



UNITED FRESH START FOUNDATION

**NEWS RELEASE**

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PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

## **United Fresh Start Foundation Helps Jump-Start Salad Bars for Alexandria City Public Schools**

*"Greens & More Bar" Installed at Charles Barrett Elementary, More Schools to Follow*

**Alexandria, VA (March 3, 2017)** - Today, the United Fresh Start Foundation joined Alexandria school and community leaders to highlight the district's first "Greens & More Bar," currently being implemented at Charles Barrett Elementary School. The salad bar dedication event highlighted public-private partnerships as a way to create healthy school food environments in Alexandria and across the country.

United Fresh President & CEO Tom Stenzel, Alexandria Mayor Allison Silberberg, Alexandria Schools Superintendent Dr. Alvin Crawley, parents, and produce industry supporters were in attendance to promote this new healthy addition to the school's cafeteria, and to observe second grade students select fresh produce options from their new "Greens & More (Salad) Bar."

"This is truly a team effort, and it's an honor to help my local school district, the place where our five children went to school, to begin implementing salad bars," said Stenzel. "Kids like fresh fruits and vegetables. When given the opportunity to make their own choices from a visually appealing display of fresh produce on a school salad bar, they will select and eat more. Salad bars are the most effective strategy for helping students make the healthy choice, the easy choice. We see this here in Alexandria, and in schools across the country. It works."

"The 'Greens & More Bar' has been a fantastic addition to our school lunch program," said Charles Barrett Principal Seth Kennard. "Our students are being exposed to new fruits and veggies each week, they are learning healthy habits, and the presence of the salad bar has helped our entire school community -- students, teachers, parents -- think about making healthy choices. It's been great."

"The health and well-being of children in our city are paramount," said Mayor Silberberg. "This new initiative shows the benefit of public and non-profit stakeholders working together for common cause, and I'm very proud of our schools for being leaders in the healthy school movement. It's great to see this success at Charles Barrett Elementary, and I'm excited to have more schools get started with creating a new generation of healthy eaters."

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) serves over 18,000 meals daily, including breakfast, lunch, supper and snacks, from 17 school sites throughout the city. With an annual food budget of nearly \$3 million, more than ten percent is allocated toward fresh produce. The district is committed to expanding fruit and vegetable choices for students, and the "ACPS 2020 Strategic Plan" specifically highlights health and wellness as essential to ensuring students are ready to learn.

Current USDA nutrition standards for school lunch require serving a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables each week, and salad bars provide an easy way for schools to serve these options. Research and experience in schools across the country demonstrates that children significantly increase their fruit and vegetable consumption when given a variety of choices in a school salad bar. When offered multiple fruit and vegetable choices, children respond by incorporating greater variety and increasing their overall consumption.

The “Greens & More Bar” is a salad bar branding concept developed by the district’s nutrition services department. Charles Barrett Elementary is one of eight Alexandria schools that will implement a “Greens & More Bar.” Jefferson-Houston School and James Polk Elementary are next in-line to offer this option, with additional schools to be identified in the months ahead.

Salad bars were made possible thanks to produce industry donations coordinated by the United Fresh Start Foundation. Supporters include: Dole Food Company, Giant supermarket, Grimmway Farms, National Potato Council, Potatoes USA, and Tour de Fresh, a produce industry cycling event to raise funds for school salad bars.

The United Fresh Start Foundation continues to engage the produce industry, foundations and allied businesses to support salad bars for schools nationwide, as a strategy for increasing children’s access to fresh fruits and vegetables every day at school.

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#### **About The United Fresh Start Foundation**

The United Fresh Start Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization focused exclusively on increasing children’s access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Affiliated with the United Fresh Produce Association, the Foundation is committed to helping today’s kid’s achieve the public health goal to make half their plate fruits and vegetables in order to live longer and healthier lives. The Foundation works to create an environment in which kids have easy access to high-quality, great-tasting and affordable fresh fruits and vegetables, whenever and wherever they are choosing snacks or a meal. More information at: [www.unitedfreshstart.org](http://www.unitedfreshstart.org).