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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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ASAP Presents Farm Fresh for Health Symposiums

Four regional events will offer tools for healthcare professionals to address barriers to healthy eating.

ASHEVILLE, NC (June 14, 2022)—Throughout the summer of 2022, ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project) will present a series of on-farm regional symposiums for healthcare professionals in Western North Carolina to explore the principles of Farm Fresh for Health. Symposiums will take place June 25 at Winding Stair Farm and Yonder Community Market in Franklin; July 14 at Perry's Berry's in Morganton; July 28 at KT's Orchard and Apiary in Canton; and Aug. 27 at Hendersonville Farmers Market. Registration is open now at asapconnections.org.

Farm Fresh for Health addresses the real and perceived barriers that influence what we eat and determine health outcomes. ASAP and community partners are using strategies such as produce prescriptions, nutrition security programs, workplace wellness, wrap-around clinical health services, farm to school, and cooking classes to impact social determinants of health. Each symposium will introduce key strategies and highlight examples from ASAP and the community. Attendees will participate in farm tours, hands-on activities, and facilitated discussion about how Farm Fresh for Health tools can be used in their practices to improve health outcomes. A farm-to-table meal (lunch or dinner) will be catered by a local food partner.

"We want to make the healthy choice the easy choice for our patients," says Dr. Brian Asbill, Chief Health Officer of LoveLife! and former president of ASAP's board of directors. "Changing culture and environment so that people are nudged to make better food choices, move more, and take part in health-promoting activities, is so important. The Farm Fresh for Health Symposiums give healthcare professionals tools and action steps they need to help their patients make these changes."

In addition to ASAP staff, speakers include Marianne Martinez and Valeria Barrera Vizcarra of Vecinos, a nonprofit healthcare organization serving and advocating for farmworkers in WNC; Nilofer Couture, Clinical Nutrition Manager at Cherokee Indian Hospital; Sonya Jones, founder of Caja Solidaria and coordinator of Henderson County Committee for Action and Nutrition; and Stephanie Stewart, Manager of Population Health and Team-Based Care for MAHEC. Several host farmers also work in healthcare, including KT Taylor and Debbie and Terry Perry, who are registered nurses. Find out more about speakers, topics, venues, and meals for each symposium at asapconnections.org.

Support for the symposiums comes from Dogwood Health Trust, a private foundation based in Asheville with the sole purpose of dramatically improving the health and wellbeing of all people and communities of 18 counties and the Qualla Boundary in Western North Carolina. Dogwood Health Trust focuses on innovative and equitable ways to address the many factors that contribute to overall health and wellbeing.

[High-resolution photos available. Contact Sarah Hart at sarah@asapconnections.org.]

ABOUT ASAP (APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT)

ASAP's mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food. To learn more, visit asapconnections.org.

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