

WINDHAM EDITION

ReminderNews

Kate Callahan promotes healthy foods in Windham

By **Melanie Savage**

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A new grant procured with the assistance of GROW Windham has allowed for the hiring of a market master and assistant market manager for the Willimantic Farmers' Market. Filling the role of assistant market manager is Kate Callahan. Callahan, a registered dietitian, grew up in Windham and returned three years ago as an AmeriCorps member. In addition to working for the market, Callahan works for GROW Windham as the director of the K-8 program. Callahan works both within the classroom and during after-school hours to instruct school children in healthy food choices. Her pre-established connections within the school system should help with Callahan's role at the market, which focuses largely on community outreach.

New Kids' Day activities on the second Saturday of every month will introduce children to healthy food topics at the market. "If we can get kids when they're young, and get them interested in fruits and veggies, we can get them a healthy start," said Callahan.

Callahan will also be preparing healthy dishes using produce procured from the market. Patrons will be able to sample the dishes, and recipes will be available in Spanish and English. "I will be working on cooking demos probably two or three times a month," said Callahan. Callahan hopes to help people figure out how to use some of the more unusual items sold at the market. Garlic scapes are the curly, green "flower stalks" of the hard neck garlic plant. Many people simply discard them, but "You can make a really amazing pesto out of them," said Callahan. "I'm a big believer that if people taste it, then they're going to want to buy it," she added.

Through community outreach, organizers hope to make the Willimantic Farmers' Market a destination event for local residents. "Having the touch points for the community for healthy food is fantastic," said Callahan. "I'm just really excited to see this market grow." As a long-time resident of Windham, Callahan wants to see the town thrive. "I'm so excited about seeing the community be more vibrant," she said.

The Willimantic Farmers' Market, started in 1976, is the longest-running farmers' market in Connecticut. The market offers fresh fruits and vegetables, prepared breakfast items, goat's milk soap, potted plants, eggs, jams, baked goods, yarn, honey and more. The market is held every Saturday, through October 31, at the corner of Jackson and Union Streets, under the pavilion. This year, the market is doubling SNAP funding. On June 13 there will be a kids' activity at 10 a.m. Check the market web site at <http://www.willimanticfarmersmarket.org/> for more details.

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