LOCAL NEWS

**Oasis springs up in southeast Raleigh food desert**

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**RALEIGH, N.C.** — Two ministers have opened a grocery store in southeast Raleigh with the hope of bringing healthy food and convenience back to the area.

Reverends Chris and Jackie Jones already operate a food ministry, and The Galley, at 402 E. Bragg St., will be an offshoot of that.

"This is a food desert," Chris Jones said recently. "Us being pastors, we have to do something about it."

Since Kroger closed a supermarket on Raleigh Boulevard in January 2013, residents of the South Park neighborhood have had few options for grocery shopping.

"If I'm going to Rock Quarry Road, it's like an hour, hour-and-a-half walk to the grocery store," Dion Hightower said. "Then you have to walk back with all those bags."

Tiera James takes her two children with her on the bus for a trip to the store, so she welcomes the opportunity to shop at The Galley.

"It'd be a life-saver because I live right there, so that's maybe a five-minute walk, if that," James said.

To promote good nutrition and healthy eating, The Galley stocks fruits and veggies up front and stashes sweets in the back.

The store also has the amenities of high-end supermarkets, such as WiFi, and plans for outdoor seating with piped-in music.

Chris Jones said he hopes to move to a bigger space nearby in the future.

"This is the beginning. This is our genesis," he said with a laugh.