A Letter from Executive Director

Tiffany FitzGerald

Dear DC Greens Community,

Spring showers may have threatened all day, but that didn’t stop us from coming together at the inaugural Ward 7 & 8 Resource Fair at The Well on May 13th. It was a wonderful occasion where neighbors were able to connect with organizations dedicated to sharing resources and resilience. We couldn’t have hoped for a better turnout or more delicious food, friends and fellowship.

Our season is still just getting started. We’re looking forward to upcoming events at The Well at Oxon Run, including our monthly Capital Area Food Bank Produce
person monthly nutrition classes held at The Well on the third Saturday of every month in partnership with WANDA (Women Advancing Nutrition Dietetics and Agriculture). The next session will be June 17th. Sign up and come join us!

Stay tuned and read on for budget advocacy updates, school food research, and the latest from DC Greens’ Produce Rx team. And when you’re in the neighborhood, don’t forget to check out the community bulletin board at The Well for analog news, events, and more!

Be well,
Tiffany FitzGerald

---

**Produce Rx News**

**Fresh Connect Cards in Action**

89% of participants in our Children & Families Produce Rx program are using their Fresh Connect cards to purchase fresh fruit and veggies for themselves and their loved ones! We’re excited to see that our participants are actively using PRx at grocery stores across the DMV (the most popular PRx card shopping site is currently the Giant grocery store on Park Road!) We look forward to continuing our partnership with About Fresh.

**Produce Rx at Food is Medicine National Summit**

Our Produce Rx Manager, Luisa Furstenberg, attended the Food is Medicine National Summit on April 26-27 at Tufts Friedman School. It brought together over 200 healthcare system leaders, providers, investors, policymakers, program implementers, and patients with lived experience, all centered around food-based health interventions. Learn more about the summit here.
Community Engagement

First Ward 7 & 8 Resource Fair in the Books!

We were delighted to host our inaugural Resource Fair at The Well, welcoming our partner organizations and community members from across Ward 7 and 8. More than 30 organizations participated, engaging with a crowd of over 100 attendees. Despite the rainy weather, the event infused a bright atmosphere through newfound connections, family-friendly activities, and fruitful networking. To find out about upcoming events and programming at The Well at Oxon Run, visit www.dcgreens.org/thewell.

Advocacy Updates

DC Falling Short on School Breakfast Participation Goal

According to a recently published study from our partners at DC Hunger Solutions, less than 50% of DC public schools are meeting the goal for school breakfast participation! Breakfast is free for all students in DC public schools and is a critical opportunity to ensure children receive at least one healthy meal each day. How can we ensure more healthy food access in our schools? 1) Make sure breakfast and lunch options are healthy, appetizing, and served in a way that gives students the time and space to eat; 2) Adopt Councilmember Henderson’s bill to launch Universal Free School Meals districtwide; 3) Improve and expand participation in the Good Food Purchasing Program to ensure that the food we source is fresh, delicious, and sustainable.

Advocates Score Major Victories in First Budget Vote, More Work Ahead
On Tuesday, May 16, the DC Council took their first vote on the fiscal year (FY) 2024 budget. The Council ultimately approved the $19.7 billion budget (the largest in the District's history), but not before making significant changes to bring community services back into Mayor Bowser's #brokenheartbudget. Thanks to the hard work of advocates like DC Greens and our coalition partners at Fair Budget Coalition and Fair Food for All, millions of dollars for essential services was brought back into the budget with more potentially to come.

Key wins include: $43 million back to the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and 230 new housing vouchers for people experiencing homelessness (Bowser had not funded any); reversed proposed cuts to a program that offers free legal assistance to people in landlord-tenant court; restored the Baby Bonds program. The Council also increased funding for dozens of schools across the city, restored funding for organizations that work with victims of domestic violence, and saved three Circulator bus routes from the chopping block.

Unfortunately, a proposed amendment package from Councilmember Zachary Parker, which would have fully funded DC Greens priority legislation Give SNAP a Raise and No Senior Hungry, failed to garner full Council support. Councilmembers will continue to negotiate until their second vote (Tuesday, May 30), and further improvements are still possible – but Council needs to hear from YOU in order to know what to prioritize! One major bright spot may be in funding Give SNAP a Raise, which Councilmembers Parker and Janeese Lewis-George have told DC Greens they are actively working to fund. Stay tuned to our social and email for updates!

