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| Official City Logo | **Stephanie Rawlings-Blake**  *Mayor*  *City of Baltimore*  250 City Hall 🞗 Baltimore**,** Maryland21202 🞗 410-396-3835 🞗 Fax: 410-576-9425  ***Better*** *Schools.* ***Safer*** *Streets.* ***Stronger*** *Neighborhoods.* | |
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| FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | | CONTACT |
| December 16, 2014 | | Caron Brace  (443) 853- 0957  [caron.brace@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:caron.brace@baltimorecity.gov) |
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| **Mayor Rawlings-Blake, ShopRite Expand Baltimore’s Virtual Supermarket Program to Include Perkins Homes and Wayland Village**  Program, the first of its kind in the nation, serves communities in food deserts through online grocery ordering and delivery  **Baltimore, MD (December 16, 2014)**—Today, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and Interim Health Commissioner Dr. Jacquelyn Duval-Harvey joined representatives from Klein’s Family Markets and ShopRite of Howard Park, as well as members of the community, to announce the expansion of Baltimore City’s Virtual Supermarket Program to two additional communities—Perkins Homes and Wayland Village Senior Apartments. The Virtual Supermarket Program is a nationally award-winning program that increases food access in neighborhoods designated as food deserts by providing online ordering and delivery options.  “This expansion is about making life better for too many Baltimore City families who lack easy access to groceries, more than 30,000 of which are our children,” said Mayor Rawlings-Blake. “That is absolutely unacceptable to me. In partnership with our community and business partners, we are taking action to help residents in some of our most challenged neighborhoods access healthy foods to feed their families.”  Approximately 20 percent of Baltimore City residents live in food deserts, which are defined as areas where the distance to a supermarket exceeds a fourth of a mile, where the median household income is at or below 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, and over 40 percent of households lack access to a vehicle.  “Access to healthy foods is vital to the prevention and control of chronic disease, so expanding the Virtual Supermarket Program to even more Baltimore families is excellent news as we strive to provide healthier and more cost-effective food options across the city,” said Dr. Duval-Harvey, interim health commissioner for Baltimore City.  The Virtual Supermarket Program—the flagship component of Baltimarket, the Baltimore City Health Department’s suite of community-based food access and food justice programs—enables residents to place grocery orders online, and offers free delivery to designated community sites. Residents can pay for groceries using cash, credit, debit, or EBT/SNAP. Baltimore’s Virtual Supermarket is the first community-based program in the country to accept EBT/SNAP for online grocery ordering and delivery.  Through this expansion, neighborhood food advocates will be available to assist residents with online ordering at POWER House Community Center at Perkins Homes on Monday afternoons from 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm and at Wayland Village Senior Apartments on Tuesday mornings from 9:30 am – 11:30 am.  “This virtual supermarket will be a tremendous resource to the residents of Perkins Homes and the surrounding community,” said Baltimore Housing Commissioner Paul T. Graziano. “The ability for our seniors, families and children to have access to healthy and nutritious foods is a necessity that will greatly improve their quality of life.”  ShopRite of Howard Park will deliver groceries orders to POWER House on Tuesday afternoons, between 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm, and to Wayland Village on Wednesday mornings, between 10:00 am and 11:00 am.  “Since Perkins Housing development is in the middle of a food desert, it is vital that our residents have access to fresh meats and produce,” said Travis Street, site manager & coordinator for POWER House, Living Classrooms Foundation. “The Virtual Supermarket Program, in partnership with the ShopRite of Howard Park, is helping our community to bridge the gap for eating better and living longer.”  The expansion to these locations marks the third and fourth Virtual Supermarket Program sites in Baltimore; and ShopRite of Howard Park is the second ShopRite store to partner with the Baltimore City Health Department to offer the Virtual Supermarket Program.  “My family and I are committed to serving the community by providing fresh food at great prices, and we are excited to extend this service to our Baltimore neighbors through the Virtual Supermarket Program,” said Marshall Klein, vice president of retail operations for Klein's Family Markets, which owns and operates nine ShopRite stores in Maryland. “Customers placing online orders will receive all of ShopRite's weekly sales and traditional low prices, and each order will be hand selected by our team of personal shoppers. We are proud to join the Baltimarket program in its mission to provide fresh, healthy food to the City of Baltimore.”  This past summer, the Virtual Supermarket Program was re-launched in partnership with ShopRite of Glen Burnie—which is operated by Collins Family Markets—with two sites in the Cherry Hill neighborhood: Cherry Hill Senior Manor and the Cherry Hill Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library.  The Virtual Supermarket is made possible through the support of United Way of Central Maryland and the Kaiser Foundation. The Baltimarket.org website is made possible through the support of the Delmarva Foundation. For more information, visit [*www.baltimarket.org/virtual-supermarket*](http://www.baltimarket.org/virtual-supermarket)  *# # #*  Visit us at [www.baltimorecity.gov](http://www.baltimorecity.gov) | | |