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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ORIS Mobile Farmers' Market Hits the Road in
Manchester, N.H. this Summer and Fall**

***“Fresh Start Food Cart” to Bring More Fresh, Local Food to Residents thanks
to \$210,000 in grants from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation and
NH Children’s Health Foundation***

MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE (September 10, 2019) -- At the Elmwood Garden and Community Center on Trahan Street in Manchester this morning, Manchester Mayor Joyce Craig and other state and local officials joined Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success (ORIS), Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation, and the New Hampshire Children’s Health Foundation to launch Manchester’s new Mobile Farmers’ Market – the “Fresh Start Food Cart” – a brightly colored van and trailer turned mobile food market. The 2019 pilot season will run through Thanksgiving and will resume and expand next spring.

The \$180,000 grant from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation to ORIS for the Fresh Start Food Cart will be awarded over three years.

Mukhtar Idhow, Executive Director of ORIS, said the goal of the new Fresh Start Food Cart will be to provide access to local foods in communities within its service region.

“Starting today, the Fresh Start Food Cart will be selling fresh, local fruits and vegetables directly to area residents where they live and work,” said Idhow. “We are particularly focused on neighborhoods and community centers that do not have easy access to fresh food, have high concentrations of low-income or at-risk residents, are designated as being at higher risk for food

insecurity, or have a reportedly high number of residents with lack of access to consistent means of transportation.”

William Brewster, Vice President of NH Regional Market for Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, noted that, as a doctor, he recognizes the importance of eating fresh healthy food for preventative care.

“We know that some families in our neighborhoods don’t have access to, nor can they afford to buy fresh fruits and vegetables for their families,” said Brewster. “This mobile market is an innovative way to bring affordable produce directly to individuals who need it most.”

This is the second mobile farmers’ market of its kind in the state – Harvard Pilgrim Foundation also helps fund the Seacoast Area Mobile Market (SAMM) making stops across Milton, Rochester, Farmington, and Dover, N.H.

“At Harvard Pilgrim, we know that health prevention often starts with the food we eat, and for some, accessing healthy and affordable fruits and vegetables can be challenging,” said Karen Voci, President of the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation. “Across the country, organizations are using mobile markets to increase access to fresh and local fruits and vegetables. Here in New England, Harvard Pilgrim has launched a fleet of mobile markets to address this challenge and create better access to healthy food.”

In addition to ORIS’s Fresh Start Food Cart and SAMM, Harvard Pilgrim has funded mobile markets in Worcester and Lowell, Mass., Hartford, Conn., and Lewiston-Auburn, Maine. Two new mobile markets will also launch this month in New Bedford, Mass., and Bridgeport, Conn.

Starting on Thursday, the Fresh Start Food Cart will make stops at three public housing locations in the city, as well as two Easterseals’ locations for employees and the public.

“Increasing the availability and accessibility of healthy nutritious food for everyone in our community is part of our mission, and we are very grateful for the support of our partners, funders, area businesses and community members to make this resource a reality,” said Idhow. “By sourcing vegetables grown as close to the market stops as possible, often using the produce grown by our new American farmers on our farm in Dunbarton, we hope this market will also serve to incentivize and support small-scale farmers in their growth.”

The Mobile Market will accept EBT/SNAP benefits for purchases and will also run incentive programs that are aimed at helping low-income individuals stretch their dollars at markets and purchase more fresh, local and healthy food.

During the initial phase for the 2019 harvest season, the Fresh Start Food Cart will make the following scheduled stops until Thanksgiving:

Day/Time	Location	Address
Thursdays 11:00am - 12:30pm	Easterseals	555 Auburn St, Manchester, NH 03103
Thursdays 1pm – 2:45pm	Easterseals	200 Zachary Road Manchester, NH 03101
Fridays 11:00am - 12:00pm	Sweeney Apartments	<u>750 & 790 So. Porter Street, Manchester, NH</u>
Fridays 12:30pm - 1:30pm	O'Malley Apartments	259 Chestnut St. Manchester, NH 03101
Fridays 2:00pm - 3:00pm	Burns Apartments	55 South Main St. Manchester, NH 03102

To learn more about the project, visit <http://refugeesuccess.org/history-mission> or contact Program Director, Matthew Thorne at mschwartz@refugeesuccess.org. To follow the Fresh Start Food Cart and get updates on stops and other information, follow ORIS on Instagram @freshstartfarmsnh or Facebook @NHrefugeesuccess

The Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation

Created in 1980, The Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation supports Harvard Pilgrim's corporate mission to improve the quality and value of health care for the people and communities we serve. The Harvard Pilgrim Foundation provides the tools, training and leadership to help build healthy communities throughout Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. In 2018, the Harvard Pilgrim Foundation awarded nearly \$1.25 million in grants to 855 nonprofit organizations in the region. Since its inception, the Foundation has awarded \$150 million in funds throughout the four states. For more information, please visit www.harvardpilgrim.org/foundation.

Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success

The Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success (ORIS) is an ethnic community-based organization located in Manchester, New Hampshire. Our mission is to aid in the resettlement of

refugee and immigrant groups in the state of NH by providing assistance, training, resources, and opportunities that promote self-sufficiency. ORIS has developed the resources and capabilities to foster the self-sufficiency and integration of new Americans, including the development of an experienced, multinational, and multilingual staff and consultant team.

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