

# Program helps Fairfield complex stuck in 'food desert'

By Ryan Chalk  
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Most people don't think twice about hopping in a car to drive a short distance to their local market where fresh produce is in abundance. However, for those people living in low-income areas, a scenario exists in which finding a fresh head of lettuce or an apple is akin to setting out across the Sahara.

For that reason, food experts including those at the United States Department of Agriculture, have mapped out areas where access to affordable and nutritious food is limited. Labeled "food deserts," these areas happen to exist in densely populated areas of Solano County.

Take The Groves apartments, located at the corner of East Tabor Avenue and Sunset Avenues in Fairfield, for example. The low-income complex resides on the edge of Fairfield's "food desert," a triangle swath of suburban landscape that stretches along Air Base Parkway to the north, down the railroad tracks that loosely defines a portion of Fairfield's border with Suisun City, and back up Sunset Avenue.

Fortunately, people



Morgan John (left), 10, Fairfield Vice Mayor Chuck Timm, Mayor Harry T. Price, and Moises Arellano (right), 8, sample fresh fruit at The Groves apartment

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have stepped up to help the residents of The Groves and surrounding neighborhoods gain access to nutritious foods.

On Saturday, The Leaven — a nonprofit partnership between the Parkway Community Church, the city of

Fairfield and Solano County — kicked off its third annual Farms to Families program at The Leaven's after-school tutoring and mentoring center at The Groves. Joining the celebration were representatives from Kaiser Permanente and First 5 Solano, and

complex Saturday afternoon in Fairfield during the kickoff of The Leaven's monthly Farms to Families program.

elected officials Mayor Harry T. Price and Vice Mayor Chuck Timm.

Residents were treated to a five-pound bag of free produce and information on healthy eating and lifestyle choices. The program will continue monthly through the fall.

Officials said it can be

a challenge for the residents in and around The Groves to provide nutritious meals for their families. Some households may not have the money to purchase nutritious foods while others may lack transportation to get them out of the "food desert" where fresh

foods are sold. To be classified as such, a food desert is a low-income census tract where a substantial number of residents has low access to a supermarket or large grocery store.

"When you think about that, especially if you don't have access to transportation, it makes it very difficult. You can only carry so much back," said Don Lowrie, field representative for Assemblywoman Mariko Yamada, D-Solano.

And without a grocery store nearby, Lowrie said, "You're not going to get fresh fruits, fresh vegetables or even fresh meat, for that matter. If we're talking about healthy living, it's about having access to fresh food."

But Farms to Families is also about encouraging healthy lifestyles and Saturday's event featured Zumba aerobic dance instruction and a nutritionist who enlisted the children of The Groves in making "Summer Fruit Kabobs."

"The Leaven is working. It is succeeding," Price said of the program and its partnerships, such as the inclusion of Zumba instruction at the center. "We know this is going to be a healthy, smart class as they go through school."

**OBITUARY**

**Edmund James Polick Sr.**

Oct. 26, 1927 — July 7, 2011

Edmund James Polick Sr. died peacefully the evening of July 7, 2011, in Fairfield, Calif., where he lived since 1964. He was 83 years old. He was born to Elza Harry and Enola Marie Polick on Oct. 26, 1927, in New Orleans.

He is survived by his devoted wife of 57 years, Jeanne Frances; daughter, Sharon Martin; son, Ed Polick Jr.; granddaughter, Amanda; grandson, Brendan; son, Rich Polick; granddaughter, Marie; step-granddaughter, Angel; his beloved sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Annette and James McCarty; and nieces and nephews.

Edmund grew up in Aruba, where his father worked for the Lago Oil and Transport Company. He graduated from Aruba High School in 1945. Upon his father's

retirement, the family moved to Plumas County, Calif., where he met his future wife, Jeanne.

He was an assistant office manager at Interstate Host in San Francisco, manager and co-owner of the Cudaback Nursery in Vacaville, Calif., and a sales representative for Union Beverage Inc. in Pittsburg, Calif. He retired in 1991.

Edmund was a Charter Member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie 4113, Suisun, Calif., and a member of the Loyal Order of Moose, Lodge 861, Fairfield, Calif.

Private family services and burial. Arrangements are by Fairfield Funeral Home, 425-1041.

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Independent Study will host a series of "Open House" for those people interested in more information about the program. Here are the following dates:

**AUGUST 2<sup>ND</sup>**  
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**AUGUST 4<sup>TH</sup>**  
12PM - 2PM

**AUGUST 6<sup>TH</sup>**  
4PM - 6PM

This program is an excellent alternative for those students who are being home schooled, for the high school student interested in accelerating for early graduation; teen parents credit recovery. An alternative setting to the traditional school, ISP offers on-site classes and tutoring support by highly qualified teachers, as well as the personalized learning plan from which the student works to complete the educational requirements. Support for students with disabilities is available.

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