



# Owner Newsletter

Winter 2023

## From Your Board President: Happy Owner Appreciation Month!

Hello fellow owners! During this Owner Appreciation Month, I wanted to thank each of you for your continued support of our store.

Being an owner is so much more than the monetary amount given, it is the opportunity to continuously support your community through a small business with you at its heart. By shopping at the store, sharing what you love, and discussing becoming an owner with friends, family, and co-workers you are breathing life into this amazing place.

But there is so much more as owners we can do!

Consider volunteering your time to become a board member! We only meet once a month and work with our General Manager to support her efforts to continue growing the store.

There is also an opportunity to engage with the community. We have a committee focused on engaging with owners. As a board member, being a part of this team is a fun way to support our growth and build community. There is no prior experience necessary, or special talents needed. Just a passion for small business and community. We would love to have you!



**Amanda Punaro,**  
EACM Board President

*"Being an owner is so much more than the monetary amount given, it is the opportunity to continuously support your community through a small business with you at its heart."*



## Engaging With Co-op Owners

What sets the co-op apart from other grocery stores in the area is our focus on supporting local farmers and producers, our friendly and knowledgeable staff, our commitment to building community, and – importantly – our cooperative ownership model.

Our owners are an integral part of the co-op and engaging with owners is a board priority in 2023. We are very excited to build and strengthen the co-op owner community. Stay tuned for more information on ways to engage with fellow co-op owners. We truly are stronger together!

## MEET THE CO-OP BOARD!



Join us on **Wednesday, March 15** between **4:30 and 6:30 pm** at the **Roycroft Craftsman Lounge** to chat informally with Board members about Board service and share your ideas about the co-op!



## Cooperative Principle #1: Voluntary & Open Membership

Cooperatives like the East Aurora Cooperative Market generally operate according to the same core principles, adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance in 1995, but with roots that trace back to the first modern cooperative founded in Rochdale, England in 1844. These principles differentiate the cooperative business model from other forms of business ownership and guide decision-making at both the strategic and operational level.



**The first principle is voluntary and open membership.** Specifically: cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to everyone able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibility of membership without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

At the East Aurora Cooperative Market, we are almost 2,700 owners strong, and growing! Each owner has made the voluntary and individual decision to be part of something larger than themselves. Thank you!

## The Seven Cooperative Principles

1. Voluntary & Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Members' Economic Participation
4. Autonomy & Independence
5. Education, Training & Information
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives
7. Concern For Community



**Lesley Carlson**

## Board Member Spotlight: Lesley Carlson

**Q. How long have you been an owner of the co-op?**

**A.** Our family moved to East Aurora in late 2014 and joined the co-op shortly after it opened, so we have been owners for maybe 4-5 years. We became owners because we liked that we could trust our purchases from the co-op, knew that they support the local economy through local sourcing, and fell in love with the personal atmosphere.

**Q. Why did you volunteer to serve on the Board?**

**A.** I wanted to get involved in the community and saw the co-op as a new community institution, started by the community and run by the community, that needed participation and that had a really good group of people with diverse skills working together to bring the store from start-up to a stable business. I wanted to be a part of that energy and felt I could contribute.

**Q. What would you say to someone who is considering becoming a board member?**

**A.** By nature, the co-op benefits from the participation of its owners in any way they can, be it through board service, working on a committee, talking it up in your community, or just shopping regularly. Being on the Board gives you the

opportunity to see and support how a well-managed business works and responds to past, current, and future challenges and goals. Most importantly, please don't be put off if you don't have business or legal experience. There are many skills that come together to make the Board work, most importantly, being invested in the position, ready to learn and maturely talk through problems, and enjoying working collaboratively.

## SAVE THE DATE!

The East Aurora Co-op Annual Owner Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, May 24 at 7 pm.** Stay tuned for more details!

