

The Co-operator

The monthly newsletter of the East End Food Co-op • Pittsburgh, PA



Care For Your Cold the Natural Way

by Gabe Wright, Life, From the Ground Up

For many people, a case of the sniffles during the winter is inevitable, something that's just accepted as another annual occurrence that coincides with the beginning of the holiday season. Unless you're one of a lucky few, you know that of which I speak: runny nose, congestion, and the dreaded sore throat. Cue the NyQuil... or not? Before automatically turning to a bag of lozenges or antibiotics (which do absolutely nothing, considering that both colds and flu are caused by viruses), take a look at some of these natural (and cheaper, especially if you grow your own) remedies.

One of my current favorites is elderberry, that common roadside shrub. It's not just for sore throats, but for fighting off a cold before it can take hold. Numerous studies have touted elderberry as an immunostimulant and have found that it can help reduce the severity and duration of cold and flu symptoms. The key medicinal

constituents are in the ripe berries; submerge a cup of berries in vodka for a month to make a potent tincture. When you start to feel under the weather, take a spoonful of the tincture two or three times a day until you feel better. For those concerned about the alcohol content, stir the tincture into a cup of boiling water—exposed to the heat, most of the alcohol will evaporate.

Although I didn't perform any double-blind studies or have any control groups, I can say with some certainty that I noticed a difference last year on more than one occasion. Taken at the first sign of cold symptoms, which I know from experience almost always progress into a full-blown, week-long cold, the illness stopped in its tracks and I felt fine within a day or two.

Honey is another go-to when throat irritation strikes. A tablespoon dissolved in a cup of hot water (or taken straight up) will soothe the burning and stop

the itching of the worst sore throats. Whenever my throat feels hoarse or scratchy, or I have a persistent dry cough, raw honey is usually what I turn to first. The effects don't last forever, so it's nice to keep a cup of tea and honey handy for when you need it.

A remedy that may seem to be counterintuitive is cayenne pepper, but it's one that works to clear up a number of symptoms. The component that causes the heat also reduces inflammation and helps relieve pain. When my cold is at its worst, I often make a concoction of hot water, cayenne powder, apple cider vinegar, and honey. It sounds crazy, but it will clear your sinuses, relax your throat, and bring tears to your eyes all at the same time.

While most people probably associate sage with turkey stuffing and winter squash, it is actually a powerful soothing herb in its own right. Steep a few leaves (fresh or dried) in a cup of boiling water to make a comforting tea. Tastes like Thanksgiving, but it gets the job done.

Finally, two additional, though less common, options are licorice and marshmallow. Sadly, they have nothing to do with Twizzlers or s'mores, but are instead the roots of the actual plants (which gave rise to licorice and marshmallow candies—fun fact). Both licorice and marshmallow roots contain elements that are great for dry, irritated throats. Because they're roots, you'll get more out of them if you let them steep in hot water (together or



separately) for a little longer than a normal tea, say 30–60 minutes. These are both easy to grow, as well, and have a place in my garden.

Colds stink. But rather than popping pills or spraying who-knows-what into your mouth, give one or two of these a try the next time you're afflicted. And remember to get plenty of sleep!

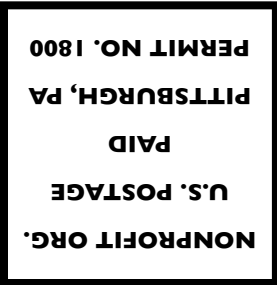
Gabe Wright is the owner of Life, From the Ground Up, a blog about growing stuff, making good food, and having fun while doing it. Gabe is a proponent of more traditional ways of cooking and living, even when you can't get "off the grid." To read more, visit his website at: www.lifefromthegroundup.us.



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS:	
The next board meeting is Monday, December 14th at 7 PM.	
NEW MEMBER ORIENTATIONS:	
To register, call 412.242.3598 ext. 438 or email memberservices@eastendfood.coop .	
MEMBERS ONLY:	
Be sure to use your 10% quarterly discount by December 31st! The next quarter goes from January 1st - March 31st.	
HOLIDAY HOURS:	
Your Co-op will close early at 7 PM on December 24th and will be closed all day on December 25th.	

East End Food Co-op • 7516 Meade St. Pittsburgh, PA 15208 • www.eastendfood.coop • 412.242.3598 • Open to Everyone, Every Day 8 AM – 9 PM



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GREW BY



NEW
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OUR
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PEOPLE AT
EVENTS

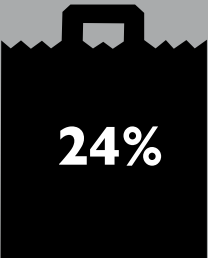
OUR CO-OP
RAISED



THROUGH
THE REGISTER
ROUND UP FOR



LOCAL
PRODUCTS
MADE UP



OF TOTAL
STORE SALES

OF OUR
PURCHASES



WERE FROM
LOCAL
SUPPLIERS

DATA COLLECTED DURING OCTOBER 2015

New In The Aisles

- BOB'S RED MILL** - Gluten Free Almond Flour
- ECO LIPS** - Lip Scrub (Brown Sugar, Mint, Vanilla) and Vegan Lip Balm (Unscented)
- PRIMAL PRODUCTS** - Primal Pit Paste (Royal & Rogue, Thyme & Lemongrass, Orange Creamsicle, Lavender)
- AMBER LOTUS** - Wall and Engagement Calendars
- ANDES GIFTS** - Fair Trade Knit Gloves, Hats, Scarves, Ear Warmers

