



## **Illinois Farmers, Got Fruits & Veggies?**

### **The Chicago Public Schools Want 'em!**

#### ***Chartwells-Thompson Hospitality Increases Buy from Local Farms Program to Over \$2 million***

CHICAGO – (July 15, 2010) Chartwells-Thompson Hospitality, the major food service provider for Chicago Public Schools, is asking Illinois farmers to contract for \$500,000 of fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables in addition to the \$1.8 million in local farm products purchased last year.

“We want apples, peaches pears, broccoli, beans, potatoes and other fruits and vegetables grown by Illinois farmers to serve nearly 305,000 students in 481 schools every day,” said Bob Bloomer, regional vice president for Chartwells-Thompson. “This is good for local farmers and great for Chicago students.”

“This program is fulfilling our commitment to meet the new nutritional standards adopted by the Chicago Board of Education to try and surpass the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s ‘gold standard’ guidelines for school food,” said Louise Esaian, logistics officer for food service at Chicago Public Schools (CPS). “We continue to take new strides every year to improve our school food menu and providing more fresh and frozen local fruits and vegetables is the next big step,” she added.

Through this effort, CPS and Chartwells will deepen their local procurement partnership with FamilyFarmed.org, a Chicago-based non-profit organization that has worked for more than a decade to build and utilize local food systems.

“The commitment of Chartwells and CPS to purchase fresh and frozen local food is a model for the nation,” said Jim Slama, president of FamilyFarmed.org. “This will continue to support regional family farmers, provide significant levels of economic development in rural communities as well as put healthy food on the plates of Chicago school children.”

Chartwells-Thompson Hospitality is a joint venture between Chartwells School Dining Services and Thompson Hospitality. Both companies are part of Compass Group, the

world's largest food service company and a national leader in sourcing local and sustainable food from family farmers through its Ag in the Middle program.

"These programs support the continued viability of regionally-focused, mid-sized farmers, which have become a growing source of wholesome produce for Compass across the country," said Marc Zammit, Vice President of Corporate Sustainability Initiatives and Culinary at Compass Group. In 2009, Compass purchased \$17 million in local products.

To access the Request for Information with information about this program go to: [www.familyfarmed.org/ChicagoPublicSchools](http://www.familyfarmed.org/ChicagoPublicSchools)

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*About Chartwells School Dining Services*

Chartwells, a division of Charlotte, NC-based Compass Group, provides dining services for over 500 public school districts and private schools, comprising over 4,000 separate elementary, middle and high schools nationwide. For more information about Chartwells School Dining Services, visit [www.eatlearnlive.com](http://www.eatlearnlive.com).

*About Thompson Hospitality*

With over 2,500 employees, Thompson Hospitality is one of the largest minority owned businesses in the United States and the largest minority owned foodservice company in the world. For more information about Thompson Hospitality, visit [www.thompsonhospitality.com](http://www.thompsonhospitality.com).

Contact Information:

Jean Saunders  
Chartwells-Thompson Hospitality  
Ph: (773) 722-4964  
[karen.dittrich@compass-usa.com](mailto:karen.dittrich@compass-usa.com)

Jim Slama  
Family Farmed  
Ph: (708)763-9920  
[jimslama@familyfarmed.org](mailto:jimslama@familyfarmed.org)