



ONEOTA CO-OP BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANDIDATE STATEMENT

Brennan Allsueorth

How long have you been a member/owner of Oneota Co-op?

I have been a member of the Co-op since February, 2022. I am interested in continuing my role on the board because I love our Co-op, cherish our community, and look forward to helping it thrive.

What do you enjoy most about the Co-op?

I enjoy the people I see at the Co-op the most. It's a pleasure seeing friends and neighbors and staff at the Co-op several times a week. And, of course, the food!

What vision do you have for the Co-op's future?

My vision for the Co-op is to help continue the great work it has already accomplished over the past fifty years. I also wish to help it grow over the next fifty years and expand upon its mission.

The following list of skills and experiences are common attributes beneficial to OCC Board leadership. Please take a moment to reflect on your own personal and professional experiences, then tell us what skills you would bring to this type of leadership role. How will your skills benefit Oneota Co-op now and in its future?

Leadership - Strategic planning - Fiscal management -

Group collaboration/consensus - Communication - Local foods/organic/sustainable agriculture - Retail experience - Grocery management - Marketing - Board of director experience - Grant writing - Business/corporate planning (public, private or non-profit) - Legal services - Volunteer involvement - Public service - Food services/management - Educational experience - Environmental sustainability - Social issues

My skills and experience that are beneficial to the board include local/organic food production, board of director experience, volunteer involvement, and enthusiasm. I still have much to learn and am committed to helping our Co-op thrive.

What other interests do you have outside of the Co-op?

Outside of the Co-op, I enjoy farming, music, and the great outdoors.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with us through this election process?

Oneota Co-op brings me so much joy. From the people who support and work there, to the delicious, wholesome food, to the cooperative principles it practices and shares - I love it all. Our Co-op was a huge draw in the decision to make Decorah my home.



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Hannah Breckbill

How long have you been a member/owner of Oneota Co-op?

I've been a member and shopper since 2010 when I moved here, and I've been a member of the board since 2020.

What do you enjoy most about the Co-op?

I love that it's a social hub of our small town!

What vision do you have for the Co-op's future?

My biggest vision is that the membership of the Co-op is galvanized into engagement and action toward a just food system, and a connected food culture. When this vision is realized, people (members) won't just know where their food comes from - they'll be connected to all parts of the process of their food getting to their plate, and they'll belong to a community that treats their food with reverence and celebration.

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I'm an experienced board member on a number of boards, and have strong leadership experience. I'm a local food entrepreneur so I have lots of business experience, cooperative experience, and experience in food systems and agriculture. I'm also an activist and community organizer.

What other interests do you have outside of the Co-op?

I'm a musician; in an alternate universe, I'm a Mennonite pastor; I love math and learning languages; and I'm super passionate about the idea of the Commons!



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Parker Deen

How long have you been a member/owner of Oneota Co-op?

Since 1997; I believe in cooperative principles and shop almost exclusively at the Co-op. I would like to serve on the board to bring whatever I can to help the Co-op thrive.

What do you enjoy most about the Co-op?

I love the community, the local and organic food, buying in bulk, and shopping in a place that supports local farmers and our community. Shopping at the Co-op feels like home to me, and I can't imagine living in Decorah without it.

What vision do you have for the Co-op's future?

I love our Co-op and want to see it continue to thrive and remain committed to promoting sustainable products and ideals. I'd like to see our Co-op expand our bulk section, and continue to grow our locally grown foods and locally made products. I love the return of the Co-op potlucks! In the absence of the hot bar and salad bar, how can we encourage members to "gather" to build community and connections in spaces like our seating area. Are there ways we can utilize the cooperative principle of education and information, to bring people together in a space of communal learning. How can we determine who doesn't feel welcome in our Co-op, and find ways to address that. Is there a way to host local art and musicians?

