



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Opportunity for Local Farmers to Participate in Farm-to-Senior Pilot**

Friendship Centers of Emmet County (FCEC) would like to partner with farmers who grow produce in Antrim, Emmet, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, and Otsego counties to incorporate locally grown foods into meal programs that serve many area seniors.

FCEC provides a variety of programs and services to individuals 60 years or older who reside in Emmet County. Services provided reflect the mission of the organization - to ensure that all senior citizens have the opportunities, information and services necessary to live healthy, safe, and active lives in dignity. Among the services provided are congregate, or group meals and Meals on Wheels, or home-delivered meals. Client surveys reveal that meals are one of the primary reasons Emmet seniors seek services from the organization. With over 59,000 meals prepared in 2013, FCEC provides a valuable source of nutrition and socialization for our county's elders. "Many of our clients grew up with good quality produce from their own gardens and farms, and they appreciate supporting those who are still farming," noted Sue Engel, FCEC executive director. "In addition, many seniors are interested in a diet that is rich in variety and nutrition and we anticipate that this trend will continue."

With support from the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation, Friendship Centers of Emmet County has begun to assess the feasibility of purchasing some of the produce used in their congregate and home-delivered meals from local growers. "Farming is a valuable part of our culture and economy in this community," explained David Jones, executive director of the Community Foundation. "We are so pleased to work with FCEC, a trusted, long-time partner, to learn what our community can do to both provide seniors with fresh, local produce while at the same time creating a new market for area growers and identifying practices that others could follow to replicate or expand these programs within our region."

Interested farmers should complete the Farm to Senior Request for Information (RFI), which can be found online at [www.emmetcoa.org](http://www.emmetcoa.org), by 5 pm on April 14, 2014. For more information, call Chris or Sue Ann at 231-347-3211 or 888-347-0369.

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