Board Corner

by EEFC Board of Directors

There is time near the beginning of the board meeting each month for members to share their thoughts and feelings about the Co-op with the directors. October's open session included 12 long-time members in attendance, many of whom were attending their first board meeting. They were all there because they heard about the board's decision during the September meeting's executive session to disqualify one of the candidates in this year's election. This decision was made as a result of the candidate not fulfilling the requirement to attend at least one board meeting before the close of voting. One member brought forth a petition requesting that the board waive the requirement and it was signed by approximately 90 members.

According to the bylaws of our cooperative, Section 4.1 states that the board "shall have the full power to govern the Co-op including.... hiring management and evaluating its performance, approving budgets and fiscal controls, borrowing money and granting security therefore, ensuring fair and equitable conditions of employment, leadership in the realm of long-range policy and assuring the mission of the Co-op is carried out." In addition, our policy labeled D 2.5.2 states that the board will present a group of qualified candidates to the members and provide opportunities for members to learn about the candidates. This is our Co-op. These are the rules that we believe are best for our organization.

The process for all candidates interested in running for the board has been refined over the past decade. All candidates this year were given a packet of information upon submitting their application. In the packet, it was clear that we expected each person to

attend at least one board meeting before voting concluded. The board uses this requirement as a way to determine whether a candidate is qualified and it has proven to be a good test of at least three important skills absolutely necessary for board work:

- Synthesizing information: Each month, a board director must sift through a packet of information, and be capable of pulling out important points.
- Time management: Board work typically occurs at inconvenient times such as nights and weekends, and often on short notice.
- Ability to ask questions: If a board member doesn't understand something, there is help available from other directors, the general manager, and consultants. Being in touch is a basic skill that is vital to building a strong, efficient team of directors.

If we expect our Co-op to have integrity in procuring and providing the food we eat, we also need to have processes and procedures in our governance and operational structures that we follow and abide by. Though we appreciate the involvement in the Co-op's affairs demonstrated by the petitioning members, the board did not see a compelling reason here to bend the rules. We believe our process is reasonable, and that our expectations were clear. The candidate did not attend a board meeting before the close of voting as required and was therefore disqualified from candidacy. We hope this explanation of our thinking helps clarify this issue for anyone concerned. If you have any feedback to share, please send it our way at: boarddir@eastendfood.coop.



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ENDS POLICY STATEMENT

East End Food Co-op exists to enhance physical and social health in our community. To these ends, we will create:

- A sustainable member-owned business open to everyone
- An ethical and resilient food infrastructure
- A vibrant, dynamic community of happy, healthy people
- A creative vision to transform the future

STATEMENT OF COOPERATIVE IDENTITY

Definition

A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Values

Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.

Principles

Most cooperatives around the world follow the core principles that were adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance in 1995. Cooperatives trace the roots of these principles to the first modern cooperative founded in Rochdale, England, in 1844. These principles are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people able to use its services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

2. Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members—those who buy the goods or use the services of the cooperative—who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

3. Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. This benefits members in proportion to the business they conduct with the cooperative rather than on the capital invested.

4. Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it does so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintains the cooperative’s autonomy.

5. Education, Training, and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. Members also inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives.

6. Cooperation among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.

7. Concern for Community

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of communities through policies and programs accepted by the members.

Customer Comments

Please carry more organic egg options. Thanks!

Our focus is on local eggs, and we currently have two suppliers which are organic, Mickley’s and Smith’s. The distinction between these eggs and our other options is that they use organic feed.
-Fran, Grocery

I would like to see Co-op workers wearing zip-up hoodies with the Co-op logo (like Construction Junction and The Climbing Wall).

Thank you for your suggestion! Although EEFC does not require our staff to wear a uniform, we do have Co-op t-shirts for sale, which many of our staff have purchased. You may also see more of our staff wearing Co-op gear as the years go by because this past July we began celebrating employee hire date anniversaries with gifts for milestone years, and several of the gifts are Co-op clothing items.
-Jen, Human Resources

I love coming to the Co-op! I come here versus other stores because people are friendly and ask me how I am. It makes me feel good when the staff takes a moment to chat. Thanks! Still don’t like the parking though.

Customer feedback is vital to our store’s success. Thank you for taking a moment to share what you do (and don’t) like about the Co-op shopping experience!
-Erica, Marketing & Member Services

Have a thought that you’d like to share?

We’d love to hear from you!

Submit a comment card at customer service!

December’s Round Up Recipient: POWER

register
RoundUp



The mission of the Pennsylvania Organization for Women in Early Recovery (POWER) is to help women reclaim their lives from the disease of addiction to alcohol and other drugs, and to reduce the incidence of addiction in future generations. They offer a full range of trauma-sensitive treatment and support services for women in recovery, and provide confidential screening, assessment, referral, and intake services through a single phone call.

