

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 1, 2016

Instagram:

@street_phoodie @thefoodtrust

On the Web:

phillyhealthyfoodtrucks.wordpress.com/certification-program

Contact:

Carolyn Huckabay

chuckabay@thefoodtrust.org; 215-575-0444, ext. 8120



Healthier Food Trucks, Healthier Consumers: The Food Trust and University of Pennsylvania Students Collaborate on Innovative Certification Program for Philly Food Trucks

WHEN: January – May 2016 for first certification period

WHERE: Philadelphia, PA

WHAT: In a collaborative effort to support mobile food vendors in their quest to provide healthier options, **The Food Trust** and the student-led **Healthy Food Truck Initiative (HFTI) at the University of Pennsylvania** have launched the *Healthy Food Truck Certification Program*. Trucks that become certified through this initiative will receive positive publicity and branding directed at their target customer base. Certified trucks will distinguish themselves as healthy among their peers and will stand out at culinary events such as The Food Trust's Night Market series.

The Healthy Food Truck Initiative is a University of Pennsylvania student group working to transform food trucks into sites where health of consumers is promoted. In collaboration with Campus Health, the public health arm of the Student Health Service, and Penn professors, these student leaders worked closely with The Food Trust, area truck operators and nutrition experts to develop criteria such for vendors to meet to gain certification. Trucks that meet a certain number of these criteria (e.g. whether the food truck offers water, 100% whole grains or a minimum of two vegetarian options on their menu), as verified through an application and in-person review process, will be certified and receive **certified healthy** stickers to display on their trucks. Operators can become recertified every two years, advancing to higher tiers and receiving additional stickers.

"A big part of The Food Trust's mission is to increase the availability of healthy food in Philadelphia, and mobile vendors are no exception," says Diana Iskolsky, senior associate of Night Market Philadelphia at The Food Trust. "We're thrilled to be able to support local food entrepreneurs who are trying to provide healthier options for their customers, and we know our Night Market fans will appreciate their effort, as well."

The program is constructed to support the diverse needs of all vendors while maintaining the structure required of a certification program. Thus, in addition to recognizing trucks that do meet the criteria requirement, HFTI and The Food Trust plan to help food trucks that may not initially meet all criteria by providing nutritional counseling and connecting them with existing certified vendors for additional support. Through this support, the goal of the program is to certify a greater number of trucks, encourage better decision making from consumers and create healthier default options from food trucks who wish to participate.

“We look forward to improving Philadelphia’s eating environment through a city staple – food trucks,” says Akansha Jain (Class of 2017), incoming president of HFTI and one of the leaders of the certification program. “It’s exciting to see something that we have been working on for so many months finally come to fruition.”

About The Food Trust

The Food Trust, a nonprofit founded in 1992, strives to make healthy food available to all. Working with neighborhoods, schools, grocers, farmers and policymakers, The Food Trust has developed a comprehensive approach that combines nutrition education and greater availability of affordable, healthy food. To learn more about The Food Trust, visit thefoodtrust.org.

About the Healthy Food Truck Initiative

The Healthy Food Truck Initiative is a student-led group at the University of Pennsylvania supported by Wharton’s Social Impact Initiative and Penn’s Campus Health Initiatives. HFTI’s mission is to transform food trucks into environments where the health of customers is valued by providing nutritional counseling, promoting nutritious offerings, certifying healthy food trucks, and facilitating connections to our network of public health business experts and successful food truck owners. To learn more about the Initiative, visit phillyhealthyfoodtrucks.wordpress.com.