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Athens Farmers Market Contact: Samantha Umstead, Assistant Market Manager

P:740-593-6763 | E: AthensFarmersMarket@gmail.com

Fourth Annual Ann Fugate Memorial Fund for Beginner Farmers Grant

The Athens Farmers Market, with their partners Community Food Initiatives and Rural Action, announces the fourth annual call for applications for the Ann Fugate Memorial Fund for Beginner Farmers grant. Ann Fugate, of Rich Organic Farms, passed away in May 2020. “This grant opportunity is our effort to pay tribute to her for all of the work she did to support local farmers and keep the AFM on the cutting edge for so many decades and ensure her legacy continues for future generations, “ says Ronda Clark, owner of Blackberry Sage Farm and past grant coordinator, “she was a fierce advocate for small farmers and a pillar of our market.”

This grant is just one example of the extensive collaboration happening here in Southeast Ohio with a shared vision for a thriving regional food system. Maribeth Saleem-Tanner, Executive Director at Community Food Initiatives, comments, “The Ann Fugate Memorial Fund is a great example of how this community works together to support a strong local food system built on small farms, sharing, cooperation, and grassroots leadership. CFI’s role in implementing the program directly supports our organization’s mission, values, and longstanding partnership with the Athens Farmers Market.”

This grant will also complement Rural Action’s Whole Farm Project supporting beginning farmers. Director of Sustainable Agriculture Tom Redfern comments, “Rural Action is pleased to continue working with the Athens Farmers Market and other partners to support beginning farmers. We can think of no better way to honor the memory of Ann Fugate than by working together as a community to grow our local food system.”

The goal of the fund is to support first time vendors at the Athens Farmers Market and keep new and innovative food producers entering the market to ensure future sustainability for the market and community. “The effects on the market have been incredible,” says market manager Tanya Hire. “These new vendors bring in new energy, ideas and products, making the market cutting edge and keeping us in tune with the latest trends.”

Donations to the AFM can be written out to CFI with “Ann Fugate” written in the memo section and sent to 94 Columbus Rd, Athens OH 45701. CFI is a 501(c) 3 organization and all donations are tax deductible.

Applicants must meet the following requirements:

- First time vendor with the AFM
- Beginning farmer

- Live within 150 mile radius of Athens, OH

There are no product requirements for this grant, but recommended products include:

- Fruit
- Eggs
- Dairy
- Honey
- Winter produce

Two annual winners will be granted a free stall fee, worth \$250 each, and will receive recognition and support as new vendors. Please note that winners will still be required to pay a \$225 membership fee, which is separate from the stall fee. Learn more about becoming a vendor with the Athens Farmers Market and access the online application for the Ann Fugate Memorial Fund grant on the Athens Farmers Market website (athensfarmersmarket.org). Deadline for submission is February 2, 2024. Contact Program Coordinator and Assistant Market Manager Samantha Umstead with questions: AthensFarmersMarket@gmail.com; 740-593-6763.