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I worked as a cashier, cheese and wine clerk, and floor manager for several years in the 90s at New Pioneer Co-op in Iowa City, and lived in cooperative housing through the River City Housing Collective; I have experience with a wide array of products as a co-op shopper for essentially all of my grocery needs for several decades; perspective of living with multiple life threatening allergies and numerous dietary sensitivities; lived and worked on an organic veggie farm in Iowa City for a couple of years; photographer; member of a Black led racial justice collective and very interested in social issues; our family makes choices with environmental sustainability, local and organic eating, and consideration of packaging for lowest impact and as guiding principles.

What other interests do you have outside of the Co-op?

I love gardening and cooking, photography, dancing, being with friends and family, travel, social justice, and thrifting.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with us through this election process?

Thanks for the opportunity to consider running for the board! I'm completely committed to the Co-op as a place to buy things, but also as model for business and community, and I would be honored to bring what I can to the mission and vision.



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Flannery Cerbin-Bohach

How long have you been a member/owner of Oneota Co-op?

I have been a member/owner of the Co-op since 2014. I am interested in serving on the Oneota Co-op Board of Directors for a variety of reasons. Firstly, I love shopping and supporting the Co-op and want it to thrive for years to come. The experience of being on the board would help me connect to other passionate community members around an important mission. I was a board member from 2015-2018 and had a good experience. My life has changed dramatically since this time as I completed graduate school, purchased a farm, had children, and started a small business. I would return with more confidence around business and financial matters, and even a deeper passion and connection to sustainable agriculture and local foods.

What do you enjoy most about the Co-op?

I appreciate that the Co-op is an inclusive place and more than just a grocery store! The Co-op is an anchor in downtown Decorah. Not only do folks shop, but it's a place where community gathers over coffee or a sandwich, it's a place kids get their after-school snack and meet up with friends, and so much more! I appreciate that the Co-op is an integral part of many community events and that it has an active role in charitable giving, benefiting many local not-for-profits and causes.

Additionally, as someone who is intentional about the food I consume, I feel good about my decisions when I shop at the Co-op. I know that staff have researched and vetted options to make sure the shelves and bins are stocked with local, wholesome and fair food products. For example, ask anyone in the Wellness Department about their products and they will be able to support and explain what items are on their shelves and even small nuances between this vitamin and another. There is deep integrity there!

What vision do you have for the Co-op's future?

I imagine a future where the Co-op opens its doors even wider to welcome and embrace all community members and shoppers. While anyone is welcome to shop at the Co-op, the perception that a membership is required still exists. There are always opportunities to continue to share that the Co-op is open to all.

The Co-op is part of an expanding food landscape that is changing all the time. I think the need for the Co-op to be nimble and have ingenuity will continue to be essential to its financial health and success. This might look like continued conversations about responding to pricing pressures, supporting new local producers, and exploring additional outreach strategies. The structure of democratic control lends itself well to having the community involved in these conversations, as well as future decisions. It is notable that previous boards and Co-op leadership has provided education about the Co-op's Ends and the governance model-- this makes the Co-op more than just a place to shop! As a board member, I would be excited to help guide these conversations while staying grounded in the Co-op's Ends and community voice.

There is an increasing demand and need to support our local economies. I think the Co-op's vision of this is an essential part of continuing to strengthen our community bonds and resiliency in never-ending uncertainty. The Co-op can be an integral part of the area's local multiplier effect, both by making purchases from local producers and by opening its doors to area shoppers to keep the dollars circulating locally. This will only continue to strengthen our local economy and make northeast Iowa a more vibrant place to live, learn, work and play!

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Reflecting upon this list, I think my strongest attributes are strategic planning, group collaboration, educational experience, communication, business planning (public), sustainable agriculture and environmental sustainability, although I have had some experiences in nearly all the skills listed.

My educational background in environmental sustainability and public health has shaped my interest in the relationship between human health and the natural world. Many of my professional experiences have included themes of this intersection, as well. This is aligned with the Co-op's mission.

