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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Watertown Urban Mission, Cornell Cooperative Extension Offer A Healthy Cooking Program to Take a Bite Out of Hunger**

The “Eat Smart New York SNAP Education Program” Provides Participants with a Cooking Demonstration, Healthy Recipe, and Take-Home Ingredients

WATERTOWN (October 8, 2015) – A healthy cooking program being offered through a partnership between the Watertown Urban Mission and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County provides up to 25 households each month with a cooking demonstration and the ingredients to take home and make the featured recipe for their families.

Now in its second year, the cooking classes are made possible in part by a grant through the Eat Smart New York SNAP Education Program, through which a Cornell educator brings in food for the cooking demonstration. The Mission hosts the classes and the take-home ingredients are provided by funding through the Mission’s Food Pantry. The program is intended for SNAP-eligible families.

In September, participants learned how to make a harvest corn chowder. Past recipes have included chicken cacciatore, vegetable stir-fry, and spaghetti with homemade sauce. After watching the cooking demonstration and tasting the prepared entree, participating households are provided with the recipe, which serves a family of 4, and enough canned and fresh items to make the featured dish at home.

“The Eat Smart New York SNAP Education Program helps people learn how to eat better for less money,” said Amanda Rae Root, Nutrition and Health Program Leader at Cornell Cooperative Extension. “When we reach participants by partnering with the Watertown Urban Mission, not only do people see how to make a healthy recipe and sample it, but they get to take the ingredients home and make it themselves.”

“We are grateful to be able to collaborate with Cornell Cooperative Extension to offer this important service, and we are so thankful for their partnership,” added Mission director Erika F. Flint. “This program is not only fun and interactive for those who participate, but it also gives them the tools and supports to make healthy choices when planning meals for their families. While they learn how to make the featured recipe, participants also get a chance to learn new techniques for cooking with fresh ingredients, how to buy food cost-effectively, and food storage tips.”

Classes are held from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., generally on the last Thursday of each month at the Watertown Urban Mission, 247 Factory Street, Watertown. The program is held on the same day as the pick-up for Food Sense, a program offered by the Food Bank of Central New York, which offers discounted units of fresh, frozen, and canned food and a la carte specials to everyone, regardless of income. “Having the cooking class

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run concurrently with the Food Sense pick-up makes the event a 'one-stop shop' for people who want to maximize their food budget," said Mission Food Pantry Coordinator, Anita D. Ciulo.

This month's cooking class will feature a recipe using fall vegetables, and will be held on October 29<sup>th</sup>. There are still spots available! To sign up or learn more about the cooking class and Food Sense, call the Mission at (315) 782-8440.

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