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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Park Ridge Takes Holistic Approach to Health with Farm to Hospital Program**

**ASHEVILLE, NC (September 17, 2009)** – Have you ever heard cafeteria food described as “amazing”? At Park Ridge Hospital that’s what’s happening—employees like the cafeteria’s meals so much that they take to-go boxes home. Part of what makes Park Ridge’s food good is the hospital’s involvement in Farm to Hospital, a program of Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) that helps hospitals support local farms and connect patients and staff with healthy food.

Park Ridge Hospital takes a holistic approach to health that incorporates nutrition and more. “We want to help our employees and patients learn where their food comes from, and how to find and prepare fresh foods,” says hospital staffer Graham Fields. “And we want to be a part of the community, because community is part of healing and prevention.”

Park Ridge, located between Asheville and Hendersonville, is in an area rich in agricultural resources. Black Bird Farms in Henderson County is one of the cafeteria’s suppliers of fresh produce. The farm has been owned and operated by the Haynes family since 1933. Current owner, Billy Haynes, Jr., says of his work with the hospital, “It’s a great partnership for me and an important way to supply fresh produce to the community.”

The hospital identifies locally grown foods on their menu with the Appalachian Grown logo, and displays promotional materials created by ASAP that tell diners about the farmers who grow their food. The hospital is also distributing Market Bucks, coupons that can be redeemed at Asheville City Market-South for fresh, local products.

ASAP offers Farm to Hospital resources to hospitals around the region, working with food service, administration, staff, patients, and the broader community. The nonprofit distributes Local Food Guides to hospitals and supports sourcing local products for cafeterias. ASAP also consults on educational programs such as cooking classes and field trips, wellness programs, and marketing and promotions. For more information, visit [www.asapconnections.org](http://www.asapconnections.org).

Support for this project comes in part from the Golden LEAF Foundation.

**ABOUT THE APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT**

ASAP is helping to rebuild the local economy, preserve rural land and heritage, encourage sustainable agricultural practices, and increase access to fresher, healthier foods. We work to keep farmers farming and to reconnect people with their food. We involve businesses, shoppers, chefs, children, seniors, healthcare providers, teachers, and all community members in the local food movement.

Appalachian Grown is a brand created by ASAP to identify foods from family farms in the Southern Appalachians.

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