

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Bringing Healthy Food to the Bayview

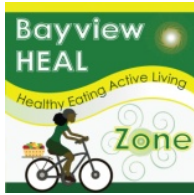
*New healthy corner store project helps small business owners to sell fresh produce and healthier foods in a San Francisco “food desert.”*

**SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 17, 2013:** A major effort to bring healthier foods to San Francisco’s Bayview District is now underway. Launching January 24, 2013 at 10am at Lee’s Market (1397 Revere Ave at Jennings St), this new project will make it possible for Bayview residents to find healthy foods throughout their neighborhood.

Bayview residents suffer from diet-related disease such as diabetes and heart disease at much higher rates than other city residents. There is limited access to healthy food for people to buy and prepare in Bayview- the availability of fresh produce is limited and is outweighed by fast food and liquor stores selling a variety of unhealthy sugary and salty snacks. Such is life in an urban ‘food desert’: food stores and restaurants exist, but they most often sell cheap, unhealthy foods, and the types of fresh foods many San Franciscans take for granted are not easy to find.

Supported by Kaiser Permanente’s Bayview HEAL Zone initiative(Healthy Eating, Active Living), two Bayview corner stores are getting [healthy store makeovers](#) to make it easier for residents to buy and prepare healthier foods for their families. In a step toward a major effort to make Bayview a healthier place to live, the Southeast Food Access (SEFA) Food Guardians are giving local corner stores the tools and support they need to make their businesses assets to the community. The Food Guardians are young Bayview residents fighting for healthier food and equity in their community. “We are taking a hands-on approach to improve the health of our community. We’re here to make a change, not wait for handouts,” said Antonia Williams, one of the Food Guardians.

[Research shows](#) that people who live closer to stores that sell healthy food have better diets, and that small stores have the potential to increase fruit and vegetable intake. However, mom-and-pop stores face a variety of challenges that can make it difficult to stock fresh produce and healthy foods. Stores are saturated with free advertising and incentives to sell tobacco, alcohol



and highly processed products. Small retailers lack the tools and support to stock healthy foods, and it can be risky to shift business plans to offer healthier goods.

“One of the best ways to improve the health of the community is to help people have access to healthy food, especially fresh produce,” says Barbara Garcia, Director San Francisco DPH. “The Healthy Corner Store project begins to change that.”

Last year, the Food Guardians assessed all the corner stores in Bayview, and found that only a few of the twenty corner stores in the neighborhood stocked items like fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain bread, or low fat milk. The Food Guardians shared the results with store owners and encouraged them to stock healthier foods. After receiving encouraging comments like, “We’re willing to try if this is what the community wants,” and, “After seeing this, I’ve got to get it together!”, Lee’s Market and Ford’s Grocery became partners in the larger effort to change their stores business practices .

The healthy corner store project aims to ease those challenges by provider retailers with incentives to shift their business plans towards healthier products and food that benefit, rather than harm, the community.

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#### **About Bayview HEAL Zone**

The Bayview HEAL Zone is a community project funded by Kaiser Permanente. HEAL stands for Healthy Eating Active Living, and the goal of the project is to work with the Bayview Hunters Point (BVHP) community so that BVHP residents may eat better and move more in places where they live, work, learn, and play. The HEAL Zone will partner with different organizations and businesses in the Bayview to encourage BVHP residents to: eat fewer calories; eat more fruits and vegetables and get more active.

#### **About SEFA Food Guardians**

The [Food Guardians](#) are a group of Bayview Hunters Point residents trained to educate, advocate, and mobilize to address community food security and justice, promote nutrition education and awareness, and support urban agriculture. The Food Guardians are a project of [Southeast Food Access \(SEFA\)](#). The Food Guardians seek to inspire positive change by addressing health equity issues and advocating for healthier food access and sustainable food systems in the Bayview district. The Bayview is the area of San Francisco that faces the greatest challenges in terms of healthy food access and suffers from disproportionate rates of diet-related disease; the Food Guardians work to reduce these diet-related health disparities.