

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Main Farmers' Market to Kick-Off Second Full Season on Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup> at Saint Paul University**

### ***Market revenues used to hire a seasonal community sustainability coordinator for Old Ottawa East***



OTTAWA. The Main Farmers' Market will kick-off its second full season on Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup> on the grounds of Saint Paul University at 223 Main Street in Old Ottawa East. The success of the 2008 season has not only allowed organisers to expand the market for 2009, but also to hire a seasonal sustainability coordinator who will work on a variety of community initiatives that reflect the Market's values and mission.

"Our new coordinator, Christiana Fizet, will develop activities and educational programs around our new Children's Garden and help out with other initiatives such as the Community Garden and Rideau River Nature Trail," said Rebecca Aird, Chair of Sustainable Living Ottawa East (SLOE), the group that spawned the community-run Farmers' Market in 2007. "She will also assist the manager of the Main Farmers' Market on special initiatives related to the Market itself. This is an innovative example of how communities can use revenue-generating projects to support complementary initiatives."

The Market's success from last year has also allowed organisers to expand and enhance the Market, while retaining an intimate feel that appeals to customers and vendors alike. Like last year, the Market will feature fresh produce, flowers, meat, honey, crafts and baked goods produced within 100 miles (160 kilometres) of Old Ottawa East. This year's edition will feature over 22 seasonal vendors, including newcomers such as Canreg Station Dairy who will bring their fine cheeses to the Main Farmers' Market. The Market will also see more daily vendors and artisans, as well as an expanded range of entertainment activities for kids and adults.

"The Main Farmers' Market is a vibrant, thriving people place where residents come to meet friends as well as to shop," said Greer Knox, Manager of the Main Farmers' Market. "This year we hope to have chef demonstrations, face painting, live music, wagon rides and a petting zoo."

Ms. Knox sees a particular role for Farmers' Markets in tough economic times. "Buying local not only helps farmers survive but also gives the consumer the opportunity to ask questions about agricultural practices and make choices based on the answers. It's obvious that fresh fruits and vegetables, picked only a few hours ago will have more nutritional value than something picked days ago and ripened chemically on a truck. In tough times the best value for our food dollars is buying locally."

*Media contact: Sean Whittaker, Tel: 613-884-6803, e-mail: [seanwhittaker@rogers.com](mailto:seanwhittaker@rogers.com)*

*The Main Farmers' Market is a not-for-profit community-based organization run by a volunteer Board of Directors. Sustainable Living Ottawa East (SLOE) was formed in 2007 as a part of the Ottawa East Community Association. SLOE includes residents working to create and promote more sustainable lifestyle choices for those who live, work and study in Old Ottawa East.*