According to POWER’s statistics, addiction affects two out of every three families, and costs the American economy \$559 billion per year in lost productivity, healthcare expenses, crime, motor vehicle crashes, and other costs. Up to 90% of addicted women have endured some form of major trauma. POWER mentors (employees who have spent at least five years in recovery) model a healthy lifestyle while connecting clients to community resources.

POWER believes that empowering women leads to lives worth living, and healthy families, as well as strong communities. They are celebrating 25 years of helping women in recovery. To learn more about this organization and the work they do, visit their website or call 412-243-7535. If you want to support them in their mission to help women take the first step on the road to recovery, don’t forget to tell your Co-op cashier that you want to Round Up this month!

Spare change can result in positive change!

www.power-recovery.com

CO-OP CAFÉ ARTWORK

Each month, East End Food Co-op partners with a local school or community organization to beautify the Co-op’s Café seating area with artwork created by area youths.

This provides an opportunity to highlight the importance of art education in the Pittsburgh community while strengthening our partnerships with local educators, many of whom use the Co-op to help teach young folks about nutrition and local food. Be sure to check out this month’s art exhibit created by:

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VILLAGE



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Board President’s Report

by Sarah Aerni, EEFC Board President

Despite it being a central theme of our lives from beginning to end, change is something that humans have a hard time comprehending. Although change is happening all around us (and to us) everyday, it can be difficult to see until one steps back and has a fixed point for comparison. At the close of Fiscal Year 2014–15, it is interesting to think about where our Co-op is and how it has changed over time.

As of the end of the fiscal year, our Co-op had 11,632 member households. We gained 690 member shares this year alone, and 4,564 memberships since 2006. These members come from all walks of life. A majority live within 5 miles of our current store, while 20% live more than 10 miles from our store and travel a considerable distance to shop co-op in Pittsburgh. The growth of our membership has brought about big changes in our organization, and creates the need for ongoing updates and adaptability.

Each of our members represents the heart of this place. By investing in a membership, you keep control of this Co-op in the hands of the members. In exchange for your investment, members have several rights and responsibilities. We all have an equal stake in caring for this place. As a member, you can vote in the board elections. You may also run for the board. You are this community.

The cooperative business model is participatory in some very powerful ways. Because of our members, no other entity or outside interest defines the parameters by which this business is run. Rather, the members delegate these decisions to a nine-person, democratically elected board. The board has one employee: the general manager. The nine of us oversee his performance, and are also charged with protecting the member equity contributed by owners. We are charged to be fiduciary stewards of this organization, which means we must decide how to protect the Co-op from risks. The board takes these duties very seriously.

Many people have come to the board this year advocating that the Co-op should take a particular course or action they recommend because they are an owner. The fact is, every member has an equal stake and the board is tasked with taking into consideration the needs of all members. We must balance a desire of one owner against the interests and needs of all the others.

A good case in point is expansion. We have heard from some members that the Co-op shouldn’t grow. Yet, a member survey conducted this year showed that over 75% of members were wholly or partially in favor of expansion. We also regularly hear from members asking for better parking, a broader product mix on the shelves, more local food, and a community space for members to meet on any number of matters. Employees request more space to do their work, for a loading dock, and other amenities that will

make workflow easier. These things will be impossible without updates to our current building or a new space entirely. We also hear from people in other parts of town, who ask us to consider building a new store in their neighborhood.

The board and general manager have developed a process using a rubric for decision-making purposes in order to account for many perspectives and requirements for an expansion project. It lists priorities and helps us balance between competing variables of any particular project. The rubric incorporates many of the needs that staff, members, board, and management have expressed and we are evaluating potential sites based on it. No decision has been made as of this time, and we continue to explore options.

Although our Co-op is in the midst of a lot of change, there are some cornerstones that will not be compromised. Our board remains committed to running a sustainable, member-owned business open to everyone. We want to hear from all of our members and we listen carefully to what you say. Others in the national co-op community have recognized and praised the positive culture of our board—we have worked hard to cultivate a culture of discussion and respect on our board, and we will continue this tradition. We invite all members to come to our meetings, to learn how we use representative democracy to efficiently make decisions on behalf of our members.

This year has been a good one for the East End Food Co-op: We’ve worked hard to refine systems and processes in preparation for expansion. We continue to successfully provide healthy local food in our current space. We have great folks comprising our staff, management, members, and board. We appreciate everyone’s participation in this local cooperative business—it does make a real difference in the world.



Our directors solicited member input about expansion and other board work through several events, including “Board in the Store.”

Treasurer’s Report

by Dennis Schauer, EEFC Board Treasurer

Fiscal Year 2014–15 officially ended on June 28, 2015. Our Co-op’s sales grew by about 5% over those of the prior fiscal year, to approximately \$11.1 million. In spite of our positive growth, we did not fully achieve our sales target of \$11.4 million, a goal that was set in hopes of an 8% growth in annual sales.

Following several years of double-digit sales growth, well above average relative to other co-ops, a trend toward normalization of our rate of growth was quite anticipated. Competition in the region is intensifying, and we’re brushing up against the constraints of our single store’s capacity to expand its customer base at exceptional rates.

