



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Monthly Newsletter ❖ May 2020 ❖ Issue 1

WELCOME to our Co-op's first monthly newsletter!

Spring is in the air - flowers are blooming, bees are buzzing, and fruit/vegetable seedlings currently thriving indoors are impatiently waiting to be planted in this year's garden. Along with this new growth, the Village Co-op Market of Williamsville is sprouting in new directions!

These new directions are driven largely in part to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have a duty to protect ourselves and our neighbors, as well as continue to support our communities. Many of our member-owners are entrepreneurs and through the struggle, we are blown away by their perseverance and focus on community. I'm amazed at their spirits and highly applaud their efforts. Understandably, grassroots efforts and community outreach for local organizations like our Co-op has greatly slowed or completely stalled nationwide. We can do our part by supporting as many local businesses as they face significant challenges now and in the future. From our Co-op perspective, the way we approach outreach and do business will need to change.

If you weren't able to join our recent Zoom calls on this subject, we are hoping to partner more closely with the Williamsville Farmers Market on a new curbside pickup service to enhance the market experience - pickup service tentatively set to begin in June. We found this to be a creative and highly useful solution to providing a much-needed service to the community within the bounds of social distancing and still get our brand and name out there.

We also want to extend a warm welcome to our 3 new Board members: John Ostroot, Steve Schultz, and Mark Storch. We really appreciate their fresh perspective, background experience, and great ideas you they have already brought to the table!

Our Co-op plans to offer virtual meetings so you can learn more about our Co-op and share your experience. Stay tuned and watch our website for events where you can help. We are nearing our goal, and one quick way to reach it is if each of us would bring in ONE new member. That would bring us to over 800 members-owners strong and make us ready for the next step in our journey! While the uncertainty that many of us feel right now may continue to linger, so may a new sense of community.

Please stay safe, support local, and help grow our Co-op!!

Jim Walfrand, Board President

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Village Co-op Events

The Village Co-op is planning to partner with the Williamsville Farmers Market to distribute pre-ordered food to drive-up customers at this year's market, which will tentatively begin in June. The Farmers Market website will have online ordering and payment capability. This is scheduled to begin June 6.

The market will be located next to the Williamsville Library, with food pickups taking place behind Village Hall and fire department. More details to come from the Farmers Market, Village of Williamsville & us.

Volunteers are needed to help with food pickups and staffing the Co-op tent where new members can get information and join the Co-op. A signup link is available at www.villagecoopmarket.com.

The Co-op Board will hold brief online orientation sessions for member-owners starting in June (details to follow on Co-op website or email).

Once COVID-19 restrictions have eased, the Co-op plans to get involved with more tabling events and door-to-door outreach for new member-owners.

Make sure your friends, neighbors and family know about the Co-op!

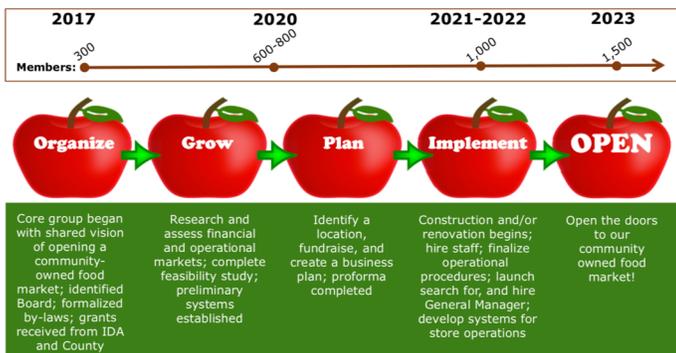
DID YOU KNOW?

- The Village Co-op had a feasibility study performed by G2G Research Group in June 2018. G2G has 30 years of experience in site location research for the retail and restaurant industries. The study concluded that a full-service grocery store of approx. 10,000 sf would compete effectively with other food stores in the area, particularly if located along Main Street in Williamsville.
- The Village Co-op has received support and guidance from Lexington Co-op and East Aurora Co-op, as well as some out-of-state locations. Co-ops are in this together for a common goal!

Support Local!

ROAD TO SUCCESS

The Village Co-op strives to be the co-op grocery store choice of the Buffalo northtowns. While we don't have a bricks and mortar store right now, we are looking for new member-owners who believe in community, healthy food options, supporting local farmers and producers, and want to be part of something big! We currently have over 403 member-owners, and despite having to face COVID-19 hurdles, we look forward to a significant increase in membership this year. As we move towards site selection for our store, a solid member-owner base is necessary to ensure a clear road to financing for our grocery store. YOU can be a founding member of the Village Co-op Market... the next big thing to hit the northtowns!



Want to know more about co-ops? Want to get a better idea of what our co-op will be like? Check out some of our fellow co-ops around the country that are either on their journey to opening a store or have a successful store already...

- <https://lexington.coop>
- <https://eastaurora.coop>
- <https://fredericksburgfoodcoop.com>
- <http://www.cedarfallsfood.coop>

Next Village Co-op Board Meeting
Wed., May 27 | 6:30pm | Zoom virtual mtg.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81174201737?pwd=K2RpSzRkKkZlR3ptVlpUcjhjbUZqdz09>

Dial: 1-646-558-8656

Meeting ID: 811 7420 1737

Password: 882794

VOLUNTEER spotlight



Karen Peppas, one of our founding members, has been with the Village Co-op since our initial 'kitchen table' discussions in 2017.

"As someone who is very passionate about health & nutrition, it is an integral part of my personal life and in my professional life as a Registered Dietitian.

My reason for joining the co-op group is simple. I believe a food cooperative market will help build a healthy community in many ways. Some of which are: offering less processed foods and locally sourced foods, as well as providing health and nutrition information. I so look forward to having one in our community."

Thank you, Karen, for being a super volunteer, founding member, and champion of the co-op!

COMING SOON...

- Do you know all the benefits of being a member-owner?
- Are you able to talk to people about what a co-op is?
- Do you feel comfortable recruiting new member-owners?

We will be offering virtual member-owner orientations to answer your questions and provide you more information about your membership and the Village Co-op Market of Williamsville.

Be on the lookout for Zoom meeting dates and info!!

QUICK CLIPS

Check out these short videos to learn more...

What is a Food Co-op?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXvjHfn25uE>

Food Co-op vs. Grocery Store: What's the Difference?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryQE5_aNy2I