

Pat Schang Info

Why are you interested in serving on the co-op's board of directors?

I retired when I moved back home three years ago. I have spent that time settling into my new (old!) home, with my family, reconnecting with the community and old friends, making new friends, and enjoying being retired. Recently I began looking for volunteer opportunities, and fortuitously became aware of the openings on the board.

Summarize any experience you may have with cooperatives and community organizations. Be sure to note any leadership roles you may have held in these organizations.

My partner, JoAnne Winkler and I opened the first health food store in East Aurora in 1974, The Country Cupboard. Most of my professional career was spent in community based organizations, working with battered women and children, as well as victims of sexual assault and crime. These organizations arose out of the women's movement, and as such were governed by consensus, and a communication flow from those served all the way up to those in state leadership who had direct contact with lawmakers and policy makers. Our agencies were responsible for helping to implement and train law enforcement on those laws, and pass our experience back to state leaders who used that information to recommend amendments. I served as project director, executive director and consultant in which I researched, developed, implemented and supervised students in an intern program for social workers. I also served on the executive committees of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape.

Summarize your professional experience and skills relevant to service on this board. What unique skills, personal qualities or perspective will you bring to the board?

I worked my way "up the ladder" in community based organizations from volunteer to Executive Director. I am a collaborative, compassionate, consensus builder, with a good sense of humor. I am politely direct, and seek to cut through irrelevant sidetracks in order to get to the deeper issues, without sidestepping process. I have a good feel for the atmosphere, and its indicator of the health of the organization. In addition I was a partner with JoAnne Winkler in opening the first health food store in East Aurora, The Country Cupboard in 1974, and have been passionate about healthy food since that time.

Describe your experiences working collaboratively with others in a group setting.

In addition to the experiences listed above, I have volunteered at a homeless shelter in Norristown PA, and The Village of Arts and Humanities in Philadelphia. Whether it was merely sitting with the homeless and listening to their concerns, or helping to implement a lead abatement educational project, I am able to lead as well as follow. Because I came up through the ranks, I carry the perspective of those served as well as those in leadership.

Based on your current knowledge and experience with being a co-op member, what is your vision for the next 3-5 years?

I'm not quite sure I can answer this, since I don't know many of the details of the co-op yet. A few ideas: a regular newspaper column in The Advertiser that covers items of interest to local residents, announcements of coming events, and generally increasing exposure in the community. Finding a way to get rid of plastic containers, perhaps by a cooperative project with ACES. Live music at the co-op!

B. Vision for the next 10-15 years?

Financial stability, a greater presence in the community, and if the need to expand arises, opening another branch, rather than looking for a larger building. One of the best things about the co-op is its smaller size, making it easy to navigate, and it's old, East Aurora charm.

What do you think is currently the greatest strength of the co-op?

It's friendly, helpful, and cheerful staff.

What do you think needs improvement at this time?

Getting rid of plastics.

Just for fun... What is your favorite food?

Avocadoes!

Please add anything else you feel is relevant to your candidacy.

I have very deep roots in this community. My paternal great grandparents operated a farm on Schang Road until the 1930's. My uncle Wally Schang played on 3 World Series teams, including the Yankees with Babe Ruth. My maternal great grandparents were original Roycrofters. My dad served on the Chamber of Commerce and Historical Society, and worked for Moog for many years.