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NEWSROOM

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EVENT CALENDAR

May 17, 2013

## MEDIA ADVISORY: PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

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## Food Summit on May 21 will help community to find creative ways to expand access to healthy foods

People are more likely to choose to eat fresh, healthy foods as part of a healthy lifestyle when the surrounding neighborhood or community is designed to help people make the best choice, the easiest choice. The North Sarasota Food Summit will engage the greater Newtown community in finding creative ways to expand access to healthy foods.

The Food Summit will be held from 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, May 21, at the Robert L. Taylor Community Complex, 1845 34<sup>th</sup> St., Sarasota.

The Newtown Community Health Action Team (CHAT), a group of residents working on a “grassroots” level to promote a healthier community, is hosting the event. Organizers say that the forum will give residents a voice in creating an environment that supports healthy food choices.

Public health officials say that when people rely on processed and convenience foods, it is often because they cannot access healthy foods. A daily diet of processed foods can lead to obesity and other preventable causes of death and disability such as high blood pressure, diabetes, strokes and heart disease.

“There are a lot of people already energized around food issues that are doing great things to support a healthy food environment in North Sarasota,” said Katie Leonard, a community health planner who advises the CHAT. “We want to build on this energy and have a dialogue about what’s working and what’s not working. The Food Summit is a way to involve North Sarasota residents, policymakers, city planners, food retailers, growers and educators in the conversation.”

Organizers believe that the Food Summit roundtable discussions will celebrate accomplishments. Additionally, it will get people thinking “outside the box” about new ways to partner and collaborate to support a healthy food network in the North Sarasota community. The Food Summit also will feature “tasting stations.”

The Newtown CHAT will use the feedback from the Food Summit to move healthy food issues to the forefront in the community.

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