

A Letter from Megan Karch

January 18, 2018

For the past 18 years, I've had the honor of being a part of the FareStart community. It's been an incredible journey, but today, I'm writing to let you know that I've made the difficult decision to step down as CEO of FareStart, and take on a new role as CEO of IslandWood on Bainbridge Island.



I was not planning to leave FareStart, but an opportunity presented itself that I couldn't pass up, which will allow me to grow professionally and spend more time with my young family.

When I first interviewed with the FareStart board and staff in 1999, I remember flying back home to Baltimore after the interviews and thinking "if these people are for real, I want to work for them." That sense of connection to mission and commitment to the work was the driving force for me choosing to relocate across the country. That magic still exists 18 years later because of your support and commitment.

I'm incredibly proud of the work that we've accomplished to help combat poverty, homelessness and hunger. Together we have:

- Increased the number of individuals locally trained annually, from 50 to over 500.
- Grown revenues from \$1.5 million to \$20 million.
- Launched new, innovative programs including our Youth Barista, Youth Culinary, and Foodservice Apprenticeship, helping more people move out of poverty and homelessness.
- Scaled the model nationally resulting in the launch of over 45 programs across the country and founded a network of 55+ members sharing best practices.
- Received numerous organization accolades including the James Beard Foundation's "Humanitarian of the Year" award.

But most importantly, we have transformed thousands of lives and multiple communities. FareStart is also in an outstanding position to make an even greater impact in the future.

I am working closely with our board of directors, leadership team and incoming Interim CEO Craig Russell to support a smooth transition as the national search begins for my replacement. Craig has been a member of our board for more than eight years, served as Board President, and is intimately familiar with the organization and its culture. He also brings vast leadership experience from his time at Starbucks. While leaving FareStart is one of the most difficult choices I have ever made, I know we have a strong, tenured team in place that will ensure that FareStart continues to thrive.