While we fell somewhat short of our budgeted gross margin (that is, gross profit as a percentage of sales), we realized improvements over the prior fiscal year’s gross margin through better cost controls and inventory management.

Personnel expenses exceeded the budgeted amount as we continued to invest in staffing.

However, some of these additional personnel expenses were offset by significant improvements in the level of operating expenses as a percentage of sales, made possible by the efforts of our management team and staff to identify opportunities for eliminating unnecessary and wasteful overhead.

Our overall pre-audit net loss for the year was approximately \$2,800. It’s important to note that because this number is pending our audit, it may change significantly, either favorably or unfavorably, based on the auditors’ adjustments.

Our year-end cash balance was approximately \$476,000. Our liquidity and solvency ratios are healthy relative to the ranges for “fiscal jeopardy” as defined by National Cooperative Grocers (NCG). Our financial position remains strong entering Fiscal Year 2015–16, and both the board and employees remain committed to improving operating results and seeking opportunities for expansion-related investment.

Results are subject to taxes and final adjustments by our auditors.

BALANCE SHEETS		
YE 6/28/15 UNAUDITED	YE 6/29/14 AUDITED	
\$922,793	\$944,371	Current Assets
788,061	820,073	Net Property & Equipment
209,114	170,631	Other Assets
\$1,919,968	\$1,935,075	Total Assets
499,571	555,785	Current Liabilities
25,528	37,094	Non-current Liabilities
\$525,099	\$592,879	Total Liabilities
1,211,443	1,155,937	Member Shares
186,259	352,696	Retained Earnings
(2,833)	(166,437)	Current Earnings
1,394,869	1,342,196	Total Members’ Equity
\$1,919,968	\$1,935,075	Total Liabilities & Members’ Equity

INCOME/EXPENSE STATEMENT			
	ACTUAL UNAUDITED	BUDGET	DIFFERENCE
Net Sales	\$11,075,412	\$11,376,102	(300,690)
Cost of Sales	6,744,102	6,730,218	(13,884)
Gross Profit	4,331,310	4,645,884	(314,574)
Personnel Expense	2,843,319	2,795,184	(48,135)
Operating Expense	1,577,637	1,766,616	188,979
Other (Expenses)/Income	86,813	(9,533)	96,346
Net (Loss)/Income	(\$2,833)	\$74,551	(\$77,384)

General Manager’s Report

by Justin Pizzella, General Manager

Fiscal Year 2014–15 marked another good year for our Co-op. Although we still face many challenges in the competitive landscape, and are busy preparing for expansion, we made great strides that I’m excited to report about.

Celebrating Our Successes

Some highlights of our successes throughout the fiscal year include:

- Membership grew by 690 households and we now have over 11,700 members.
- We grossed \$11.1 million in sales this fiscal year.
- Approximately 25% of our sales were from local products.
- Our financial books are in good shape and we are preparing to bring all of our accounting in-house.
- We continued to offer free events and educational opportunities for our community.
- Our donation program allowed us to support partnering organizations in our region, and the Register Round Up in particular was record-breaking this year.
- We introduced and trained our staff on a comprehensive customer service program.
- We instituted a robust rewards and recognition program to acknowledge the great work our employees do.

Challenges We Face

In last year’s “General Manager’s Report,” I wrote about the challenges our Co-op was facing: the need for continual improvement in our operations, increasing participation in our Co-op, and the changing competitive landscape of the natural/organic sector. These challenges haven’t gone away, and we have to continue focusing on all three in order to effectively accomplish the things that differentiate us as a co-op.

Operations: Throughout the fiscal year, we prepared for several improvement projects that we are still undertaking. Renovations to our Produce Department’s back room and expansion of their retail space will provide the department with needed capacity to make larger purchases and enable more sale pricing for seasonal produce. Our Café is in the midst of updating many of the kitchen’s systems and processes to allow us to support their continued growth. We are also implementing an everyday low price program called Co+op Basics that will offer more dynamic pricing opportunities on many selections storewide.

Participation and Engagement: Over the last year, we attempted several new ways for

members to participate in the Co-op, which you can read more about in the “Member Services Report” below. We remain committed to developing more methods of member engagement in the Co-op.

Competition: The demand for clean, organic, and non-GMO food is growing as our society becomes more conscious of healthy eating. As a result, more retailers—including conventional grocers—are becoming focused on organic. Additionally, several strong new natural/organic focused chains are spreading rapidly throughout the country. Currently there are at least three of these grocery chains looking at potential sites in the Pittsburgh area, so we must prepare for the reality of increased competition.

Meeting our Challenges

First and foremost, we need to emphasize that we are the trusted source for local and organic produce in Western Pennsylvania: We are local. We are community owned. We have tremendous impact in our community. We know our farmers and suppliers.

Next, we need to continue our focus on becoming operationally excellent. We can’t settle for being an average grocer. We need strong systems and exceptional customer service.

