Carolina Ascent FC Welcomes Food Lion as Club's Official Grocer Partner

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Partnership combats food insecurity; provides nutrition education across Carolinas

CHARLOTTE, N.C., July 24, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Carolina Ascent Football Club announced today its strategic partnership with Food Lion as the club's Official Grocer Partner. The two organizations unveiled details of their collaboration July 24 at the Food Lion located at 2226 Park Road in Charlotte, N.C. Food Lion, an omnichannel grocery retailer, operates more than 1,100 stores in 10 states across the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic regions.

As the Official Grocer Partner of Carolina Ascent, Food Lion will introduce multiple programs through its hunger relief platform, Food Lion Feeds. Carolina Ascent and Food Lion are dedicated to fighting food insecurity across the Carolinas and providing nutrition education for young athletes, setting them up for success in life. Food Lion Feeds was founded in 2014 by Food Lion to address food insecurity in the towns and cities it serves.

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In addition, Food Lion's partnership with Carolina Ascent is its first collaboration with a women's professional sports organization and the region's newest top-tier women's professional soccer team. Carolina Ascent is one of the eight inaugural franchises of the United Soccer League's Super League, the newest Division One women's professional soccer league in the United States. The collaboration will promote the accessibility of healthier food and physical activity.

"We are thrilled to have such an amazing partnership with Food Lion. Food Lion is a community service stalwart with a rich history of fighting hunger related issues in our region," stated Tim Schuldt, Chief Operating Officer, Carolina Ascent Football Club. "We look forward to driving more awareness to this challenge that many of our Carolina neighbors face, and more importantly, we look forward to rolling up our sleeves and working with Food Lion to make a difference."

Through Food Lion Feeds, Carolina Ascent players, coaches and staff will serve families experiencing food insecurity through two unique programs. Each season, Carolina Ascent players will accompany two families on shopping sprees at local Food Lion stores to create memorable moments and provide parents and children with the nutritional meals they need to live healthy lives. Families will be identified by Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina. Also, in partnership with the food bank, the club will volunteer two times per season at the annual Backpack for Hunger event to support Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina. The Backpack Program provides more than 200,000 backpacks filled with nutritious food to nourish children across the 24 counties Second Harvest serves. These initiatives represent the power of partnerships working together to increase access to nutritious food and nourish thousands of children and their families experiencing hunger.

To support nutrition education, Food Lion and Carolina Ascent will launch a video series that will be distributed through various communication channels, including social media, Carolina Ascent's website and in-stadium video boards. The club will work with Food Lion to identify and deliver meaningful, educational content focused on nutrition tips for youth-aged athletes, including Food Lion's proprietary Guiding Stars® program. Introduced in 2006, Guiding Stars is easy to understand and includes ratings on more than 6,000 products and shelf labels at all Food Lion stores. The three-star rating system is simple: one star for good, two stars for better and three stars for the best nutritional value.

"At Food Lion, our neighbors count on us to nourish their families, and we are committed to doing everything we can to address food insecurity in our community," said Meg Ham, President, Food Lion. "Through partnerships like this one with Carolina Ascent, we are working to address some of the root causes of food insecurity. We believe no one should have to choose between dinner and rent or gas and groceries. In a time when families and their children experience hunger, we look forward to this partnership to increase access to nutritious food and nutritional education."

As a result of the partnership, the Food Lion logo is featured on the sleeve of the Carolina Ascent home jersey. Food Lion will also sponsor all goals made throughout the inaugural season and provide meals to benefit Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina through its hunger relief platform. Through the initiative, known as Score To Give More, Food Lion Feeds will help provide 1,000 meals for every goal the team makes in home and away games.

Carolina Ascent kicks off its inaugural season Saturday, Aug. 17, at 7 p.m. The new women's professional soccer team hosts DC Power FC at American Legion Memorial Stadium. Season tickets are on sale now at carolinaascent.com/tickets.

About Carolina Ascent FC
Carolina Ascent FC is one of the eight initial markets of the USL Super League, a new Division One professional women's soccer league set to kick off in August 2024. Carolina Ascent is reaching new heights for women's soccer. Step by step the club will take strides to grow the women's game, elevate the community and support a more sustainable future for the residents of the Carolinas. The team will play all home games at the historic American Legion Memorial Stadium. For information on club news, season tickets and more, visit carolinaascent.com.

About Food Lion
Food Lion is an omnichannel grocery retailer committed to nourishing its neighbors. More than 82,000 associates across 1,100+ stores deliver an easy, fresh and affordable shopping experience throughout 10 Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic states. With a focus on hunger relief, Food Lion is a

pioneer in food rescue. In 2014, Food Lion Feeds was created and has since donated more than 1.2 billion meals to those who are food insecure. The retailer has committed to donate 1.5 billion meals by 2025. Founded and based in Salisbury, N.C., since 1957, Food Lion is a company of Ahold Delhaize USA, the U.S. division of Zaandam-based Ahold Delhaize. For more information, visit foodlion.com.

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An image accompanying this announcement is available at https://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/28f8637b-fbde-45aa-8984-ce78538fd9f5