



# Ypsilanti Farmers Market

## 2017 Season Report

### 2017 Ypsilanti Farmers Markets At a Glance

**Our Ypsilanti Farmers Markets operate from May-October, Downtown on Tuesdays 3-7pm and in Depot Town on Saturdays 9am-1pm**

**Total Sales:  
\$258,060**

**Total Food Assistance Sales:  
\$50,414 (18%)**

**785 SNAP transactions with 289 unique SNAP customers**

**Average Daily Attendance:  
600**

**Total Customer Visits:  
34,451**

**Total Vendors:  
75**

The purpose of the Ypsilanti Farmers Markets is to provide vibrant community spaces for local farmers and small businesses to sell directly to their customers, with an emphasis on increasing access to healthy foods for underserved populations.

Growing Hope is dedicated to strengthening our community through collaborative partnerships, creating community spaces, and fostering growth and development for healthy food access throughout Southeast Michigan. Since 2006, our Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers Market has played a key role in providing fresh, local food to our community while providing a space for farmers and food producers to sell their products. The expansion of our market to a permanent year-round indoor and outdoor market in 2017 allowed people of all income levels to rely on fresh, locally grown, organic produce right in the heart of downtown Ypsilanti. Check out our tremendous progress from 2017 and help envision the future of healthy food access in Ypsilanti!

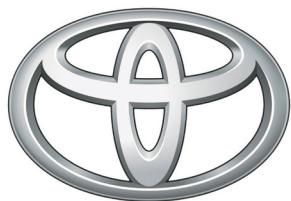


A helper from Marks Farm & Greenhouse unloads goods for the market



Vendor Maggie Minor of Magnolia Bakery sits with her baked goodies at the market

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## Federal and County Funds Help Support the Ypsilanti Farmers Markets

The U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded Growing Hope a three-year grant through their Farmers Market Promotion Program. These funds will help attract new customers to the markets, help expand the Ypsilanti Farmers Market-Downtown from seasonal to year-round, and support Growing Hope's "Building Blocks for the Food Entrepreneur Trainings." In 2017, 61 people attended our Building Blocks classes which focused on the cottage food law, becoming a market vendor, going commercial, and online marketing. Over half of the participants said that because of attending a class they are more likely to develop new outlets for their businesses. The Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development also supported the Ypsilanti Farmers Markets and Building Blocks trainings through the Act 88 mileage Local Economic Development program. The Ypsilanti Farmers Markets continue to grow and thrive due to support from our local elected officials and federal farmers market grants.



## A Fond Farewell from our Founder, Amanda Maria Edmonds

After 15+ years as the founding Executive Director of Growing Hope, I passed the torch and retired at the end of 2017. In the earliest years, our focus was on gardening and young people, using growing together as a vehicle for many types of positive change. "Food system"—let alone sustainable food system—wasn't terminology commonly used or even understood. How health and place and food and economies are so very interconnected was also not recognized. The kids in our summer program sold produce at the Depot Town farmers market,

but it seemed a stretch in 2006 when we stepped up and founded (with several key partners) what we called then the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers Market. It was a stretch both because we had no experience in market management, and because it seemed a diversion from the core work we were doing around school and community gardens. However, I think we knew even then that for us to make change it was about shifting to a systems approach, and engaging in our food system in multiple ways. I think we were right, and now these years later we explicitly talk about how our systems approach is core to how Growing Hope creates Healthy People, Healthy Places, and Healthy Economies. I fell in love with farmers markets, and while I am moving on from ours at Growing Hope, I am staying involved in broader work in the farmers market sector, as an advocate and a consultant. I am proud to have led, over the last several years, the creation of the Ypsilanti Farmers MarketPlace and all that it will offer for years to come. While I don't think that farmers markets—or gardens, for that matter—will solve all of our community's systemic challenges, I do think these on-the-ground, place-based strategies are a core part of how we foster more sustainable, nourishing, and resilient communities. Thank you for all you do to participate in, shop at, or support ours.

