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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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South Side Coalition Announces New Partnership with Local Grocery Stores to Improve Healthy Choices for Diet and Exercise

The Healthy Choices, Healthy Community Coalition is pleased to announce that two of Milwaukee’s largest and most popular south side grocery stores have joined with them to increase healthy food options available to neighborhood residents. Pete’s Market and El Rey (stores already well known in the community for a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables) will increase their selection of whole grain breads, cracker and cereals; whole wheat flour, quinoa, sesame and flax seed; cage free eggs and baked chips.

“In order to make healthier choices, our community needs healthier options in the neighborhood. We are extremely pleased with all the organizations that joined this community initiative and particularly grateful with the owners of Pete’s and El Rey, who offered full collaboration and support as soon as we approached to them. This is an important step to have a healthier neighborhood”, said Tatiana Maida, Healthy Choices Program Coordinator.

Food demonstrations will be held on the next three Saturdays (November 3,10 and 17 from 11:00 to 1:00 p.m.) at both stores. Tips on how to prepare and use the new food items, samples to taste and recipes to take home will be offered to encourage shoppers to include the healthier options into their everyday meal planning.

(more)

In January 2012, the Healthy Choices Program conducted an availability and price assessment of 50 food items in eight local grocery stores. The food items were chosen based upon a more holistic approach to nutrition and included whole grains and seeds such as quinoa, sesame and flax.

The study showed that there were gaps in the availability of some food items in the two main grocery stores where families in the area shop. After learning the results of the study, a group of 17 South side residents involved in the Healthy Choices program decided to approach El Rey and Pete's to request the expansion of healthy foods in those stores. The program participants committed to support the stores by offering food demonstrations and providing marketing and education materials including posters, handouts, and recipes.

The Milwaukee County Extension and the 'Community and Regional Food System' (CRFS) Project at the University of Wisconsin-Madison initiated the Healthy Choices, Healthy Community Coalition, to look at issues of access to healthy food in local communities. In addition to Sixteenth Street's Healthy Choices program, the Coalition includes Core El Centro, the Center for Urban Population Health, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, the Community and Regional Food System Project and Milwaukee County Cooperative Extension.

For more information contact Tatiana Maida, Healthy Choices Program Coordinator: (414) 385-3784, or Greg Lawless, Co-Manager of the Community and Regional Food System Project, (608) 575-6798.

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