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NEWS RELEASE

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**GOD'S GREEN MARKET FEEDS THE HUNGRY AND WINS COUNTY AWARD
Distinguished Public Health Service Award Goes to the Rev. Hugh Farrish
and the Port Chester/Town of Rye Council of Community Services
DeCicco's Also Honored for Quitting Tobacco Sales**

There probably aren't many spiritual leaders who ride a tractor and grow vegetables to nurture the body as well as the spirit in Westchester County.

But the Rev. Hugh Farrish, of Bowen Memorial Baptist Church in Mount Vernon, does. After learning that Port Chester had no farmer's market but that needy neighbors there could benefit from the gift of fresh vegetables, he teamed up with the Port Chester/Town of Rye Council of Community Services to grow, tend and bring to God's Green Market enough free vegetables to feed more than 2,500 people for 13 weeks during the growing and harvesting season.

That's why the Westchester County Board of Health awarded them both the Distinguished Public Health Service Award today at St. Peter's Church in Port Chester, where God's Green Market is based.

"This is a terrific thing that you're doing, teaming up to provide nutritious vegetables to some of our Westchester neighbors, and your efforts are also sensitive to the environment," said County Executive Andy Spano. "I can't think of two more worthy recipients of this award."

Volunteers will begin sowing the seeds for this year's crop at God's Green Market this week. Rev. Farrish provided the seeds, the 12 acres of land and the know-how after six years of gardening at his Mount Vernon church and New Rochelle home, while the Council contributed volunteers who came from several churches in Port Chester, Rye Town and Rye Brook. These weekend farmers spent many Saturdays and some week days watering, pruning and weeding. They harvested vegetables and delivered them to God's Green
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Market, where needy neighbors were able to get bags full of just-picked produce. The crops included squash, eggplant, corn, potatoes, cucumbers, cabbage, pole beans and peas.

“A wonderful rainbow of faiths and nationalities all came together to show our compassion,” said the Rev. Bruce Baker of All Souls Presbyterian Church in Port Chester, who nominated both groups for the award. “There were residents of Rye and Purchase, members of a local Latino congregation and African-Americans from Rev. Farrish’s church. It was a really interesting mix of people. By the end of the summer, some of the recipients of God’s Green Market came back to the farm and volunteered.”

This multicultural, multiethnic undertaking continues. More volunteer farmers are needed this year. Interested residents should contact Ann Barringer Spaeth at the Council at (914) 939-8055.

“My uncle gave me a tractor in North Carolina, and I towed it home,” said Rev. Farrish, explaining how he went from gardening to farming. “I do all the plowing myself. This is out of love. Thoughts come. Revelations come. Everything you do is a sermon. The more you give, the more is given to you.”

It is also a green venture, which is important to Westchester County. Volunteers travel in church vans for the 80-minute drive to and from the farm in Goshen, saving fossil fuel, and no pesticides are used on the farm. For a one-time \$5 fee, recipients are given reusable cloth bags that they can refill, week after week, at God’s Green Market. And there is no waste: any surplus vegetables are distributed to soup kitchens and food pantries at the end of the market day.

“I commend both Rev. Farrish and the Council for exemplifying the highest level of commitment and distinguished public health service to the community in the past year,” said Dr. Douglas G. Aspros, DVM, president of the Westchester County Board of Health. “We salute you both for your services to the cause of public health in our county and for having responded with creativity and generosity in accomplishing our shared mission of promoting public health.”

At the same awards ceremony, Dr. Aspros presented DeCicco Markets with a proclamation honoring the company’s bold decision to stop selling tobacco products in their four Westchester stores.

“It’s not often that we see businesses put the health of the public before their profits, which is why DeCicco is to be commended,” said Dr. Aspros. “I hope more retail establishments will follow DeCicco’s lead by banning the sale of tobacco products in their stores, too. The harder it is to buy cigarettes, the less people will smoke.”

