



**For Immediate Release  
August 21, 2012**

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## **Seafood Throwdown Brings Unique Partnership to Farmers Market Highlights Local Seafood in Healthcare Industry's Purchasing Decisions**

**Gloucester, MA** – Seafood Throwdown, a unique cooking competition that highlights the importance of local seafood in restoring a healthy ocean ecosystem, is back at Cape Ann Farmers Market on Thursday, August 23, 2012 with a twist: focus of this Throwdown will be to highlight the role of local seafood in young people's health and diet while showcasing the work underway to assist healthcare industry in shifting their buying practices to support locally caught seafood. The Cape Ann Farmers' Market and the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance have sponsored Seafood Throwdowns for the past four years to raise awareness about why "Who Fishes Matters."

This Thursday's event is a rematch between Classic Cooks and Sugar Mags. Last year's Seafood Throwdown winner Julie Ann Geary of Classic Cooks Catering will be joined by Justin Grandin of The Happy Taco food truck. They will compete against 5 time winner Sugar Mags who will be featuring Lidia Sands and Sandro Carvalho with owner Missy Hart cheering from the sidelines.

Earlier this summer, a Seafood Throwdown was held at Boston Children's Hospitals kicking off the collaboration between NAMA and Health Care Without Harm's Healthy Food in Healthcare Program (HCWH) who are working together to shift the health care industry's seafood buying habits to prioritize seafood caught sustainably and locally and support the social, environmental, and economic importance of our local fishing communities. The Seafood Throwdown season will end at Fletcher Allen Health Care in Burlington, Vermont on October 24<sup>th</sup> featuring chefs from three healthcare facilities in Vermont focused on healthy foods.

“There's a revolution going on in healthcare food service around the country,” Alan Hawley, MBA, CDM, District Manager for Unidine Corporation who manages the Food Service Programs at Northeast Health System. “Northeast Health System is at the forefront of this revolution in recognizing that the philosophy of ‘first do no harm’ extends to the food served to patients, families and caregivers by signing onto the national Healthier Hospitals Initiative. “Our hospitals on the North Shore are exploring with the local fishing industry to procure locally and sustainably caught seafood that matches our values to support the community and serve the freshest and most nutritious food available.” Unidine was the first contract food service company to sign Health Care Without Harm's Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge in 2007.

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“Our source of food from the ocean is in danger of being taken over by industrial food production models like agribusiness and with that our marine environment is endangered. This is the time for those who care about our ocean to weigh in on who catches our fish by signing our [online petition](#) to fisheries managers asking them to ensure the diversity of our fishing fleet and prevent the industry from being turned into a fleet of Big Box Boats,” says Niaz Dorry, NAMA’s coordinating director based in Gloucester. “The health care industry spends \$7 billion a year on food in the US and has a proven track record of leveraging their purchasing power to make change. Taking a leadership role in applying lessons learned from our land based food system to support community based fishermen and locally caught seafood brings more power to the call for shifting fisheries policies so they benefit our environment, marine biodiversity, food safety, food sovereignty and food security, and the economic and social fabric of fishing communities that are putting food on our tables.”

Peter Van Ness of [gimmesound.com](#) will emcee and Steve Parkes of Maritime Gloucester will demonstrate how to fillet and prepare whole fish. Home cooks who have been thinking about joining the [Cape Ann Fresh Catch Community Supported Fishery](#) but may be intimidated by the idea of breaking down a whole fish will benefit from Steve’s demonstration. Judging the event will be Lara Lepionka of Backyard Growers and [Beacon Street Farm](#), Hallie Baker of [Turtle Alley Chocolates](#) and three youth judges: Lila, Becca, and Willa who will make sure the chefs’ creations are compatible with young people’s palates.

“Health care facilities nationwide are making steps to transform their internal food and beverage environments to model healthy behaviors and reduce obesity and chronic disease rates in their communities,” says Stacia Clinton, RD. LDN. the Regional Coordinator of HCWH’s Healthy Food in Healthcare Program. HCHW is an international coalition that works with the healthcare sector to promote the health of people and the environment. “We are excited to be part of a collaboration that prioritizes the purchase of local, sustainable seafood as a component of healthy food initiatives.”

Seafood Throwdown is the brainchild of the partnership between the Cape Ann Farmers’ Market and NAMA as a way of promoting the ecological importance of locally caught seafood in a fun, educational and community driven fashion that engages the larger community in issues affecting our ocean, fishing communities and fisheries.

Cape Ann Farmers' Market opens at 3 p.m., the contest starts promptly at 4 p.m. Parking is always free and ample on Market days.

Fight the Big Box Boats petition can be found at <http://www.change.org/petitions/fight-the-big-box-boats-save-family-fishermen-and-the-fish>. NAMA is aiming to get 1,000 signatures by September 21, in time for the next meeting of the New England Fishery Management Council.

Seafood Throwdowns will be held in New Bedford, Marshfield, Chatham, Boston, and Rockport, MA, as well as Hatteras, NC, Portsmouth, NH, Burlington, VT, and Unity, Maine. For a list of Seafood Throwdowns for 2012, please visit <http://namanet.org/events>.

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