We also need to continue working on expansion, which has been talked about since the mid-2000s. We need a bigger store to serve our community and members. We’re currently looking at several opportunities throughout the region. We will prioritize expanding our existing location first; any other opportunities will be weighed against that option.

Finally, we need to continue to serve our members by being a great co-op. This is accomplished by embodying all of the Cooperative Principles, particularly through partnerships with other co-ops, and developing strong participation with our membership. Whether it’s serving on the board, attending events, recommending the Co-op to a friend, sharing feedback and ideas, or shopping the store, we want everyone to be involved!

I’m honored to be the general manager of this Co-op. Our organization has already done so much to positively impact our community. And we have such great potential to do even more. I look forward to continued years of success!

Members Services Report

by Heather Hackett, Marketing & Member Services Manager

Fiscal Year 2014–15 was another incredible period of growth in our membership: 690 new member households joined our Co-op, making us 11,632 households strong!

Member Benefits

The only change to our member benefits during the fiscal year was the discontinuation of the opportunity for members to volunteer in exchange for additional shopping discounts. The decision to end the Volunteer Program was made by our board, based on the perceived illegality of such programs in for-profit businesses such as ours.

The Marketing & Member Services Department worked with the board and general manager to explore ways to bring the existing program into compliance, but unfortunately we didn’t have any success. We will continue to compare notes with other co-ops, and research the programs that some folks believe are compliant, which are community service-based programs that offer members discounts in exchange for contributing their time volunteering at community non-profits.

On a positive note for member benefits, though, I would like to bring attention to the continued expansion of our Community Partners Program. During Fiscal Year 2014–15 we welcomed a number of new partners to the list of participating businesses: Country Barn Farm, Dragonfly Castle Toys, Health Horizons, Healthy Mind and Body, Natural Stitches, Simply Helpful, Steel City Movers, and Tula Organic Salon & Spa. We have even further increased the number of partnering businesses this current fiscal year, and at publication time we had a total of 31 Community Partners! (Find a full listing of our partners at www.eastendfood.coop/co-op/community/community-partners-program.)

Member Engagement

The end of our Volunteer Program certainly eliminated a direct method of member engagement, and yet with the limited participation of members in that program when it was still up and running, our department had already identified engagement as a challenge. With the end of our Volunteer Program, we were able to reallocate the hours that had been used to administer that program to other member services activities, allowing us to create a Member Services Coordinator position. The ongoing development of this role has opened up several opportunities to serve our members, and we continue to try new things.



We collaborated with the board to host member gatherings throughout the year to discuss the decision to end the Volunteer Program. These events also explored member engagement challenges and opportunities.

The first effort we introduced was “Members’ Open Forums.” The idea was to have some standing items, like an icebreaker and the sharing of store news, which would be complimented with a pre-selected topic to explore. We used the kick-off event as a chance to brainstorm topics that members wanted to focus on. The events were held monthly from January through July 2015, but were so sparsely attended that we discontinued them.

We also established “Members Speak Out,” a standing column in *The Co-operator* reserved for members who want to share perspectives with fellow members. These articles may cover a wide range of subjects relevant to the Co-op community. To leave space for a larger number of voices while maintaining efficiency in producing our newsletter, we have established a few guidelines for submission. Members interested in submitting a piece can request the guidelines and learn about space availability by contacting Member Services.

In addition to increasing opportunities for members to share ideas with one another, we continue to develop new methods of communicating with our members. Comment cards are one way we get feedback from members and non-members alike. Throughout the year we introduced methods for better tracking of comments to ensure that employees are addressing suggestions and concerns in a timely fashion, and also to increase awareness of areas where improvement could be made in each department.

We also introduced several varieties of email communications in April 2014. In addition to our bi-weekly E-News circulation, we have “Co-op Events” bulletins, a “Local Foods Forecast” that we send throughout our region’s growing season, and other timely updates distributed throughout the year. Our goal to create a members-only e-newsletter was also realized in November 2015. (Members can sign up for emails on our website, or by contacting memberservices@eastendfood.coop.)

Member Satisfaction

In the winter of 2014, University of Wisconsin—River Falls once again oversaw the completion of the Member Survey we conduct every two years. A recap of this survey was published in the March 2015 issue of *The Co-operator*, which you can find on our website at www.eastendfood.coop/co-op/newsletter-archive.

The goal of the Member Survey is to help us better understand what members want and to improve the services we offer all of our customers. This year’s survey documented a trend toward continuous improvement: With only one exception (prices), there was an increase in the feeling that store characteristics (including availability of natural/organic/local foods, quality, freshness, cleanliness, and more) met member’s needs “very well.” And pretty much across the board, responses were more positive than in 2012.

However, there remains room for improvement. We are the primary grocery store for only 32% of our members. Compared with our national counterparts, this figure puts us at the bottom half of the scale. We also ranked less favorably in the categories of location, hours, and pricing. We will continue to identify focus areas and look forward to finding ways to better serve our community.

We will also be taking the responses provided for expansion-related questions to heart. Approximately 8 in 10 members are supportive, to some degree, of expanding the Co-op sometime in the next 3 years. Members particularly showed a preference for expansion in our current location rather than opening a second store, which aligns with the priorities our general manager and board have established.

