

East Aurora Cooperative Market Board of Directors

# Newsletter

Spring 2022

## Grocery Workers Appreciation Day!

On February 22, the board treated the hard working staff at the co-op to pizza, wings, and a small thank you gift to let them know how much they are appreciated. Because truly, without them the store would not be what it is!



## EACM Member-Owners . . .

- Love being a part of the East Aurora Community
- Know the co-op is an important part of what makes East Aurora unique
- Want to preserve that special community feel for future generations
- Appreciate that shopping at the co-op supports the local economy

## What Makes the EACM Different from a Chain Grocery Store

The East Aurora Co-op Market is a unique place. When the co-op founders envisioned our store, they wanted to share their love of community and great food with their neighbors. Unlike a chain grocery store, the co-op is run and owned by members of our community instead of a corporate office with little or no connection to East Aurora. Our general manager, Jess Armbrust, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the co-op with oversight provided by member-owners who serve on the co-op board of directors. Strategic planning and decision making for our co-op happens right here in our community. As members of the board, we aren't grocery experts (we have help in that department), but we are passionate about the East Aurora Co-op Market and being a part of the co-op's future.

Love having the co-op in East Aurora? Well, we need you! Part of what makes the co-op work is the dedication of the volunteers who serve on the board of directors. Board members are an essential part of the co-op business.

Our board is effective because of our diverse backgrounds. We are individuals with many different experiences including teachers, nurses, engineers, and fellow business owners. Each person brings new ideas to the table from their own unique viewpoint. You don't need any specific skills to be a board member. Training is provided on the principles of board governance. What we all have in common is a passion for our East Aurora community and a desire to ensure the Cooperative Market thrives as part of the landscape.

We are currently looking for member-owners to join our Board of Directors. Please consider supporting your store by volunteering. Email [directors@eastaurora.coop](mailto:directors@eastaurora.coop) for more info.

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## The Increased Costs of the Pandemic

Anyone who has been grocery shopping lately has likely noticed their bill being a bit higher than usual. The East Aurora Co-op is not immune to the issues facing the global grocery market. We wanted to take a moment to touch on some of the challenges that are impacting our co-op, our member-owners and our customers.

### **Scale of operations**

As a small store, the East Aurora Co-op can sometimes lose out to larger stores with more buying power. To ensure we carry the products our customers want, we also typically pay more for them than the big box stores who order in much larger volume. Larger stores have more capacity to absorb increased costs during the pandemic than a small locally owned store.

### **Shipping**

Goods that are not procured locally are facing backlogs and bottlenecks through national and international supply chains. While your mayonnaise may not be made internationally, the jar it is stored in might be. This in turn affects everyday pricing at our favorite co-op.

### **Labor**

The pandemic has brought on an unprecedented shift in the labor market. Due to labor shortages, entry-level wages at competing businesses are well above the state minimum wage. As a result, the co-op's cost of labor has also increased significantly as we work to ensure the co-op is a desirable employer, offering reasonable wages, while also continuing to provide a high quality customer experience.

Our co-op staff is working hard to stay on top of current price changes and product offerings. What remains most important for us is to maintain a superior customer experience in our store and continue to offer our employees a safe and satisfying place to work. Thank you for supporting your store!