

Message from the Sandy Springs Farmers Market Team

On behalf of all of us involved in putting together the **Sandy Springs Farmers Market**, a HUGE thanks to the nearly 2000 of you who came out for opening day this past Saturday. The SSFM Team and all of our vendors were astounded (and gratified) by the enormous show of support from our community. Beginning at 8:00 a.m. (30 minutes before opening), and continuing throughout the morning, you showed up in droves and never let up. In some ways, it felt like a scene from the movie **Field of Dreams**: build it and they will come!

As organizers, we have attended many markets these past several months, and quite simply we have not seen anything like this past Saturday – with crowds that completely bought out the market within the first couple of hours. To be sure, we (and our vendors) totally underestimated the demand for product this first day.

During the past weekend we have received hundreds of comments – by email, Facebook posting, phone and in seeing many of you out and about at the ball fields and other wonderful events which occurred here in Sandy Springs. Your compliments, thanks, and overwhelming show of support is incredibly generous and satisfying. You also had many good ideas and constructive suggestions which we want to address.

Of those expressing some concern, the vast majority of the comments related to the number of farmers and quantity (and variety) of fruits and vegetables being offered. We completely understand this concern and are working extremely hard to increase the number of farm vendors that participate in the **Sandy Springs Farmers Market**, and of course we will encourage all of them to bring even more of their harvest each Saturday.

Please also understand that the mission of the market is to bring locally and regionally grown produce – direct from the farm (and not from re-sellers) and that we are still very early in a growing season that was severely delayed due to the very harsh (cold and wet) winter that just recently came to a close (we had sub-freezing temperatures and snow right into early April). As we move into late spring and summer, we can assure you that there will be much more produce and that the farmers will work hard to meet our market's demand. Some examples of what you can expect and what we're doing include: the arrival of Pearson Farms (and their regionally grown peaches) by the end of May; Burns Best Farm and their wonderful blueberries and produce joining us in a few weeks; and a special market appearance by a Vidalia onion grower – with their special onions harvested and delivered straight from the farm to our market!

In our own observations we also saw some things which we will work to improve, including long lines for coffee and other on-site food consumption items (baked goods, for example), traffic flow and parking, and even some questions about dogs (which we want to continue to include – but need to make sure they are kept under control at all times). For these and any other concerns, we ask for your patience, knowing that we will continue to listen to your suggestions and have known all along that we would be making improvements each and every week.

Now – please indulge us while we share some of the wonderful comments that we received, from customers and vendors:

Market Attendees:

“Thank you so much for bringing this to Sandy Springs. Fresh Food. Great!...”

“We have lived in Sand Springs for more than 30 years and were so excited to attend the first day. We loved it. Congratulations!”

“What a wonderful thing you are doing for Sandy Springs. Thank you! Can you also open up on Sunday?”

“How can we volunteer?...”

“Awesome first day – we just loved the fresh produce and had a great meal Saturday night with food purchased at the market.”

Loved it & told friends about it. Will definitely visit again. Can't wait for salad with smoked mozzarella tonight. All purchased at market this morning.

And some from our vendors – many of whom attend other markets:

“A huge congratulations to Jeffrey, Andy, and Kimberlee for a job well done. Sandy Springs has been needing this for many years and it took a special group of visionaries to put it together. As a local retailer, **Breadwinner** is so proud to be able to share in the experience and continue to spread the word to all our customers, many of whom have let us know through phone calls, emails and visits to the shop what an outstanding event it was. Thank you!”

“Thank you so much for the opportunity to be a part of the Sandy Springs Farmers Market. It was a privilege to be a part of it. I grew up in the area, attended church right around the corner from the Market and have many, many fond memories of my time there. I am looking forward to next week. We will make some changes to be able to serve more rolls and quicker. I think I could have sold 2-2.5X as many rolls as I brought.” --- **Faith Bradberry – Sweetodelles Cinnamon Rolls**

“... a BIG congratulations to you. What a wonderful start a Sandy Springs community Farmer's Market that is going to bring years and years of enjoyment, a sense of togetherness and a source of quality foods to the Sandy Springs community.....not to mention a superior environment for local Atlanta vendors to promote their products at. From all of us here at **Garlic Clove Foods**, Thank You and we look forward to a long and prosperous relationship.”

“I personally believe that it will exceed the _____ Farmers Market as being the top market in Georgia!” *(we'd rather not name the other market)!*

“You guys did a great job, honestly one of the best 1st markets I have experienced. There are a lot of market managers that could learn a great deal from you! It was such a pleasure!”

From all of us who have worked so hard to put together the Sandy Springs Farmers Market, we thank you for your support this past weekend and we hope you will continue to come out and enjoy the fresh, local food being offered by these wonderful growers and other vendors. We appreciate your feedback so please keep it coming (and tell others as well!).

**Best regards,
The SSFM Team: Andy, Jeff and Kimberlee**

www.sandyspringsfarmersmarket.com

Follow us on Facebook!