We’d like to thank everyone who participated in our Member Survey! If you did not receive a survey invitation via email this year, then we do not currently have an email address on file for you. If you would like to participate in future surveys, please contact memberservices@eastendfood.coop to update your membership record.

In spite of some challenges, Fiscal Year 2014–15 remained an overall positive and productive year for the Marketing & Member Services team. Learn more on page 6 about some of our many efforts to better serve our members!

Giving Back

The East End Food Co-op is committed to the Cooperative Principle of Concern for Community, and for this reason, we donate regularly to community organizations. Every year, we field hundreds of requests for contributions through the two components of our donations program: general donations and the monthly Register Round Up. Priority is given to local groups that support causes related to nutrition, education, food access, and sustainability, and whose missions are in line with the Co-op’s Ends Statement.

Register Round Up

The Register Round Up Program was established in April 2013, and each month gives shoppers the opportunity to round up their total at the register to the nearest dollar and give the difference to a local non-profit. Totals collected throughout Fiscal Year 2014–15 broke records nearly every month and added up to \$36,716.35, an amazing 213% increase from the year before! Below are the recipients throughout the fiscal year.

Date	Organization	Total
Jul 2014	Braddock Youth Project	\$2,698.90
Aug 2014	Animal Rescue League	\$2,577.84
Sept 2014	Shady Lane Day Care & School	\$1,641.58
Oct 2014	Tree Pittsburgh	\$3,080.82
Nov 2014	Backpack for Hunger	\$3,451.53
Dec 2014	Neighborhood Learning Alliance	\$3,415.78
Jan 2015	Trade Institute of Pittsburgh	\$3,547.64
Feb 2015	GTECH Strategies	\$3,019.35
Mar 2015	Jubilee Kitchen	\$3,682.69
Apr 2015	Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy	\$3,080.45
May 2015	Pittsburgh Center for Creative Reuse	\$2,967.73
Jun 2015	Burgh Bees	\$3,552.04

General Donations

The Co-op’s general donations program contributed \$12,257.37 to local organizations through gift baskets, store gift cards, and donations of food. A few of the many organizations that received donations from us during Fiscal Year 2014–15 include:

- City Mission
 - City of Asylum Pittsburgh
 - Clean Water Action
 - East End Cooperative Ministry
 - Every Child, Inc.
 - Environmental Charter School
- Green Building Alliance
 - Just Harvest
 - Kelly Strayhorn Theater
 - Nine Mile Run Watershed Association
 - Operation Better Block
 - PERSAD

- Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture
 - POWER
 - Rabbit Wranglers
 - The Children’s Center of Pittsburgh
 - The HOPE Center
 - The Midwife Center
- Thelma Lovette YMCA
 - Thomas Merton Center
 - Three Rivers Community Foundation
 - Ujamaa Collective
 - Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
 - Wilkins School Community Center
 - Western PA School for the Deaf

412 Food Rescue

In addition to our ongoing donation programs, the East End Food Co-op established a partnership with 412 Food Rescue in May 2015. This local non-profit works to end hunger and eliminate food waste by utilizing a network of volunteers who collect excess or unsellable fresh food from retailers, restaurants, and wholesalers, and deliver it to organizations in need. We donated nearly 500 pounds of produce within just the first month of our partnership!

Winterfest

The Co-op also hosts an annual fundraiser that benefits the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. Winterfest took place January 31, 2015, at Hosanna House in Wilkinsburg, and featured live music, a chance auction with prizes donated by local businesses and arts organizations, children’s activities, a photo booth, food from the Co-op’s Café, sweet treats, a sundae bar, and libations. This year’s festive gathering was a tremendous success, attracting nearly 500 guests! The Co-op was able to once again double its donation to the Food Bank with a total of \$3,473.95 raised, an amount that equates to providing 17,015 meals throughout the region.



Community Involvement

Our outreach team was busy again this year representing the Co-op all around the region. Our primary efforts included sponsoring and hosting our own educational events, in addition to supporting other organizations’ activities in the area.

Co-op Events

The Co-op provides frequent opportunities for our members and the larger community to attend store-sponsored educational and informational events. In Fiscal Year 2014–15, the Co-op hosted 45 events, including workshops, lectures, and film screenings! Over the course of the fiscal year, 937 people attended these gatherings, both members and non-members.

By partnering with knowledgeable individuals, vendors, producers, Community Partners, and other organizations to present information on a wide array of subjects, we continue to forge positive connections in our community. Here is a list of just a few of the organizations we have had the pleasure of working with to present our Community Event Series this past fiscal year:

- Burgh Bees
 - Solarize Allegheny
 - StormWorks
 - Assemble
 - Women for a Healthy Environment
 - Equal Exchange
- Yummy Plants
 - Pennsylvania Resources Council
 - La Prima
 - Garden Dreams Urban Farm & Nursery
 - Shadyside Worms
 - Allegheny Chesapeake Physical Therapy

In addition to our ongoing weekly events, in 2014 we hosted our second GMO-themed community forum in observance of Non-GMO Month. “Know Your GMOs” was held on October 18th at Carnegie Mellon University. The event featured local restaurants and food suppliers striving to go GMO-free, including Legume Bistro and NuGo Nutrition. We had samples and prizes available for all in attendance, including copies of presenter Denise Caruso’s book, *Intervention: Confronting the Real Risks of Genetic Engineering and Life on a Biotech Planet*.