I will summarize a few of my experiences that demonstrate my passion for local food, as well as highlight several other skill sets. In previous roles, I helped connect youth and adults to local, healthy food. One of my favorite local projects was helping to spearhead a regional campaign, "Together, we grow healthy kids" that connected area youth to local agriculture, healthy food, and physical activity. I taught nutrition education in area schools and then helped others do the same in a leadership role. Presently, I coordinate a worksite community supported agriculture program at my employer and connect coworkers to local produce. Most recently, as the co-business owner of Tailwind Acres -- which specializes in cut flowers and on-farm events such as workshops, weddings, farm-to-table dinners and u-pick flower events -- I have organized several farm-to-table dinners catered by Iowa-based chefs. The vision for these meals was to connect consumers to slow food, raised or grown in Iowa, with care for the land. We welcomed over 80 guests to our farm to enjoy such meals. Organizing these events provided an opportunity to plan, market, manage finances, and educate.

I've served as the Northeast Iowa Community College Wellness and Life Stage Program Manager for the last 10 years and have had lots of experience in group collaboration and consensus-building on various campus committees that I've either chaired or been a member of. My role also demands that I schedule and communicate health education to employees on a regular basis. Additionally, I teach an online class that is rooted in physical activity and beckons personal reflection on health, well-being and the choices we make that impact our health behaviors. This experience in collaboration

and communication would help me in effective governance on the Co-op board.

My professional communication roles have also been expanded in the development and growth of Tailwind Acres. I lead a monthly newsletter, communicating with the public and collaborating with area business owners to form partnerships. Owning and operating a small business requires copious amounts of planning, financial decisions, flexibility and creativity which spill over into all aspects of my life. I believe these aspects would be an asset as I would review financial board documents, as I understand the dance of risk management, community partnerships to build vitality and the importance of long-term planning.

Lastly, I served on the Co-op board from 2015-2018, which means that I am familiar with the roles and responsibilities of Board members and policy governance.

What other interests do you have outside of the Co-op?

My interests are wide and varied. I am lucky to have professional roles that fill my bucket. I can explore the latest health trends and read about environmental topics. Additionally, I love everything about growing and caring for cut flowers. I can truly get lost in making bouquets and the aesthetics they bring to the world. It has been extremely rewarding to witness the success of our on-farm events through the creation and development of our business, Tailwind Acres. We manage 27 acres of animal habitat, flower gardens, an Airbnb, event barn and other historical outbuildings. The upkeep and care for this property is how we spend a majority of our free-time!

I have been a competitive runner since 1998 and still find a thrill in learning about the sport and new ways of getting stronger and faster. I recently stepped into the role as women's team director for Iowa's longstanding post-collegiate racing team, Runablaze Iowa. This provides me with the opportunity to lead and connect with a cohort of women from all over the state as we continue to pursue high level road racing ambitions. I also support my partner, Adam, in his growth and development of his fitness and clinical bodywork business, Leverage Better LLC.

We are proud parents of two Linden (age 8) and Neely (age 3).



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Andrea Eger

How long have you been a member/owner of Oneota Co-op?

I have been a member of the Co-op since I moved to the area 4 years ago. I am interested in serving on the board because I am passionate about local, sustainably raised food. I have worked in agriculture for the past 18 years and love that there is a place like the Co-op that thinks about and prioritizes good food in the way that I do. I am a huge fan of cooperatively owned businesses and would love to contribute by serving on the board. I am excited to learn more about the challenges that are facing the Co-op and find creative solutions to help solve the issues the Co-op is facing.

What do you enjoy most about the Co-op?

I love the food and the people! The Co-op is such a welcoming place to shop that shares my values and supports businesses that are doing great things. I also love seeing such local products!

What vision do you have for the Co-op's future?

I would love to help the Co-op expand the membership and do more activities in the community. I would also love to work with staff to hear their feedback of what could be changed to support them and bring in new ideas/products.

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I have lots of experience in local foods/sustainable agriculture, environmental sustainability, volunteer involvement and creating educational programs. I have facilitated many groups with diverse opinions/priorities to find consensus and unity. I currently serve on the Ye Olde Opera House board and the Spring Grove Chamber of Commerce. I also have lots of experience writing grants.

What other interests do you have outside of the Co-op?

I love reading, cooking, traveling and crafting.