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Denver Urban Gardens Workers Unionize, Seek Voluntary Recognition

Denver, CO — Yesterday, a majority of staff members at Denver Urban Gardens (DUG), a community gardening and food access nonprofit in Denver, announced their intent to unionize with the Denver News Guild as Denver Urban Gardens Workers United (DUGWU).

Denver Urban Gardens has always been an organization promoting the collective interest of the community. DUGWU believes that DUG's continued success relies on upholding collective values by developing stronger employee protections, transparency, and ensuring that everyone's voices are at the table.

In their mission statement, which they delivered to management, the DUGWU said:

“As DUG grows and evolves, it's essential that our internal policies and culture reflect our values and grassroots origin and honor each staff member's unique voice. We believe that the sustainability of DUG is directly related to the passion and solidarity shared by its workforce. This union will create a more sustainable work environment for every employee, strengthen solidarity with our community, and allow us to develop increasingly equitable and accessible programs.”

DUGWU has requested voluntary recognition from management in order to expedite the process of bargaining a first contract. They are joining many nonprofits across Denver and Colorado in organizing their workplaces and winning union protections in a field that often relies on workers sacrificing their own needs for the sake of the mission - one that is better served when staff are able to have a direct say in their working conditions.

Shay Moon, a Food Access Program Coordinator at Denver Urban Gardens, said of the effort:

“Our union at DUG will democratize decision making processes internally and keep the organization true to its founding identity. DUG started as a community organizing project, and our union will reinvigorate the solidarity shared by staff in pursuing collectivist goals.”

Eliza Greene, a Director of Garden Leadership, added:

“This union will ensure that all staff have a voice in the decisions that affect their day-to-day work and their livelihoods, including making sure our nonprofit wages reflect the rising cost of living in Denver metro. This is also about being part of a positive movement in the food systems and nonprofits worlds. We love our DUG community and want to make this the best place to work, and the best place to gain access, skills, and resources for people to grow their own food in community.”

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The Denver Newspaper Guild, Local 37074, is a union of Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska and Montana newspaper employees, and employees working for unions and nonprofit organizations in the state. To learn more, visit denvernewspaperguild.org.