Outreach Participation

The Co-op regularly supports and contributes to events in the Pittsburgh area. These ongoing efforts have allowed us to increase awareness about the Co-op. We contributed to a number of community initiatives throughout Fiscal Year 2014–15 by sponsoring, tabling, and presenting information at events in our area. Through our presence at 50 community gatherings, we reached over 74,000 people. Here is a list of just some of the activities in which your Co-op participated:

- Regent Square’s Run Around the Square
 - Farm to Table Conference
 - Carnegie Library Summer Reading Expo
 - Food Revolution Day
 - Venture Outdoors Festival
 - GoodTaste! Pittsburgh’s Hometown-Homegrown
- VeganFest
 - Wilkinsburg House & Garden Tour
 - Light Up Point Breeze
 - Pittsburgh Yoga Expo
 - Home & Garden Show
 - Homewood Health Matters
 - Pittsburgh PrideFest

In addition to these efforts, we have continued to participate in the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council (PFPC). The PFPC was formed in 2009 when a group of local stakeholders, including your Co-op, began meeting regularly to address issues related to our community’s food system. The Council serves as a collaborative advisory organization, bringing together people from diverse food-related sectors to examine, develop, and improve Pittsburgh’s food infrastructure. We attend monthly meetings and working groups to make sure that the interests of Co-op members, employees, and producers are represented.

Stay Current

- There are many ways to keep track of our upcoming activities:
- Read the event listings on the back page of *The Co-operator*
 - See posters in the store
 - Stop at Customer Service for a handbill
 - Visit our website at: www.eastendfood.coop/co-op/events
 - Follow us on social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Google+)
 - Sign up for our E-News



Supplying healthy snacks, sharing information, talking co-op, and wearing banana suits are just a few of the many fun things our Co-op’s outreach representatives get to do at community events.

THE CO-OP

The East End Food Co-op is Pittsburgh’s only member-owned natural and organic food market, serving the community since 1980. We offer the finest in certified organic produce and herbs, bulk foods, vitamins and supplements, cruelty-free health and beauty aids, organic and natural packaged and perishable goods and hard-to-find items for special dietary needs.

Our award-winning Vegetarian Café and Juice Bar offers a daily array of fresh, wholesome, hot entrées, soups, salads, and vegan dishes.

The Co-op is open to the public and membership is not required to make purchases, but members do receive better prices, have access to the Federal Credit Union, and can vote and serve on the board of directors.

7516 Meade St. Pittsburgh, PA 15208
www.eastendfood.coop

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Mark Frey, Vice President
Dennis Schauer, Treasurer
Sarah Aerni, Secretary
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Caroline Mitchell ‘17
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Human Resources: Jen Girty
Finance: Shawn McCullough
Marketing & Member Services: Barb Burk
IT: Erin Myers
Grocery: Maura Holliday
Café: Amber Pertz
Front End: eric cressley
Produce: Evan Diamond

THE CO-OPERATOR

Editor: Heather Hackett
Assistant Editor: Kate Safin
Design & Layout: Molly Palmer Masood
Printed By: Indiana Printing & Publishing

The Co-operator is a monthly publication mailed to East End Food Co-op members. Additional copies are available in the store’s foyer, and at outreach events. *The Co-operator* is also available online at www.eastendfood.coop.

Opinions expressed are the writers’ own and do not necessarily reflect Co-op policy. The East End Food Co-op does not endorse the views or products of the advertisers in this newsletter.

Contact Us:
If you are interested in more information about advertising or would like to submit an article, please contact Member Services:

Email: memberservices@eastendfood.coop
Phone: 412.242.3598 ext. 103

Show how much
you “LIKE” us
and **follow**
EEFC online!



EMPLOYEE
OF THE MONTH



Congratulations to **Shawn McCullough** who was chosen as the Co-op staff pick for Employee of the Month. Shawn has worked here as our finance manager for close to two years.

Q. What’s your favorite thing about your job here?

A. It’s gonna sound hackneyed, but working with the people. I mean, that’s what makes a job a fun place to work! (Specifically, working with Jules and Sammy.)

Q. What are your favorite products here?

A. The cheesecake that [baker David] Rosenberg makes. I think that’s the best cheesecake I’ve ever had. President’s Butter... Dr. Bronner’s Toothpaste... Lux Chocolate... There’s a lot of good stuff! And I get a triple espresso latté every day.

Q. What do you like to do when you’re not at the Co-op?

A. I play racquetball. Hang out with the kids. I play nerdy computer games.

Q. If you could change one thing about the Co-op, what would it be?

A. It would be that more people know where we were and what we do. For example, I’ve had people ask me where the store was as I walked through the parking lot.

NEW FACES

Craig Beach, Café
Craig has worked in the food industry for more than twenty years. Craig was a member of Mountain People’s Co-op in Morgantown, WV., and likes that co-ops are friendly and intelligent and that we care about community.

