

Orange County Great Park and Orange County Produce, LLC Partner to Donate Food to Local Food Banks and Kitchens

IRVINE, Calif., Sept. 30, 2013 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Orange County Produce and the Orange County Great Park in Irvine, California, continues its “Parks without Borders” program by offering fresh food to Orange County’s local food banks and soup kitchens. On most weekends, a group of volunteers are invited to harvest all they can to prepare and deliver fresh fruits and vegetables to those they serve. Orange County Produce is growing food on the four-acre VALOR Field at the Orange County Great Park in Irvine, to support this effort.

“In the United States, on average 30 to 40 percent of the food grown goes uneaten each year,” said Tom Larson, Manager of Farm, Food & Landscape Division for the Orange County Great Park in Irvine. “With Orange County’s long history in agriculture, we are taking a leadership role in developing ways to reduce waste.”

“The wonderful partnership with the Great Park VALOR Program, Orange County Produce, LLC and our food security friends at Second Harvest Food Bank, Community Action Partnership of Orange County and Loaves & Fishes allows us to deliver freshly harvested fruits and vegetables to those in need. We appreciate the hard working volunteers who gathered over 10,000 lbs of vine ripe watermelons last Saturday,” said A.G. Kawamura.

Robert Flournoy, president of Loaves And Fishes x10, has been gleaning regularly at the Great Park for more than three years. He began his journey fighting hunger when he made a commitment to help support seven homeless people in Tustin, Calif. Today, his organization has gleaned thousands of pounds of food and delivered it to help those in need in low-income communities.

Gleaners also harvest from Orange County Produce’s 105-acre organic farm at the Orange County Great Park.

The Kawamura family, who founded Orange County Produce, has been growing fruits and vegetables in Orange County for over half a century. Guided by third-generation family members A.G. and Matt Kawamura, Orange County Produce farms more than 800 acres within the urban boundaries of Orange County. A.G. Kawamura, California Secretary of Agriculture from 2003-2010, is engaged in many projects to increase efficiencies and reduce waste within our agricultural system including a new program, Solutions From the Land Dialogue (sfldialogue.net), supported by United Nations Foundation, the Farm Foundation and the Nature Conservancy.

“California is one of the largest agricultural economies in the world,” said Kawamura. “We are committed to continuing the legacy of farming in Orange

County and that is why we are making efforts to provide fresh, high-quality produce to the local food banks using the VALOR Field at the Great Park.”

The VALOR Field (Veteran’s Agricultural Learning – Opportunities and Resources) is the site of a fledgling program to provide education and hands-on experience to veterans in preparation for employment within the farm to table industry. OC Produce and local partners have collaborated on this field, growing tomatoes and numerous other crops, and donating the produce.

“Orange County Produce and Alegria Fresh are volunteering services and resources to manage and care for the VALOR field, contributing a tremendous amount of energy, labor and skill for this very important community service,” said Larson.

EnviroIngenuity, through its food division Alegria Fresh, a Laguna Beach-based hydroponic vertical farming company, assists Orange County Produce with management and production on the VALOR Field. In partnership with Kawamura, Alegria Fresh is completing construction of a new demonstration farm designed to showcase high performance urban agriculture and test new growing systems that may be applied to commercial agriculture. Alegria’s hydroponic vertical farm is solar powered and uses no soil, 90 percent less water, 70 percent less land and 50 percent less fertilizer than traditional farming methods.

“We are proud to partner with the Kawamura family to support their vision for a more sustainable future and are especially proud to assist OC Produce in its efforts to reduce waste and deliver fresh, locally grown produce to the hungry in Orange County,” said Erik Cutter, Managing Director of Alegria Fresh. “We are testing new technologies to improve urban farming processes to meet the great challenges facing our food production and distribution systems.”

About the Orange County Great Park in Irvine:

Hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over Southern California enjoy the Orange County Great Park’s array of recreational and educational opportunities and participate in shared experiences, including panoramic views from the iconic Great Park Balloon that rises 400 feet in the air. Other Great Park features include the Carousel, Farm + Food Lab, Kids Rock Playground, Walkable Historical Timeline, Palm Court Arts Complex, Historic Hangar 244, the North Lawn multi-purpose fields and the newly constructed South Lawn that is comprised of four soccer fields, a Visitor Center, a Field House and a sophisticated series of large ponds for capturing rain water for irrigation.

In addition to free sports clinics, gardening workshops, weekly Farmers Market and other community events, the Great Park hosts an annual series of special events that provide unique experiences for the entire family, including the Great Park Pumpkin Harvest and the Flights & Sounds Summer Festival. With its approximate 1,300-acre master plan, the Great Park is the centerpiece of the redevelopment of the publicly-owned portion of the 4,700-acre former Marine Corps Air Station El Toro. For more information, please visit <http://www.ocgp.org/>.

About Orange County Produce:

One of the oldest remaining farm companies in southern California, Orange County Produce, LLC, has farmed within the rural urban environment of OC for over half a century.

