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FREE SHUTTLE SERVICE BRINGS ASYLUM HILL COMMUNITY TO THE FARMERS' MARKET AT BILLINGS FORGE

- The Asylum Hill Fresh Express, courtesy of The Hartford and Aetna connects people who live and work in Asylum Hill to fresh, local produce at Billings Forge Community Works' Farmers' Market held at Billings Forge.
- The Hartford and Aetna will contribute at least $5 for every purchase made by an employee to fund The Double Value Coupon (DVC) program which doubles the buying power for shoppers in need.
- Members of the Asylum Hill community, employees, public officials and media are invited to "#RideAsylumHillFreshExpress".

For the third year, Aetna and The Hartford have collaborated to provide free, roundtrip shuttle service from the Asylum Hill neighborhood to the Farmers' Market at Billings Forge in Frog Hollow. The grand opening event kicks off on Thursday, June 16 with media availability between 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. ET.

The Asylum Hill Fresh Express runs continuously from 10:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. every Thursday until October 27. The shuttle will stop at Aetna, The Hartford, Immanuel House, and Billings Forge Community Works.

"In addition to helping consumers gain access to fresh, nutritious, local produce we believe that our Farmers' Market is helping the community to regain a figurative 'town square'", reports Cary Wheaton, founding Executive Director of Billings Forge Community Works. "Our neighborhood comes alive on Thursdays and the community is experiencing the many positive outcomes associated with increased foot traffic and animated public space."

Every purchase made by employees of The Hartford and Aetna is helping the community through The Double Value Coupon (DVC) program. The Hartford and Aetna will donate at least $5 for every purchase made at the Farmers' Market at Billings Forge to the DVC program. These generosities will enable persons with SNAP benefits (formerly food stamps) to double the money they use to purchase more fresh foods at the market.

"We encourage our community neighbors and employees to take a ride on the Asylum Hill Fresh Express and enjoy the fresh fruits and vegetables the market has to offer," said Diane Cantello, Vice President of Corporate Responsibility at The Hartford. "We believe it's vital to build

community connections where we live and work and help local businesses prevail. The farmers' market helps us do both."

The Farmers' Market at Billings Forge accepts cash, debit, credit, and electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards.

"We are on a mission to build a healthier community right here in Hartford," said Chris Montross, Aetna's Senior Director of Community Relations and Urban Marketing. "Helping people get fresh, healthy, affordable fruits and vegetables is one of many things we can do to achieve that goal."

Frequent shoppers can also increase the value of their purchases by using their free 2016 Fresh Card. Shoppers can have their card punched at each visit and after 10 visits they will receive a $5 farmers' market coupon redeemable until the Asylum Hill Fresh Express ends.

The Farmers' Market at Billings Forge began in 2007 by Billings Forge Community Works, a local non-profit, as a seasonal weekly market providing the residents of the Billings Forge community and the surrounding Frog Hollow neighborhood with access to fresh, local foods.

Farmers and food artisans travel from all over Connecticut to sell their fresh goods directly to consumers. In addition to produce, the market also features flowers, breads, fresh dairy, local Italian ice, eggs, jams, pickles, soaps, and locally roasted coffees.

Visit the vendor's page to learn more about the farmers, artisans, and entrepreneurs who participate in the market every week.