Barb Burk, Marketing & Member Services
Barb has been in marketing for 18 years. She has overseen all aspects of marketing departments, and would like to help to establish a larger footprint for our Co-op. Outside of work, you can find Barb training her German Shepherd and spending time with family and friends.

Ruthie Cartwright, Café
Ruthie finds the principles of collaboration and autonomy exciting, and spent a year at college living and working in a craft co-op. Ruthie is interested in food-workers’ justice and fair trade. Prior to coming here, Ruthie worked in and managed a student-run café for four years.

Annalise Kamber, Produce
Annalise comes to us from an organic produce distributor in the Bay Area and applied here because our values align. When not at work, Annalise can be found going to shows, riding her bike, hanging out with her dog, and learning to navigate Pittsburgh.

Olivia Kessler, Café
Olivia loves working with new people to create things together. Olivia appreciates that co-ops have a more transparent and responsible business model than other organizations. Olivia is both an artist and a musician, and plans to release an album soon.

Audri Stangrecki, Café
This is Audri’s second stint in our Café, having worked here last year. Audri believes that it’s more important than ever to set an example of what can be accomplished through cooperation. Audri eventually wants to become a professor and improve our education system.

Lauren Torralba, Front End
Lauren also returns to us after some time away, inspired by previous experiences here and the wonderful people she has met. Lauren can talk to you about history, ghosts, or both for hours. Lauren plans to continue schooling and eventually become a teacher.

YEARS OF SERVICE RECOGNITION

Thanks to the following employees for their contributions:

Richard Calhoun, Café	3 Years
Andrew Jacobsen, Grocery	1 Year

Café Specials • December 2015

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 CASSOULET	2 BAKED TOFU TURKEY WITH ROASTED VEGETABLES	3 SEITAN HAM WITH PARSNIPS AND APPLES	4 INDIAN KITCHEN	5 AM: BRUNCH PM: QUICHE
6 AM: BRUNCH PM: PIZZA	7 BURRITO BAR	8 CASSOULET	9 BAKED TOFU TURKEY WITH ROASTED VEGETABLES	10 SEITAN HAM WITH PARSNIPS AND APPLES	11 INDIAN KITCHEN	12 AM: BRUNCH PM: QUICHE
13 AM: BRUNCH PM: PIZZA	14 BURRITO BAR	15 CASSOULET	16 BAKED TOFU TURKEY WITH ROASTED VEGETABLES	17 SEITAN HAM WITH PARSNIPS AND APPLES	18 INDIAN KITCHEN	19 AM: BRUNCH PM: QUICHE
20 AM: BRUNCH PM: PIZZA	21 BURRITO BAR	22 CASSOULET	23 BAKED TOFU TURKEY WITH ROASTED VEGETABLES	24 SEITAN HAM WITH PARSNIPS AND APPLES	25 CLOSED	26 AM: BRUNCH PM: QUICHE
27 AM: BRUNCH PM: PIZZA	28 BURRITO BAR	29 CASSOULET	30 BAKED TOFU TURKEY WITH ROASTED VEGETABLES	31 SEITAN HAM WITH PARSNIPS AND APPLES		

STORE HOURS:

OPEN DAILY:
8 AM - 9 PM

Café HOURS:

JUICE & COFFEE BAR:
8 AM - 7 PM

SOUP & SALAD BAR:
8 AM - 7 PM

HOT FOOD BAR:
11 AM - 7 PM

WEEKEND BRUNCH:
9 AM - 1 PM

DECEMBER 2015
COMMUNITY EVENT SERIES

VERMICOMPOSTING WORKSHOP
Wednesday, December 9th, 6:30 PM

Nancy Martin, PA Resources Council
POWER/EEFC Conference Room
Environmental educator Nancy Martin will provide everything you need to get started with vermicomposting—including the bin and the worms! You will leave this event with a complete, ready-to-use vermiculture system, and the necessary knowledge to house, feed, and care for your own worms.

This event will cost \$70 per person/\$75 for couple; register by calling 412-488-7490 ext. 226.

MAKING THE PERFECT CHEESE PLATE
Wednesday, December 16th, 7 PM

Jen Lawton, Cheese Coordinator
POWER/EEFC Conference Room
Sample a variety of cheeses from Pennsylvania and surrounding locales. Learn about the different styles of cheese, and how to combine flavors for a cheese plate everyone at your holiday gatherings will love! We will also explore cheese accompaniments, as well as decoration and serving ideas.

This event is FREE, just call 412-242-3598 to reserve your spot!

Save The Date:

Winterfest

Join us for a festive afternoon
of Music, Food, & Fun!
All proceeds will benefit the



Saturday, January 23rd from 1 – 5 PM
Hosanna House
807 Wallace Avenue, Wilkinsburg

Look for your Co-op at this upcoming event:

Saturday, December 5th, 4-7 PM: Point Breeze’s Light Up Night is a family-friendly wintertime event featuring festivities from Point Breeze businesses and neighbors including the East End Food Co-op. We’ll be tabling with children’s activities and samples, so stop by to say hello! More information: www.pointbreezepgh.org.