



Contacts: nona.evans@wholefoods.com – 512 542 0794
liz.burkhart@wholefoods.com – 512.542.0682

WHOLE FOODS MARKET® EXECUTIVE AND CHEF ANN COOPER VISIT WASHINGTON, D.C. TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHY SCHOOL LUNCHES

*Whole Foods Market Customers Exceed Donation Goal, Fund Free School Lunch Resource Web Site
Company Commits to Working with Local Schools, Communities to Improve School Lunch Nutrition*

WASHINGTON (Sept. 10, 2009) — Whole Foods Market (NASDAQ: WFMI), a leader in natural and organic foods, and Chef Ann Cooper, the nation's "renegade lunch lady," are working to help transform lunch in schools across the country by kicking off the "School Lunch Revolution" awareness tour today in Washington, D.C.

Cooper and Whole Foods Market Co-President and Chief Operating Officer Walter Robb will speak to key influencers about the "School Lunch Revolution" program, asking community members to get involved and government officials to consider more rigorous nutrition guidelines as they prepare to reauthorize the Child Nutrition Act.

"There is a role for everyone when it comes to getting fresher, healthier school lunches served in our schools," said Robb. "We are engaging everyone on this issue – from parents learning to pack healthier lunches, to our customers donating to the cause, to our Team Members getting involved at their local schools, and with key community groups, to elected officials interested in prompting real change."

Robb and Cooper begin today with a press conference and community discussion at 10:30 a.m. at the Tenley Whole Foods Market store at 4530 40th St. N.W. Afterward, they will meet with USDA officials to discuss the National School Lunch Program by calling attention to:

- The need to go beyond dietary guidelines when updating school lunch nutrition standards;
- More focus on fresh, natural whole foods with fewer artificial ingredients such as colorings, flavorings and trans fats (hydrogenated oils); and
- A greater emphasis on local food.

Cooper will underscore the need to dedicate an additional \$1 per day per child to the School Lunch Program and advocate for universal breakfast and lunch provided to all students, which would allow schools to have more time to focus on better nutrition planning and meal preparation as it would eliminate enormous administrative and accounting burdens.

"We must help schools transition from highly processed foods to more fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and animal protein raised without added growth hormones and antibiotics," said Cooper. "There is real momentum around creating the very best education for our children. That starts with ensuring that children are ready to learn. Good nutrition for every child is an essential ingredient for success. My ultimate goal is to educate and inspire schools, parents and students to take bold steps to improve the quality of education by making better food choices."

To help schools learn to serve an increased amount of fresh, wholesome food, Cooper's nonprofit, F3: Food Family Farming Foundation, created the free online resource center – www.thelunchbox.org. Whole Foods Market kicked off a donation drive by contributing and then its customers got engaged and have donated more than \$400,000 to develop this valuable resource.

"We're so excited and grateful that our customers have embraced the opportunity to get involved. In five weeks, we've been able to raise more than \$400,000 through our check outs," said Robb. "This allows Chef Ann's Foundation to offer easily accessible, free resources for all schools. These tools will help them duplicate the success that Ann has created in Berkeley, Harlem and now Boulder."

Whole Foods Market is pleased to announce that its more than 270 U.S. stores have committed to reaching out to schools and organizations in the communities they serve, to find ways to work together to ensure better nutrition at lunchtime. Work already underway includes stores in D.C. that created a multi-faceted partnership with the metro-area YMCA that includes both healthy eating and fitness components. Other partners in the D.C. include the Capital Area Food Bank Kids Café program and Manna Food Center.

After Washington, D.C., the School Lunch Revolution awareness tour will continue to Bethesda, Atlanta, Nashville, Chicago and Houston. Chef Cooper will be featured in a series of talks and panel discussions on the subject, including:

- Sept. 10: 5:30 p.m. - YMCA on Old Georgetown Rd, Bethesda, Md.
- Sept. 14: 6:30 p.m. – Morningside Elementary School, Atlanta
- Sept. 15: 12:30 p.m. – Belcourt Theatre, Nashville
- Sept. 16: 9 a.m. – Whole Foods Market Kingsbury, Chicago
- Sept. 24: 6 p.m. -- Tinsley Elementary School, Houston

###

About Whole Foods Market®

Founded in 1980 in Austin, Texas, Whole Foods Market (www.wholefoodsmarket.com), a leader in the natural and organic foods industry and America's first national certified organic grocer, was named "America's Healthiest Grocery Store" in 2008 by *Health* magazine. The Whole Foods Market motto, "Whole Foods, Whole People, Whole Planet"™ captures the company's mission to find success in customer satisfaction and wellness, employee excellence and happiness, enhanced shareholder value, community support and environmental improvement. Thanks to its more than 50,000 Team Members, Whole Foods Market has been ranked as one of the "100 Best Companies to Work For" in America by *FORTUNE* magazine for 12 consecutive years. In fiscal year 2008, the company had sales of \$8 billion and currently has more than 275 stores in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Whole Foods Market, Fresh & Wild™, and Harry's Farmers Market® are trademarks owned by Whole Foods Market IP, LP. Wild Oats® and Capers Community Market™ are trademarks owned by Wild Marks, Inc.

About Chef Ann Cooper: Meet the Leader of the School Lunch Revolution

Chef Ann Cooper, aka, "The Renegade Lunch Lady" and author of *Lunch Lessons: Changing the Way We Feed Our Children*, is on a mission to ensure that every child in America receives healthy, delicious food every day in school. Her work over the past decade has already transformed the school lunchroom experience for tens of thousands of children. She will share her methodology and tools through The Lunch Box, which has the power to help all schools to make simple, yet revolutionary changes to their lunch programs. Chef Ann Cooper is currently serving as the Interim Nutrition Director for the Boulder Valley School District and is the former Director of Nutrition Services for the Berkeley Unified School district. She is the author of four books and is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park with more than 30 years working in the culinary world. For more information visit: <http://www.chefann.com/html/about-chef-ann/bio-photos.html>.