

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tiffany Goetzinger, Fair Food Program
tiffany@fairfoodprogram.org | 941-993-5754

Mike Houston, Takoma Park Silver Spring Co-Op
mhouston@tpss.coop | 301-891-2667

Takoma Park Silver Spring Co-Op to become Maryland's first Fair Food Sponsor, marking landmark commitment to farmworkers' human rights

The beloved neighborhood institution will support CIW's Presidential Medal-winning Fair Food Program, which combats forced labor, sexual violence, and other human rights violations in U.S. agriculture

TAKOMA PARK, MD – On February 1, the Takoma Park Silver Spring Co-Op (TPSS) and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) will launch a partnership to support the award-winning Fair Food Program (FFP), a worker-driven human rights initiative ensuring basic protections for tens of thousands of farmworkers along the East Coast.

"Consumers who support their local co-op are some of the most conscious consumers in the country," said Gerardo Reyes of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. "The sponsorship agreement with Takoma Park Silver Spring Co-Op is an important, concrete new way for consumers to support workers' rights and buy more ethical food. We are happy to welcome TPSS and its members into the Fair Food movement."

In line with its commitment to prioritizing suppliers that provide safe and fair working conditions, TPSS will contribute a portion of its sales of Fair Food Program certified produce. This contribution will help fund both wage bonuses to farmworkers in the FFP, and comprehensive monitoring and oversight via the independent Fair Food Standards Council. TPSS will also integrate education about farmworker rights and the FFP into its ongoing member engagement work.

"A key part of our mission is to prioritize social responsibility in the products we stock," said Mike Houston, General Manager for TPSS. "Becoming a Sponsor of the Fair Food Program is an opportunity to put that mission into practice by supporting farmworker rights in a unique, tangible way. We're thrilled to be able to offer our members yet another way to live their values."

The Fair Food Program was named one of the *Harvard Business Review's* 15 "most important social-impact stories of the past century," and was called "the best workplace monitoring program in the

U.S.” on the front page of the *New York Times*. It provides strict protections for tens of thousands of farmworkers along the East Coast who harvest tomatoes sold at TPSS.

TPSS is the second co-op, after the Park Slope Food Co-Op in New York City, to join the newly created Fair Food Sponsor Program. The Sponsor program was created in order to allow progressive co-ops, small independent grocers, and individual restaurants and chefs to join the Fair Food Program, which, until now, has only focused on large-scale buyers of produce.

###

Coalition of Immokalee Workers: www.ciw-online.org

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers is a human rights organization and Presidential Medal recipient internationally recognized for its achievements in the fields of social responsibility, anti-sexual violence efforts, community organizing, and ending slavery. The CIW’s Fair Food Program is a groundbreaking partnership among farmworkers, Florida tomato growers, and fourteen major food retailers that buy Fair Food produce. Fair Food Buyers agree to purchase exclusively from suppliers who meet a worker-driven code of conduct, which includes a zero-tolerance policy for slavery and sexual harassment. Buyers also pay a “penny-per-pound” premium, which is passed down through the supply chain and paid out directly to workers by their employers. Since the program’s inception in 2011, buyers have paid over \$30 million into the FFP. For more information, visit www.fairfoodprogram.org

Takoma Park Silver Spring Co-Op: <https://tpss.coop/>

Takoma Park Silver Spring Co-op is a natural foods cooperative business owned by our friends and neighbors. With more than 10,000 members, our mission is to ensure that our customers have access to goods produced in socially and environmentally responsible ways, with an emphasis on local and organic foods, at reasonable prices, and in a welcoming community marketplace setting. We offer products and services that protect and nurture the planet and our immediate area. Our buyers prioritize sustainable and organic food and fair-trade products from local and other small producers whenever possible.