**Transforming DC Jail Food**

Newly elected advisory neighborhood commissioner for single member district 7F08, Leonard Bishop, sees his main responsibility as listening to the questions and concerns of his fellow incarcerated community members and working to make improvements at the DC Jail. One concern ANC Bishop hears come up time and again? The food. "The food is not very good. It’s almost entirely processed and the portions are too small, and what’s served has little nutritional value," said Bishop in an interview with Washington City Paper.

In an effort to transform the food system at the DC Jail from one that harms into one that heals, DC Greens is working alongside incarcerated and formerly incarcerated community members on an advocacy campaign to support the FRESH STARTS Act. Introduced by Judiciary Chair and Ward 2 Councilmember Brooke Pinto in February of 2023, the FRESH STARTS Act would improve nutrition and food quality in DC jails,
DC Greens Weighs in on Federal Food Access and Child Nutrition Rules

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) not only sets rules and regulations for what and how food is grown on the farm, it is also responsible for shaping critical food access programs, including the National School Lunch Program. Recently, USDA asked public stakeholders to weigh in on two important food rule-makings that could expand food access for youth, and DC Greens answered the call.

The first rulemaking proposed to dramatically expand students' access to school meals by lowering the threshold that schools have to meet to qualify for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), a federal program that enables eligible schools to serve free meals to all students. USDA wanted input from stakeholders as to whether or not they should lower the threshold (aka, the percentage of low-income students at a school) for schools to qualify for CEP from 40% to 25%. DC Greens supported this change in our comments, because it will greatly increase the number of schools that are eligible for CEP and the number of students benefiting from healthy school meals.

The second rulemaking proposed changes to child nutrition program standards, which affect more than 30 million children who rely on school, after-school, and early childcare meal programs. The proposed rules put forward important updates that would result in increased local food procurement, more equitable and culturally-relevant meals, improved nutrition, and expanded career opportunities. DC Greens submitted comments in alignment with Good Food Purchasing Program standards, supporting many of the proposed changes and recommending adjustments to others.

Now that the public has had a chance to weigh in, USDA will review all the submitted feedback and prepare final versions of the proposed rules.

The Well at Oxon Run

Capital Area Food Bank Produce Distribution - Wednesday, May 24th
Don't miss the Capital Area Food Bank Produce Distribution event at The Well on Wednesday, May 24th, from 1pm to 5pm. Visit us and grab a box filled with fresh vegetables and fruits like carrots, onions, pears, apples, and potatoes. You can even take an extra box for your friends and family!

Join Seed & Culture Saturday Workshop with Falani on May 27th
Discover the vibrant Seed & Culture Saturday workshop series with Falani. Their second workshop takes place on Saturday, May 27th, from 12pm to 2pm. Mark your calendars and be part of this enriching experience!

Yoga at The Well is Back - Weekly starting June 3rd
Get ready to rejuvenate your mind and body with Yoga at The Well. Our resident yoga instructor, Jalila Williams, will be leading free yoga classes every Saturday this summer, starting June 3rd, from 11am to 12pm (except June 10th). Join for an enriching experience while surrounded by the beautiful urban garden. All levels are welcome. 
RSVP for this Saturday’s class here.

Nutrition and Wellness Classes - Monthly Every 3rd Saturday, June 17th (next session)
Open registration is now available for all remaining classes! We are excited to highlight our partnership with WANDA (Women Advancing Nutrition Dietetics and Agriculture) to deliver a free nutrition education series at The Well for all community members who are interested and register. The classes are led by a Nutritionist who focuses on sharing information about many topics such as: the types of food to eat while dealing with chronic food-related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and high blood pressure; general shopping tips; and tips for cooking healthy, culturally relevant meals. Visit our website www.dcgreens.org/nutritional-wellness to find out more and register to attend.
Opportunities at The Well

Last month, the Kingdom Care Senior Center staff and elders gathered at The Well to connect and plan future community activities. In addition to enjoying meals together, they expressed their interest in movement classes, smoothie demonstrations, chess and card games, and more. Stay tuned for upcoming events and opportunities!

Produce on the Horizon

Exciting news from The Well: melons are coming soon! We’ve recently seeded a variety of melons and will transplant those seedlings to our fields this June. Currently, we have cabbage, broccoli, and lettuce growing in our fields, and they will soon be ready for harvest. Stay tuned for the freshest produce straight from our farm.