
Media Advisory

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Building Bridges Across the River Provides Healthy Food to Ward 8 Families

Washington, D.C. – Building Bridges Across the River (BBAR) is launching its new Community Raised Inspired & Sourced Produce (CRISP) program, a venture designed to create a fresh, healthy and local food network to address the social determinants of health and improve food access in Ward 8. A food-centric cooperative of eight local urban farms will increase the distribution of fresh herbs, fruits and vegetables to families east of the river.

“Our CRISP program was designed to share 100% organic, affordable fresh food grown by minority farmers right here in Ward 8” shared *THEARC Farm Manager Dominic Hosack*. The farm has provided fresh food and educational programming since 2014 as a solution to some of the social challenges faced in the community.

“Our Bridge Park Plots build on the success of THEARC Farm - last year we grew over 6,000 pounds of fresh food and vegetables!” said *Scott Kratz, Vice President of Building Bridges Across the River*. “This investment by Amerigroup Foundation will provide a season’s worth of healthy food to 150 Ward 8 children.”

The CRISP program is a BBAR partnership with Children’s National Medical Center to provide FREE weekly baskets of fresh food to 75 low-income families through a community driven agriculture (CSA) program generously supported with funding from Amerigroup Foundation.

“We are excited to partner with Building Bridges Across the River to bring healthy food to our patients east of the river.” said *Claire Boogaard, Associate Medical Director at Children’s National*. “This is especially critical for an area in the nation’s capital that has just one full service grocery store serving over 80,000 residents.”

The CRISP program is designed to urgently provide affordable and healthy food to children and adults in Ward 8. Recent data show 7.6% of black high school students living in D.C. report no fruit consumption and 8.3% report no vegetable consumption in the past seven days. Similarly, adults in Ward 8 report the lowest consumption of dark green vegetables (49%). Ward 8 is 97% black and both Ward 7 and 8 are home to 50% of all D.C.’s children.

This lack of access to healthy foods is correlated with health issues as people living in Ward 8 have the highest rates of obesity (43%), diabetes (16%), asthma (21%), heart attack (12%) and no physical activity (35%) in the city. CRISP will help by increasing the quantity and quality of healthy food available directly in the neighborhood.

“At Amerigroup, we are committed to improving the health and well-being of our communities and our consumers in the District of Columbia,” said Linda Elam, President, Amerigroup D.C. “Access to nutritious, wholesome foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables can prevent disease and improve quality

of life. We are pleased to support programs like CRISP that provide the means to encourage healthy behaviors, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with Building Bridges Across the River.”

WHO: Building Bridges Across the River’s **Bridge Park Plots & THEARC Farm** in partnership with National Children’s Hospital at THEARC and Amerigroup Foundation.

WHAT: Community Raised, Inspired and Sourced Fresh Food Standard CSA is priced at \$40 per week. CSA shares supported by Amerigroup will be at no cost to low-income families.

WHEN: CSA shares are offered every week from June through October. Visit bridgepark.org/csa to select your pickup day and D.C. location.

WHERE: Fresh and local food sourced from THEARC Farm at 1901 Mississippi Ave. SE and seven Bridge Park Plots located throughout Wards 6 and 8

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ABOUT BUILDING BRIDGES ACROSS THE RIVER

Building Bridges Across the River’s (BBAR) mission is to improve the quality of life for families living east of the Anacostia River by providing leadership, management and fiscal oversight of the 11th Street Bridge Park, the Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus (THEARC), THEARC Farm & THEARC Theater. Through these projects, BBAR uses a multi-sector approach to address significant social, health, environmental & economic disparities that exist in DC. THEARC FARM and Bridge Park Plots are BBAR’s solution to creating food equity in the city.

Founded in 2015 at Building Bridges Across the River’s Congress Heights campus, THEARC Farm has become a beacon of urban farming east of the Anacostia River. Its mission is to provide training and support for urban farmers and growers, educate the community about wellness and nutrition and provide affordable organic produce through a CSA program named C.R.I.S.P. (Community Raised Inspired & Sourced Produce.)

For the last three years, the 11th Street Bridge Park (a program of Building Bridges Across the River) has collaborated with faith communities and local non-profits to design and build urban gardens that have become social and cultural hubs for residents and congregants in Wards 6 & 8 in Washington, D.C. There are now SEVEN Bridge Park Plots providing access to fresh food on both sides of the Anacostia River.

About Amerigroup Foundation

The Amerigroup Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Amerigroup, a wholly owned subsidiary of Anthem, Inc. Together, with local, regional and national organizations, the Amerigroup Foundation works to enhance the health and well-being of individuals and families in communities that Amerigroup and its affiliated health plans serve. Amerigroup Foundation funding is focused on strategic initiatives working to address and provide innovative solutions to health care challenges, as well as promoting the Healthy Generations Program, a multi-generational initiative with five areas of focus: Healthy Heart, Cancer Prevention, Healthy Maternal Practices, Type 2 Diabetes Prevention, and Healthy Active Lifestyle. These disease states and medical conditions include: prenatal care in the first trimester, low birth weight babies, cardiac morbidity rates, long term activities that decrease obesity and increase physical activity, diabetes prevalence in adult populations, adult pneumococcal and influenza vaccinations and smoking cessation. The Foundation also coordinates the company’s year-round Associate Giving program which provides a 50 percent match of associates’ campaign pledges, as well as its Volunteer Time Off and Dollars for Doers community service programs. To learn more about the Amerigroup Foundation, please visit www.anthem.foundation.
