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For Immediate Release

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### ***Growing for Good* Cultivates a Future for Local Farms and Food Security: PCC Community Markets, Harvest Against Hunger and Neighborhood Farmers Markets announce three years of community funding to support local food systems**

*The program, developed during the pandemic, helped keep 100% of participating farms in business while providing more than 114,000 pounds of local produce to hunger relief agencies*

(SEATTLE, January 10, 2023) – [PCC Community Markets](#) (PCC or “the co-op”) — the largest community-owned food market in the U.S. and one of Seattle’s original grocers — in partnership with [Harvest Against Hunger](#) and the Seattle [Neighborhood Farmers Markets](#) today announced that [Growing for Good](#) secured three years of community funding. Growing for Good is a pandemic-borne innovation designed to support the stream of fresh produce from small farms in the Puget Sound region to local hunger relief agencies. This multiyear funding will support refinement, replication and scaling of the program to drive even greater impact across Washington state.

Pandemic-driven shifts in supply and demand in 2020 disrupted foundational aspects of the food system in our region. Both farmers and customers encountered significant disruption to providing and obtaining food, all the while food insecurity increased significantly due to job loss and discontinuation of meal programs at public schools. In addition, large food distributors prioritized retailers to ensure public food security, so even hunger relief organizations with financial resources were unable to purchase through U.S. Foods and other sources they relied on pre-pandemic. That is when PCC, Harvest Against Hunger and Neighborhood Farmers Market joined forces to fill the gap with Growing for Good.

Now entering its fourth year, this program supports local food systems while nourishing the members of its community who may not otherwise have the resources to prioritize fresh or local food.

The Growing for Good model allows for upfront payment to local farms, enabling them to supply fresh foods to hunger relief agencies. Since its inception in 2020, Growing for Good supports 16 farms that are small, local and family-owned along with 21 community-based hunger relief agencies. Since then, more than 114,000 pounds of local produce has been purchased from farms, the majority of which are certified organic. This helped ensure that 100 percent of all participating farmers remained in businesses throughout the pandemic. Additionally, more than 65 percent of farms that participate are owned and operated by farmers who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), many of whom are first- and second-generation farmers, bringing their family’s farming traditions to the U.S.

“It is deeply heartening that with the collective power of our partners, and tremendous support from the co-op’s staff, members and community, we will dedicate the next three years to grow this program while strengthening our relationships with local farms and food banks,” said Rachel Tefft, Senior Manager of Community Food Systems at PCC. “Due to the fundraising efforts of our staff and continuous dedication of our community during the past three years, we were able to work quickly with community

# PRESS RELEASE



partners to support our local food system with new infrastructure between farms and hunger relief agencies while responding to the immediate needs in the community. The commitment to this program for the next three [years] is an opportunity to take a pandemic relief program and build it into something with long lasting effects and benefits.”

According to David Bobanick, Executive Director of Harvest Against Hunger, “the Growing for Good partnership is a perfect example of how a community-based and supported program can build and expand new approaches to help families and individuals facing food insecurity thrive. The program reduces hunger, supports small farm economies, prevents food waste, and increases access to healthy, local produce through networks of farms, food banks, meals programs, and volunteers throughout the state. This work proves that purchasing directly from local farmers allows for not only healthier, more diverse food options for people facing food insecurity, but helps these farms to prosper and create relationships within their communities.”

Growing for Good has been funded by the community for the community since it began in 2020, with a contribution of over \$300,000 between 2020 and 2022. PCC will provide an additional \$300,000 in funds raised in-store, specifically designated to support purchase of local food from farmers by hunger relief agencies, and an additional \$75,000 from the co-op. With that combined \$375,000 of funding, the program has heightened flexibility and responsiveness to meet community needs and deliver qualitative results for partners.

“Growing for Good’s initial goal was to mitigate lost access and income for small farmers during a period of significant disruption and anxiety,” said Seattle Neighborhood Farmers Market Executive Director Jennifer Antos. “Impact expanded steadily over three years and yielded unanticipated benefits for farmers: predictability, the ability to plan and a business opportunity that supports the community. Looking ahead, the program continues to work towards core goals, including helping farm participants remain profitable and supporting new and existing hunger relief agencies.”

## **About PCC Community Markets**

Founded in Seattle in 1953, PCC Community Markets (PCC) is a certified organic retailer and the nation’s largest community-owned food market. With an active membership of more than 100,000 members, PCC is committed to a triple bottom line that balances environmental, social and economic goals while reducing environmental impacts and giving back to its community. PCC is a haven for those who share a dedication to fresh, organic, seasonal food that is sustainably sourced from over 800 local producers, farmers, ranchers and fishers. The co-op’s mission is to ensure that good food nourishes the communities it serves, while cultivating vibrant, local, organic food systems. PCC operates 16 stores in the Puget Sound area, including the cities of Bellevue, Bothell, Burien, Edmonds, Issaquah, Kirkland, Redmond and Seattle. Seattle stores are in the neighborhoods of Ballard, Central District, Columbia City, Downtown, Fremont, Green Lake, View Ridge and West Seattle. The co-op also plans to open a new store in Madison Valley. In 2021, PCC gave more than 65% of pretax earnings to members and the communities it serves. This includes the co-op’s member dividend and support of nonprofits around the Puget Sound area such as Ventures, Washington Farmland Trust and FareStart.

## **About the Seattle Neighborhood Farmers Markets**

# PRESS RELEASE



The Neighborhood Farmers Markets (NFM) is a community-based, 501c3 non-profit organization that began in the University District in 1993, and has since grown to include seven farm-and-food-only markets serving more than 200 small businesses and 600,000 Seattle residents annually. NFM's mission to support and strengthen Washington's small family farm businesses is integrated into their food access programming and at the center of everything from educating consumers about seasonal eating to developing economic opportunity for farmers. In 2012, NFM worked with the City of Seattle to pilot a fruit and vegetable matching program that doubled the value of SNAP benefits for low-income shoppers. Today, the program has scaled statewide into farmers markets and grocery stores and is known as SNAP Market Match. Market producers reach Seattle residents through NFM markets organized in the University District, Capitol Hill, West Seattle, Columbia City, Lake City, Phinney and Magnolia. In 2023, NFM will celebrate 30 years of impact in the local food system.

## **About Harvest Against Hunger**

Harvest Against Hunger (HAH) fills the gap between farmers and food packers with surplus produce and local hunger relief organizations. Through its core work, HAH seeks donations of surplus produce directly from farmers and processors, then contracts with trucking companies to deliver the produce from the donor to the food bank distribution warehouses. In this manner, HAH and its partners secure and distribute millions of pounds of produce to drastically reduce agricultural food waste in Washington and beyond. Through its Farm to Community programs, HAH partners with farms and hunger relief agencies, along with state and local agencies, foundations and other community partners, to ensure that as much healthy local produce as possible gets to hunger relief partners while supporting small-scale farmers in communities across Washington. For more information, visit [www.harvestagainsthunger.org](http://www.harvestagainsthunger.org).

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