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[Community Corner](#)

## 'Pooch Parking' A New Service For Vienna Farmers Market

The Vienna Farmers Market continues to find ways to support the community, including a new service to watch your dog while you shop.



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"Pooch Parking" is a new service at the Vienna Farmers Market to allow dog owners to shop. (Courtesy of Optimist Club of Greater Vienna)

VIENNA, VA — Under Virginia's health code, animals other than service animals are not allowed at farmers markets. But at the Vienna Farmers Market, a recently-introduced service lets residents shop while volunteers watch their dogs.

Monica Isaac, one of the Vienna Farmers Market's managers, told Patch people passing by the market are often pet owners walking their dogs. Even though they cannot enter the farmers market with dogs, organizers still want pet owners to visit and patronize the vendors.

Enter "Pooch Parking."

This service features volunteers at the farmers market manager's tent who will watch dogs so their pet owners can enter the market. Dogs will get pampered with water, shade and treats.

That's just one of the ways the [Vienna Farmers Market](#), in its 16th year, serves the community. The week of Aug. 6 to 12 is National Farmers Market Week, but Isaac says it is a valuable resource for the community on Saturdays from May to October.

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"That bears with the whole premise of maintaining a local focus on producers, including produce and other consumables that are locally generated and are [sold] in ways other than big box stores," said Isaac.



Courtesy of Optimist Club of Greater Vienna

The farmers market runs Saturdays from 8 a.m. to noon from May to October in the Vienna Community Center parking lot just off the Washington & Old Dominion Trail. It is run by the Optimist Club of

Greater Vienna, whose vendor fees become proceeds to support children in the community through scholarships and youth programs. According to Isaac, the farmers market has three goals: to support local producers, build a sense of community and providing a family-friendly experience. Farmers market participants include groups that benefit the local community or help the planet through soil conservation and residential composting.

For instance, [Lucy's Charity Plant Sale](#) is a farmers market participant that gives proceeds to charitable causes. Isaac said the sale was started by a Vienna teenager whose family has extra seeds for plants to grow in their backyard. Instead of throwing away the extra seeds, they decided to use them for a good cause and approached the Optimist Club of Greater Vienna.

"They just completed their third year of raising funds for the Optimist Club," said Isaac, noting their sale numbers have grown each year.

Through the Optimist Club, proceeds benefit [Second Story](#), a local nonprofit helping homeless teens, and [World Central Kitchen](#)'s efforts to feed children in Ukraine.

Another way the farmers market supports youth is through community service opportunities. Isaac says the farmers market's social media responsibilities are handed over to Madison High School students, and they gain experience and service hours in return.

By shopping at the Vienna Farmers Market, Isaac says "you can fill [almost] your entire grocery needs." The ability to try new cuisines is part of the farmers market's goal of building community. Some of the cuisines represented are Mexican, Salvadorean, French, Vietnamese and Turkish.

"People are bringing their traditional plates from those parts of the world," said Isaac.

Other vendors include meat and egg producers, fruit and vegetable growers, prepared food producers, Caffe Amouri's coffee and tea, a vendor selling spices and rubs, a honey producer, nut producer, bread vendor, flower producer, dog treat vendor and more.

"You can eat, you can fill your fridge, you can feed your pet and you can decorate your home," said Isaac.

By shopping at the farmers market, Isaac says you have a "direct impact on our fellow neighbors and community here." So bring your pooch and let them be pampered while you shop for local goods.

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