

August 20, 2015

Mr. William E. Crenshaw, CEO
Publix Supermarkets
Post Office Box 407
Lakeland, Florida 33802-0407

Dear Mr. Crenshaw,

Grace and peace to you. The Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church met in Daytona Beach at Bethune-Cookman University in June of 2015. During this annual meeting, delegates from across Florida gathered representing 670 churches throughout our Conference.

One of our matters of business was to consider a resolution about farmworker justice brought forth by four clergy members. The resolution called for the conference's support of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' Fair Food Program and the groundbreaking transformation in human rights it has ushered into Florida's fields. In addition, it called on Publix Supermarkets to join thirteen major food retailers in participating in the Program, thereby committing to eradicate abuses in the corporation's supply chain.

As we were leading up to Annual Conference, the Conference's Social Justice Committee reviewed the resolution and suggested that the chairperson, the Rev. Sarah Miller, and our director of Missional Engagement, the Rev. Clarke Campbell-Evans, meet with Publix leadership to discuss the resolution. Rev. Campbell-Evans was routed to speak with Mr. Mark Codd; Mr. Codd requested a copy of the resolution but did not respond to Rev. Campbell-Evans' attempt at conversation.

At the conference, the resolution was presented and debated on the floor. After a variety of voices had been heard and two amendments had failed, the resolution passed overwhelmingly, 515 to 165. A copy of that resolution is attached.

As such, I am writing to inform you of the Florida United Methodist Conference's resolute call to Publix to join the Fair Food Program and to take part in the expansion of long-denied human rights of farmworkers.

As United Methodists, we believe that all people are made in the image of God. We affirm the human dignity of our brothers and sisters who work in the fields and support them in their efforts to have that dignity upheld.

The resolution acknowledged that the Coalition of Immokalee Workers has sought a dialogue with Publix leadership for over five years, with no response from your company. We urge you to accept this invitation. We would be happy to facilitate such a convening.

Grace and peace,

The Reverend Elizabeth Gardner
Conference Secretary
Florida Conference, United Methodist Church

c: Bishop Kenneth H. Carter, Jr.