

# SIUE and community partners seek support for Market on Wheels

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EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and the [Goshen Market Foundation](#), with support from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and the [Edwardsville Community Foundation](#), have partnered to deliver delicious nutrition via a Market on Wheels to local individuals who have little or no access to healthy produce.

Goshen Market on Wheels will bring affordable produce from local farmers and SIUE's rooftop teaching garden to neighborhoods, schools and community centers whose residents lack access to fresh produce as a result of food-desert conditions. Two SIUE students will travel in the mobile market, making three to four local stops a week, to deliver fresh produce and provide education on nutrition and food sustainability.

# MARKET ON WHEELS



## GREEN ROOF & SIUE CLASSROOMS



In partnership with SIUE, The Goshen Market Foundation supports the growth and maintenance of a learning food roof to supply the Market on Wheels. Students in several of the University's programs can experiment with urban gardening practices and learn about the history, culture, and science of agriculture.

## DOUBLE VALUE COUPONS

When it comes to purchasing food, it's not always easy to buy what is healthy and sustainably-sourced. The Goshen Market Foundation has implemented a Double Value Coupon incentive program for Illinois SNAP/Link (food stamp) customers, which enables Link card users to double the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables they can purchase at the Market on Wheels.

## LOCAL FARMERS

An additional source for locally-grown produce to be used on the Market on Wheels will be local farmers.



## FOOD DESERTS

Food deserts are defined as parts of the country void of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually found in impoverished areas. This is largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers' markets, and healthy food providers. The Market on Wheels will make weekly stops at schools, parks, hospitals, and community centers in these areas to offer new options for healthy, affordable produce.



## NUTRITION EDUCATION

Although providing the opportunity to purchase whole foods affordably is a decent step toward food security, education is also an integral part of the equation. At each stop, the Market on Wheels will equip underserved communities with recipes, food processing techniques, preparation demonstrations, and nutritional information so that they can more effectively use and enjoy it.



SIUE's Jessica DeSpain, PhD, associate professor in the Department of English Language and Literature and president of the Goshen Market Foundation, is spearheading the effort with the help of 12 undergraduates in her spring 2018 Literature and Sustainability course.

"This class has a high-impact service learning component that is teaching students the value of hard work, a commitment to the betterment of area communities, and how literature and sustainability intertwine," DeSpain said. "There is a lot of literature on agriculture, life on a farm and food insecurity. Through this literature, we discuss cultural implications of our relationship to food and how those impact the environment."

The high-impact community engagement practice (HICEP) received approximately \$5,000 from CAS' 2018 Targeted Funding Initiative toward the rooftop garden and securing of a mobile market vehicle.

Other fundraising efforts are underway through Friday, March 16 to achieve a goal of \$20,000. The Edwardsville Community Foundation has agreed to match up to \$1,500 in private donations made to the project by March 16. To donate, visit [app.donorview.com/M5wD](http://app.donorview.com/M5wD).

Additionally, Dewey's Pizza in Edwardsville is hosting a fundraiser for the Market on Wheels from 4-10 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 27. Up to 20 percent of all food and beverage purchases, dine-in or carry-out, will be donated to the project when customers show the Market on Wheels flyer either on their phone or in hand. The flyer can be accessed on [Facebook](#).

DeSpain's students will grow the produce on the University's rooftop teaching garden throughout the semester. They plan to have a mobile market purchased and outfitted by May.

"I'm passionate about helping people gain access to healthy, nourishing foods," said Olivia Russell, a junior English major from Granite City. "This project requires giving our time and effort to something much more important than ourselves. Helping others and trying to make the world a better place to live is most important. I'm glad to be in a class that finds value in that."

Zack Gondek, a senior integrative studies major, with focus areas in biological sciences and creative writing, has found the literature and sustainability course to be a perfect blend of his interests and desire to solve issues such as food insecurity.



“Dr. DeSpain has selected some great creative works that emulate farm life,” said Gondek, of Carol Stream. “I’ve always had an interest in agriculture and botany, and this project is helping me understand more about my community. I never realized food deserts were an issue in Madison County.”

Gondek and classmates will collect data to determine which crops will be most marketable locally. Their goal is to expand the rooftop garden by adding more growing soxx, a trellis to grow vine plants and other structures for potatoes, tomatoes and herbs. The students will also develop nutritional content to share with customers.

The project connects directly to sophomore Lydia Friz’s aspirations to write about environmental issues. The Collinsville native emphasizes the project management, team aspects of this endeavor as great preparation for her future career.

“This class offers experience planning a complicated project involving various stakeholders, teamwork opportunities with a tangible, shared goal, and important lessons in problem-solving,” Friz said. “I’m finding myself worrying less about grades and thinking more about what needs to be done to successfully accomplish this important project.”

Central to SIUE’s exceptional and comprehensive education, the [College of Arts and Sciences](#) has 19 departments and 85 areas of study. More than 300 full-time faculty /instructors deliver classes to more than 8,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Faculty help students explore diverse ideas and experiences, while learning to think and live as fulfilled, productive members of the global community. Study abroad, service-learning, internships, and other experiential learning opportunities better prepare SIUE students not only to succeed in our region's workplaces, but also to become valuable leaders who make important contributions to our communities.