accepted Here." In FY 2011, 112 Michigan farmers' markets, 130 roadside stands and 1,529 Michigan farmers were authorized to accept WIC Project FRESH Coupons.

According to Jo Ann Wilczynski, Prevention Services Director at the Health Department, "Eating fresh is a sure way to eat healthy! So, in order to assure that our families are getting the best nutritional value, we have partnered with Michigan State Extension Services (MSUE). MSUE staff are experts when it comes to proper food handling and food preparation techniques and the recipes they will share are delicious, affordable and easy to make." Classes will be offered as follows:

Branch County Office, 570 N. Marshall Road, Coldwater, MI.

Phone: 517-279-9561, ext. 147

Every Thursday, beginning June 21st from 8 AM – 4 PM. Classes are scheduled on the hour, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3 p.m. (There will be **NO** classes on July 19th.)

Hillsdale County Office, 20 Care Drive, Hillsdale, MI.

Phone: 517-437-7395, ext. 117

The second and fourth Tuesdays of the month starting June 12th. Classes are scheduled on the half-hour, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Three Rivers County Office, 1110 Hill Street, Three Rivers, MI.

Phone: 269-273-2161, ext. 205

Every Wednesday, beginning June 13th. Classes are scheduled on the hour from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Classes will continue to be offered through the summer until all the coupons have been distributed to interested participants. To participate in the class, just plan on attending a scheduled session. To learn if you qualify for WIC and Project Fresh, please call your local office or check out our website at www.bhsj.org. Purchasing good, wholesome foods is one of the benefits of WIC... now adding fresh fruits and vegetables to the list is another!

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