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FareStart Signs Lease at Pacific Tower as Part of Five-Year Strategic Growth Plan to Double Services and Impact

Seattle (June 3, 2014) — [FareStart](#), the local non-profit organization that provides culinary job training to homeless and disadvantaged individuals, announced today that it has signed a lease with the Washington State Dept. of Commerce for space at the iconic Pacific Tower (also known as the Pacific Medical Tower), located atop Seattle's Beacon Hill. The lease, which includes 10,000 square feet of space across the first and second floors, is part of FareStart's new five year strategic growth plan aimed at more than doubling the number of individuals served through the organization's job training programs. FareStart will officially occupy the new space Sep. 1.

"We're thrilled to become a part of Pacific Tower's new Innovation Center," says FareStart CEO Megan Karch. "We'll be able to significantly expand our training—a key focus of our strategic growth plan—in a location that will also bring together other organizations providing key support services to the community, including our students, such as medical and dental facilities and continuing education. It's a dream scenario for us."

FareStart's new strategic plan includes growing its training programs by nearly 63 percent, from 320 people annually to 520; and increasing the number of graduates by almost 92 percent, from 167 annually in 2013 to 320 in 2018. To direct the growth to areas needed most, FareStart examined populations currently underserved by employment training and identified four areas of increased focus: women, youth, individuals coming out of corrections, and individuals who are housed but in poverty. FareStart will focus its growth for these populations within its current training offerings, the adult culinary program and its Barista Training & Education program for at-risk youth. FareStart will also focus on wage progression for adult and youth graduates, with increased high school diploma/GED completion and access to higher education, customer service training and advanced skills.

To support the planned increase in training and the new facilities at Pacific Tower, FareStart aims to grow its social enterprise businesses from \$3.7 million to \$7 million in annual sales over the next five years. FareStart's businesses, including the FareStart Restaurant, provide hands-on training opportunities to students in the program while generating approximately half of the organization's operating revenue (the rest comes from individual donations, foundational grants, and a small amount of government funding). FareStart is also focused on growing its childcare meals in the new space—along with increasing community meals at the 700 Virginia facility—from 650,000 total meals annually to 1 million. These are the low-cost, healthy meals provided to area homeless shelters and low-income day care centers, a cornerstone of the organization's history and training program. Additionally, FareStart hopes to grow its meals program to include private schools, daycares and medical centers.

"The Pacific Tower plays such an important role in our five year strategic growth plan," says Karch. "Our

organization requires balanced growth between student training and our social enterprise businesses, which fund our mission. We cannot grow one area without balancing the other side of the equation. Not only will the Pacific Tower space allow us to more than double the number of students we're serving, but it will also allow that growth to happen sustainably by expanding our social enterprise businesses, generating important funds for the mission and creating dynamic training opportunities for our students. It's a win-win."

FareStart's 10,000 square feet of space at Pacific Tower will include kitchen space, retail space for an espresso bar/café and a quick-service facility, and training and classroom space for both the adult and youth programs. FareStart will also have access to an expansive 8th floor event space as the venue's exclusive caterer during evenings and weekends. The Pacific Tower facilities will operate in tandem with the organization's current location at its 700 Virginia Street building, home to the organization's well known restaurant space and host to its weekly Guest Chef Night dinner series.

Since 1992, FareStart has provided opportunities for nearly 7,000 people to transform their lives, while also serving over 6 million meals to disadvantaged men, women, and children throughout the Puget Sound. Every day, men and women transform their lives in FareStart's adult program, which includes culinary training, job placement services, life-skills classes, counseling, and assistance with housing, food, clothing and other support services to assist FareStart students as they change their lives. In 2013, 90 percent of FareStart's adult graduates secured employment within 90 days of graduation and three months later, 88 percent were still in their jobs.

In 2011, FareStart launched Catalyst Kitchens to take the FareStart model to a national scale—working with existing organizations across the country to help apply the lessons that FareStart and "Model Members" from within the network have learned over the past several decades. Since its launch in 2011, the Catalyst Kitchens member network has collectively provided training and job opportunities for more than 3,500 men, women and youth in three countries, provided more than 11 million nutritious meals for those in need, and generated over \$30 million in social enterprise revenue—which has gone back into the organizations to help increase capacity and services.

"We have aggressive goals for the future," says Karch. "The need for our services continues to rise, and we're stepping up to meet that need. With our five-year strategic plan and new space at Pacific Tower, all the pieces are in place to do everything we can to end homelessness, poverty and hunger in our region."

About FARESTART: FareStart provides a community that transforms lives by empowering homeless and disadvantaged men, women, and families to achieve self-sufficiency through life skills, job training and employment in the food service industry. Since 1992, FareStart has provided opportunities for nearly 7,000 people to transform their lives, while also serving over 6 million meals to disadvantaged men, women, and children. Every day, men and women transform their lives in the adult program, which includes culinary training, life-skills classes, counseling, and assistance with housing, food, clothing and other support services to assist FareStart students as they change their lives. FareStart's Graduate Support Services program provides ongoing guidance to adult graduates, providing a full year (and sometimes longer) of support to help individuals move forward to self-sufficiency. FareStart, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, generates about half of its annual operating revenue through business operations, such as Guest Chef Night at the FareStart Restaurant. For more information, visit www.farestart.org.

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