

## SPREADING HEALTH

Beans&Greens nourishes neighborhoods with local produce.

words KELLI WHITE photos provided by JENN BROCKMAN

What happens when an interest in food, the experience of shopping at farmers' markets and a professional background in corporate strategy come together? In Jenn Brockman's case, the result is contributing to an organization called Beans&Greens that, according to the program's tagline, is "Nourishing Neighborhoods with Local Produce."

"Beans&Greens is creating a conversation about nourishment in our city," Brockman, head of market development and program messaging for Beans&Greens, says. But Brockman is talking about more than just food when she mentions nourishment.

BEANS&GREENS HELPS  
CONNECT LOCAL FARMERS  
TO MARKETS, HELPS PROMOTE  
THE MARKETS AND MAKES  
OTHER PAYMENT METHODS  
POSSIBLE FOR CUSTOMERS.

"The aim of Beans&Greens is to improve local food security by making local produce more accessible and affordable for residents in our community," Brockman says. "We also want to promote farmers' markets as places to educate people about nutrition and to make them a cultural experience. It really is benefitting the entire community, not just low-socioeconomic groups."

According to Brockman, when people are educated about nutrition and have access to healthier food in an affordable way, betterment of public health is seen on a communal scale.

### AWARENESS TO ACTION

Beans&Greens helps connect local farmers to markets, helps promote the markets and makes other payment methods possible for customers. The organization is making healthy, local foods more accessible, making local produce more affordable and doubling the value for people with Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

"SNAP is the new name for the former Food Stamp program and was designed for people who are transitioning to work," Brockman says.

An Electronic Benefits Machine (EBT) has transformed farmers' markets from only accepting cash to accepting electronic payments by SNAP and debit. Beans&Greens also doubles the value of senior coupons at participating farmers' markets in Kansas.

The program was put into motion in spring 2010. In several short months, Beans&Greens has expanded its efforts from seven to 14 farmers' markets in 2011.

Beyond growth in the number of participating farmers' markets, Beans&Greens is currently launching its own Mobile Market to serve very food-insecure neighborhoods, where grocery stores are two miles or more away for most residents, Brockman explains.

### HOW TO HELP

"Everyone in our city can be a shareholder in this program in some capacity," Brockman says.

Here are some ways you can contribute:

- Support Beans&Greens by finding them on Facebook. "Here, people will have the opportunity to donate to special campaigns for the farmers' markets and the program," Brockman says.
- Volunteer for a specialized interest by visiting [www.beansandgreens.org](http://www.beansandgreens.org). There are many opportunities.
- Know something about nutrition? Offer your time by providing nutrition education at the markets. One goal of Beans&Greens is to have chefs come to markets to demonstrate healthy ways to prepare the already-healthy food available at the markets.
- Donate directly to mobile market activities, help farmers' markets build capacity, or contribute to the matching fund.

If you are interested in these or other ways you can help contribute to the nourishment of our community, contact the Menorah Legacy Foundation at (816) 753-0606 or visit <http://www.beansandgreens.org>. ❖

*For more information on Beans&Greens and to see a complete listing of participating markets, visit the Web site listed above. Beans&Greens is owned and operated by the Menorah Legacy Foundation.*



The Beans&Greens logo tells a story that explains the need for the program and its goals. From the attention to nourishment for a community to the relationship between people and food, the center of Beans&Greens is the heart that helps build the foundation for healthier, stronger communities.

"The best place to focus nourishment is on the heart," Brockman says.