The company is managed by A.G. and Matthew Kawamura, third generation growers and shippers of fresh produce. A.G. Kawamura is the former California Secretary of Agriculture where he served from 2003 to 2010 and is actively involved in developing policy in the areas of education, hunger and nutrition. He serves as the co-chair of Solutions From the Land, a United Nations Foundation project that is developing a sustainable roadmap for 21st century agricultural systems.

Orange County Produce, LLC, engages in year-round production and marketing of fruits and vegetables. Dedicated team members work creatively to resolve hunger and nutrition problems within the local community and educate the public about the art and science of urban farming and the challenges facing our food system. Orange County Produce, LLC, is currently engaged in building an exciting, interactive urban agricultural exhibit at the Orange County Great Park in Irvine, California.

Visit Orange County Produce at <http://www.OCProduce.com/>.

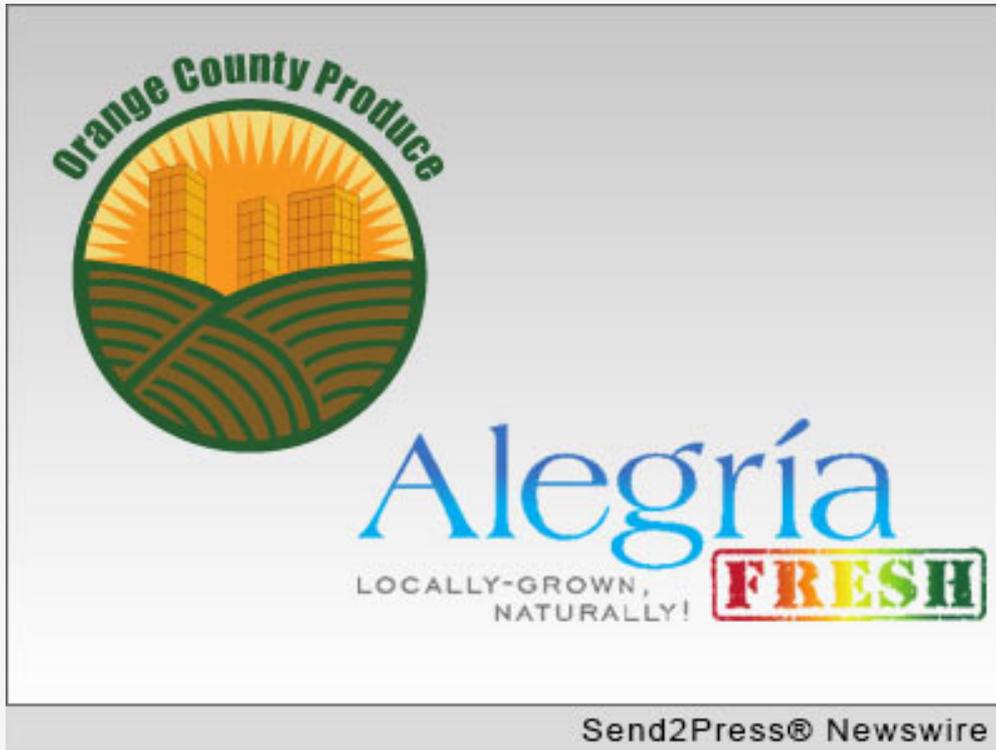
About Alegria Fresh:

Alegria Farm is a new hydroponic vertical farm employing over 150 hydroponic vertical towers growing over 8,000 plants in less than 1/20th acre. The farm is part of the interactive urban agricultural exhibit at the Orange County Great Park in Irvine, California. Alegria Farm is Orange County's first hydroponic vertical farm and the first West Coast showcase for the vertical hydroponic system which uses no soil, 80 percent less water, requires 70 percent less land and 50 percent less fertilizer than traditional farming. This high performance growing system produces clean, natural food faster and allows plants to grow bigger and stronger, making plants naturally more pest resistant.

Alegria Farm produces an exotic variety of leafy greens, medicinal herbs and heirloom vegetables. Hydroponic farming is soilless and utilizes coconut fiber instead of organic soil, and produces strong plants that are nutrient-rich. For more information on Alegria Fresh or to schedule a tour of the farm, please visit www.AlegriaFresh.com or follow on Facebook and Twitter. Alegria Fresh is the high-performance urban agriculture division of EnviroIngenuity, a company dedicated to reducing waste.

Visit Alegria Fresh at <http://www.AlegriaFresh.com/> and EnviroIngenuity at <http://www.EnviroIngenuity.com/>.

News issued by: Orange County Produce, LLC



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Original Story ID: 2013-09-0930-004 (8982) :: Orange-County-Great-Park-Orange-County-Produce-LLC-Partner-to-Donate-Food-to-Local-Food-Banks-Kitchens_2013-09-0930-004

Original Keywords: Parks without Borders, Orange County Produce and the Orange County Great Park, Alegria Farm, Alegria Fresh, EnviroIngenuity, Hydroponic Vertical Farming, Solar Decathlon, Irvine, A.G. Kawamura, VALOR Field Orange County Produce, LLC Irvine California IRVINE, Calif.

Alternate Headline: Orange County Produce and Orange County Great Park of Irvine Share Crops with Local Food Banks

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Original Shortcode for Story: <http://goo.gl/x8dgFV>