



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 31, 2017

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Eastside Food Co-op workers submit cards for union election

More than 70% of Eastside Food Co-op employees signed and submitted cards to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) yesterday, March 30th, to unionize with the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW), Local 653. Eastside Food Co-op workers hope to follow workers at the Linden Hills Co-op who unionized with UFCW Local 653 last month. They aim to raise standards both at their co-op and the larger retail grocery industry.

“I support the union movement here at Eastside,” said James Mossak, who works in the grocery department. “Our goals are to continue to support a fair work environment, provide accountability and transparency, and to have a strong voice at the table in regards to policies that affect us Eastside employees.”

Co-ops are long standing champions of organic food, sustainable agriculture, the environment, and fair trade which supports good working conditions and fair wages for producers. Workers at Eastside Food Co-op believe in those co-op values and are forming a union as an extension of those values in their own workplace.

“I love working here because I love this community, I love produce and educating people on how to use and preserve it. I am excited to form a union so we can ensure Eastside Food Co-op continues to be an amazing resource for the community, and a great place to work for all of us here now and in the future.” said Whitney Manning from the produce department.

“Working within the cooperative movement, I have seen the value and emphasis in treating workers fairly. Unionizing is one way that we can move forward and incorporate our vision in the local and globalized economy.” said Abbie Vander Horck from the produce department.

Local 653 members were quick to welcome the new workers to their union family.

"I am a Deli manager and have worked in the industry for over a decade. I am so inspired by the energy of the Eastside Food Co-op workers' organizing. They are making a difference at their work and in their community," said Jay Grygar who works at Cub Foods in Brooklyn Park North.

Emily Calhoun, who works in the produce department at Linden Hills Co-op, expressed her support, "My co-workers and I at Linden Hills are so thrilled that Eastside workers are going to join our union."

Amanda Smith, who works in the health and body care department at Linden Hills added "We start contract negotiations with our employer in April and we know that having more co-op workers in the union with us means we all have more power."

After delivering signed union authorization cards to the NLRB, workers passed out flyers and wore buttons in store to show solidarity. A large group of workers also participated in a delegation to the interim store manager, John Lacaria, to inform him of their decision to form a union.

"Eastside Coop has always strived to be a tightknit community of workers. We take pride in our store and each other. We are creating unity for workers and want to work together with management to make sure all voices are heard," said Angelique Allebach from the scanning department.

"This is about us as workers having a voice and making a commitment to back each other up. We started our union by talking to our coworkers and getting each other involved. Organizers help advise and guide us through the process, but we organized ourselves. I would love to help other workers who want to form a union," said receiver, Tia Terchila.

Organizing a union at Eastside Food Co-op is a reaffirmation of workers' commitment to solidarity, democracy, equity, and social responsibility. Inspired by workers who recently formed a union at Linden Hills Co-op and The Wedge in Minneapolis, Whole Foods Co-op in Duluth, and the People's Food Co-op in Michigan – workers know they are Stronger Together.

Cashier Matthew Krofta said, "This is about the staff at Eastside having a voice and having more communication with management. We want transparency, accountability, and to know that rules are applied fairly throughout all levels of the store."

After receiving signed cards the NLRB will schedule an election for employees to decide whether to unionize.