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[www.growinghope.net](http://www.growinghope.net) [facebook.com/growinghope](https://facebook.com/growinghope)

# 2017 Ypsilanti Farmers Market Impact

**“Growing Hope inspired me to create my own business and empowered me as a female farmer. Growing Hope is a great asset to the community and I am glad to be a part of it.”**



**“Access to those of us in the community who need help - those who do not drive big fancy cars or can spend a lot. I use the farmers market to feed my family, as it is cheap, healthy, sustainable food. This is important to me.”**

## Community Collaborations at the Farmers Market

### Ypsilanti African-American Food History Mural

In 2017, Growing Hope created opportunities for youth in Ypsilanti to develop as local leaders and instill a sense of pride in their city. Thanks to support from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, Growing Hope partnered with Ypsilanti Community High School to create a vibrant mural celebrating Ypsilanti's African-American food heritage. Students in Lynne Settles's art class researched, designed and painted the mural which was installed at the Ypsilanti Farmers MarketPlace. Local African-American farmers and gardeners participated in the project by speaking to Settles's art class about their experiences in the local food system. At the mural unveiling in October, students presented what they learned about Ypsilanti's food history to local leaders. With more space for murals at the MarketPlace, Growing Hope anticipates continued partnership with these young leaders in Ypsilanti.



Ypsilanti Community High School students in teacher, Lynne Settles's art class at the unveiling of the mural they created at the Ypsilanti Farmers MarketPlace in downtown Ypsilanti.



The National Theater of Ghana performs at the Ypsilanti Farmers Market in Depot Town

# The Robert C. Barnes Sr. MarketPlace Hall & The Ypsilanti Farmers MarketPlace

Ypsilanti has a year-round indoor/outdoor farmers market! The Robert C. Barnes Sr. MarketPlace Hall is nearing completion, and for the first time the indoor Ypsilanti Farmers Market is open once a month January-April. While the primary goal of purchasing the building has been to extend the season of our downtown farmers market year round—thus increasing economic activity, sales of local product, and food access—this facility is very much “more than a market” as we’ve come to say. A fully licensed commercial kitchen will act as the heartbeat to the large warehouse building. It will become a micro-incubation kitchen, available for affordable rental by local entrepreneurs. Additionally, the kitchen will service the MarketPlace Hall when in use as an event space. We know through our work with food entrepreneurs and by running a farmers market for 12 years just how much a licensable, rental commercial kitchen space is a limiting factor to many food businesses to start or grow. We’re so grateful for the countless volunteer hours and generous financial contributions that have gone into making this space a reality.

## The Ypsilanti Mobile Farm Stand by Growing Hope



In Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township, access to affordable, healthy food remains a major health concern. Low income seniors especially face barriers to accessing healthy food through limited mobility and affordability. The Ypsilanti Mobile Farm Stand addresses these issues by bringing local produce to the places where people live, work, and gather. In 2017 the Ypsilanti Mobile Farm Stand visited the Ypsilanti Senior and Community Center, Clark East Tower Apartments, and the Washtenaw County Department of Health & Human Services. In addition to weekly stops, the farm stand also visited the West Willow Community Center during monthly neighborhood association meetings and distributed \$1,042 worth of free produce thanks to funding from the Washtenaw County Health Department. Based on our surveys, the majority of our farm stand customers were residents of Ypsilanti, 60 and up, and eligible for SNAP benefits. The farm stand doubled sales over 2016 with \$3,687 worth of produce sales—19% of which came from food assistance programs including Senior Project FRESH, Prescription for Health, Double Up Food Bucks and EBT/SNAP. Bringing healthy food to people makes a difference!

## The Veggucation Station with Liza & Our Teen Mentors



Liza started her Nutrition Education Internship with Growing Hope in May, 2017. You may have seen Liza or tasted one of her healthy samples at the markets this year at our “Veggucation Station”! Liza was instrumental in planning our cooking demonstrations and teaching our Teen Mentors about food safety and healthy recipe preparation.

### What was your favorite part about working at the Veggucation Station?

The bonds that I made with market patrons, vendors, and volunteers was one of the greatest things I gained from my time at Growing Hope. Lots of market patrons sought out my table, even people who never accepted my samples.

### How were you impacted by working with at the Ypsilanti Farmers Market?

I learned a great deal about farming, running a market, and the role that community health workers can have in a market.