



## MEDIA ADVISORY

# Presidential Award Honors Historic Partnership to Combat Worker Abuse and Exploitation

*Recipients Share Their Story Sunday Following a Community Screening  
of FOOD CHAIN\$*

Los Angeles, February 2, 2015 -

*"This is an extraordinary accomplishment, and reminds all of us not just of the work that we have to do, but that dedicated individuals... can strike out against injustice, break down barriers, and make a world of difference."*

*-Secretary John Kerry*



Jon Esformes (Operating Partner, Pacific Tomato Growers), Catalina Ramirez (CIW), Lucas Benitez (CIW), Cheryl Queen (VP, Communications, Compass Group), Laura Germino (CIW), Judge Laura Safer Espinoza (Fair Food Standards Council), and Greg Asbed (CIW)

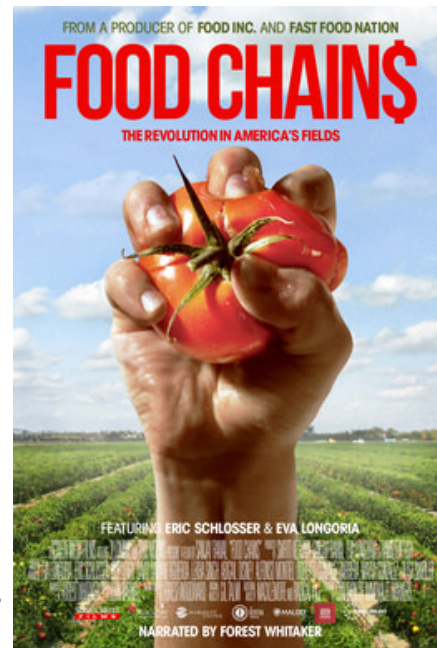
Founders of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers along with Jon Esformes, Co-CEO of Pacific Tomato Growers, are on their way to Los Angeles from the White House where they just received the 2014 Presidential Medal for Extraordinary Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking.

On Sunday, February 8th, they will hold a community discussion about the evolution of the Fair Food Program following a screening of the movie [FOOD CHAIN\\$](#). The movie depicts their collective struggle, and ultimately their triumph of morality over corporate greed.

*"This is not a film about oppression; it's a film about transformation." -Eva Longoria  
(Executive Producer)*

The film documents the journey of a group of tomato pickers and shows how compromise and collaboration brought opposing sides together. In 2010 Jon Esformes, Operating Partner of Pacific Tomato Growers, became the first of many large growers to participate in the Fair Food Program with the CIW. This revolutionary agreement was hailed by the New York Times as "the best workplace monitoring program" in the United States.

Prior to heading up Pacific Tomato Growers, Esformes was struggling with alcoholism. His treatment at Beit T'Shuvah changed the direction of his life. As strong advocates of justice and assisting the under-served, [Beit T'Shuvah](#) is proud to support Jon's recovery and fight for fairness by hosting this community screening and discussion. "Thousands of lives have improved, and that is the power of saving one soul," says CEO and Senior Rabbi Mark Borovitz.



Co-sponsors of the event, [Netiya](#) and [T'ruah](#) are also actively involved in advancing human rights. Netiya is an interfaith network organizing communities around just food systems and advancing urban agriculture with projects that include converting unused land in the Los Angeles area to gardens. T'ruah acts on the Jewish imperative to respect and protect human rights throughout the United States, Canada, Israel and occupied territories.

Together the sponsors, presidential award recipients, and film makers are joining forces to raise awareness not only about oppression but to highlight the stories of personal transformation evolving from their collaborative fight against societal injustice.

The screening will be followed by a panel discussion about the movie and the Fair Food Program with Director Sanjay Rawal, Operating Partner of Pacific Tomato Growers Jon Esformes, Co-founders of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers Greg Asbed and Lucas Benitez, Rabbi Mark Borovitz of Beit T'Shuvah, and Executive Director of Netiya Devorah Brous.

**WHEN:** February 8th from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
3:30 snacks and tour of Beit T'Shuvah  
4:00 FOOD CHAIN\$ screening  
5:30 Panel

**WHERE:** Beit T'Shuvah 8831 Venice Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90034

**WHO:** **Sanjay Rawal**, Director of FOOD CHAIN\$  
**Jon Esformes**, Operating Partner of Pacific Tomato Growers  
**Greg Asbed**, Co-founder of Coalition of Immokalee Workers  
**Lucas Benitez**, Co-founder of Coalition of Immokalee Workers  
**Rabbi Mark Borovitz**, Senior Rabbi & CEO Beit T'Shuvah  
**Devorah Brous**, Executive Director Netiya

### About Beit T'Shuvah

Beit T'Shuvah is a treatment center and educational institution dedicated to guiding individuals and families towards a path of living well in order to recover from addiction. For the past thirty

years they've utilized a faith-based model in Los Angeles integrating spirituality, psychotherapy, Jewish teachings, the 12-steps and the creative arts. For more information please visit [www.BeitTShuvah.org](http://www.BeitTShuvah.org).

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