

Know Your Local Merchants Come On Get Veggies!

Fairwinds Farm Has School Bus To Transport Vegetables

By Stephanie Lipcius Palko

If you see a brightly-colored bus traveling up and down the roadways in Cecil County and nearby areas, don't think it is part of a remake of the 1970s sit-com "The Partridge Family."

It is actually a bus containing lots of fresh, local vegetables.

The business is called Greens To Go.

The concept for the traveling veggie bus came from JoAnn and Ted Dawson of Fairwinds Farm. They sell produce at the farm and thought the bus would be a great way to get their products out to a larger market.

The maiden voyage for the veggie bus took them to Kilby Cream near Rising Sun last week

where the Dawsons showed off the bus to the county Tourism Committee.

They looked on the internet to find the bus, which is shorter than the full-sized school bus.

"We went all the way to Raleigh, North Carolina to pick it up," JoAnn said.

"That's because they have air conditioning on the school buses down south," Ted explained.

"We picked it up last year, but we ran out of time to finish it," JoAnn said. She and Ted did all of the painting of the bus. It includes pictures of vegetables.

Inside the bus, Ted removed all of the bench seats and constructed a table-height shelf just under the windows. An edge



JoAnn and Ted Dawson have appropriately decorated a school bus for their Greens To Go business that will travel the area offering fresh produce.

around the shelves holds the baskets of produce in place as they travel down the road. The shelf has a skirt of bright fabric with a vegetable theme that allows Ted and JoAnn to stock more produce under the table. There is the driver's seat and a soft office chair in the front of the bus.

While the name Greens To Go is painted on the front of the bus, JoAnn said they have affectionately named their new vehicle "MiMi." When they found the bus on the internet, a typographical error in the ad called it a mimi bus instead of a mini bus.

The Dawsons are not done with their veggie bus. They needed to figure out a way to attract attention as they drive through neighborhoods or around other locations.

"We're going to have a sound system that plays "Old McDonald Has A Farm," JoAnn said.

The Dawsons are now working to create a schedule for their bus. They figure they will operate it about five days a week.

"We want to go to the marinas," JoAnn said. They want to go to events, produce markets, neighborhoods, workplaces and anyplace else where people would love to get some fresh produce.

"The corn is great this year," Ted said.

Joann said she recently went to the Governor's mansion in Annapolis where produce was showcased by Governor Martin O'Malley with the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture on hand to participate in the event. Dawson said it was great to see Union Hospital's

kitchen recognized at this event.

"Maybe we can get an award next year for our bus," she said, with a nod to her husband.

For information on Fairwinds Farm or where to find their new Greens To Go Bus, call them at 410-658-8187.



The inside of the bus has bins filled with tempting fresh vegetables.