

Smile Farms Launches 'Heat with Heart' Initiative

Smile Farms, which empowers people with different abilities by creating meaningful employment for them, has launched a line of hot sauce, Heat with Heart. One hundred percent of the proceeds will fund jobs and training for individuals with disabilities.

Smile Farms partners with non- and for-profit organizations to provide people with disabilities educational, vocational and employment opportunities in agricultural and culinary settings. Its programming impacts 280 Smile Farmers, their families and their communities across five counties in New York state.

Founded in 2015 by the McCann family based on a successful partnership with Independent Group Home Living Program, Smile Farms began as a single greenhouse operation. Since then it has blossomed into a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with 10 campuses and counting, and has become the signature philanthropic partner of 1-800-FLOWERS.COM, Inc.

Smile Farms creates impactful opportunities at local farms, urban gardens and greenhouses, where hundreds of adults and youth with different abilities grow and sell flowers, plants and produce in the communities where they live. Smile Farms produce is also used in partner organizations' kitchens and vocational programs and is donated to nonprofits serving people in need.

This year, Smile Farmers have been planting, pruning, harvesting and nurturing peppers from seed to shelf. The result is Heat with Heart hot sauce, fiery red and earthy green sauces that contain no artificial flavors or artificial preservatives.

According to Smile Farms, the initiative showcases the full spectrum of its



farmers' capabilities—all they can do when simply given the opportunity—and it validates the contributions people with different abilities make in their workplaces and communities.

"Smile Farms' pepper project represents this innovation," says Smile Farms Managing Director Diana Martin. "Our farmers get to place the seeds in the ground and watch them generate all this amazing fruit—it's so satisfying to them to know that as they're harvesting those peppers, they're going to be made into hot sauce to sell, which is going to create revenue for their programs. It's more jobs for them and their peers."

For more information or to purchase Heat with Heart hot sauce, visit SmileFarms.org/heatwithheart.

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