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### **LEDGE LIGHT HEALTH DISTRICT RECEIVES USDA FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT**

Ledge Light Health District has been awarded a \$100,000 grant from the USDA to implement the Farm Fresh New London County Schools Project. Over the next two years, LLHD will work with school food service directors, farmers and local organizations, including FRESH New London to increase the amount of locally grown produce in all New London County school districts by 10 percent.

“As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, Ledge Light's award from USDA is exactly the kind of enlightened food policy that I support as a way to promote local agriculture and healthier nutrition. Kudos to Ledge Light for their hard work competing for this grant,” said Congressman Joe Courtney.

“Ledge Light Health District is thrilled to receive this USDA grant, an affirmation of the long-range objectives of the ACHIEVE New London County Coalition,” said Director of Health Baker Salisbury. “In partnership with FRESH New London and our regional educational systems, we can now take steps toward healthy eating and active living, our major goals.”

The grant will fund a part-time Farm to School Coordinator and support nutrition education efforts such as school gardens, visits to local farms and cooking classes. The project has six objectives, which are expected to be completed by November 2015. Throughout 2014, LLHD and FRESH New London will focus on two objectives: the first is to complete an inventory of food system assets and barriers for the eight existing farm to school programs and the twelve school districts who currently have no system in place; the second is to formalize membership, functions and a meeting schedule of New London County Farm to School Advisory Council.

The remaining four objectives will be completed the following year. These objectives include developing relationships between farmers and food service directors through networking events; establishing a five-year New London County Farm to School program that will address transportation barriers and establish a local center for Farm to School trading; establishing an electronic procurement portal for farms and schools to use for purchases; and increasing demand for locally grown fresh foods to be served in county schools.

“FRESH New London is dedicated to working with the community to make a better food system. Our schools are the ideal venue for modeling and instructing young people about healthy eating, environmental stewardship, and local agriculture,” said FRESH New London Co-Founder and Executive Director Arthur Lerner. “We are excited to be part of this new, Ledge Light Health District-led, USDA Farm to School Grant. Together we will build the capacity of New London County Schools to integrate local agriculture, gardening and healthy food into curriculum and the school day.”

“The USDA Farm to School Grant provides an ideal opportunity to incorporate health, nutrition, science and technology into a curriculum that embraces local talent and challenges the barriers to food security for the next generation,” said Nancy Rossi, Managing Executive of the Gemma Moran United Way/Labor Food Center. “We support this partnership and its outreach to New London County schools and embrace its development in our county.”

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Ledge Light Health District – LLHD – serves as the local health department for East Lyme, Groton, Ledyard, New London and Waterford, Connecticut. As a health district, formed under [Connecticut General Statutes Section 19a-241](#), LLHD is a special unit of government, allowing member municipalities to provide comprehensive public health services to residents in a more efficient manner by consolidating the services within one organization.

The Director of Health and staff of LLHD work to promote health and wellness among the 120,000 residents we serve. By enforcing the Connecticut Public Health Code, conducting health education programs, monitoring disease outbreaks and nurturing our environment, LLHD is focused on *promoting healthy communities*.

LLHD’s mission statement – **to prevent disease, illness and injury; to protect and nurture our environment; and to promote improved health and prosperity for all residents** – describes in more detail our slogan of “promoting healthy communities.”

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Promoting healthy communities

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