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Whole Foods introduces food redistribution program to reduce food waste

September 1, 2020

To kick off Hunger Action Month, Whole Foods Market announced Nourishing our Neighborhoods, a program created to expand capacity and capability for community-based food rescue organizations to move food from where it's available to where it's needed most.

Whole Foods Market is donating the funds to purchase 19 refrigerated vans, and donating two refrigerated catering vans, to community-based food rescue and redistribution programs to transport both perishable and nonperishable food to communities within 18 markets across the United States and Canada. The vans will provide recipient organizations with 20,000 pounds of rescued food per week per vehicle, donated from Whole Foods Market and surrounding grocers and retailers, which equates to 182 million meals provided over the anticipated 10-year lifetime use of each van.

"Nourishing our communities is a priority at Whole Foods Market, especially in these challenging times," said Rob Twyman, executive vice president of operations at Whole Foods Market. "We're proud to put forth a food redistribution solution to reduce food waste and provide both perishable and nonperishable nourishing foods to our communities."

According to ReFED's COVID-19 U.S. Food System Review, while food systems are global by nature, they manifest locally, especially in the last mile of distribution to consumers. Hyper-local support is needed to ensure distribution to end users, in many cases through community-based organizations like the recipients of Whole Foods Market's Nourishing our Neighborhoods program.

Nourishing our Neighborhoods will complement the ongoing efforts by Whole Foods Market to

support food access and food recovery. Whole Foods Market donates millions of pounds of perishable and nonperishable food to local food banks and food rescue organizations annually; individual stores also participate in a variety of local food waste diversion programs.

Whole Foods Market suppliers RightRice, Justin's and Severino Pasta Co. have made generous donations to help fill the Nourishing our Neighborhoods vans upon initial distribution to the recipient food rescue organizations. Whole Foods Market will fill the remaining space in vans with both perishable and nonperishable goods. Whole Foods Market has rigorous quality standards for all food it sells, which prohibit over 100 preservatives, flavors, colors, sweeteners and other ingredients commonly found in food.

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