

Round UP

JANUARY ROUND UP AT THE REGISTER EVENT FOCUSES ON LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

Shoppers are invited to contribute to the Oneota Co-op Board of Directors
and Iowa Food Hub “Grow the Good” grant program Jan. 8 - 21

By Hannah Breckbill, OCC Board of Directors

This year, we are celebrating 50 years of the Oneota Community Food Cooperative, and that anniversary merits some reflections on our origins and visioning of where we're going.

Our food co-op started with a group of people gathering regularly to source and distribute bulk foods and other food that they were not able to buy in conventional grocery stores. For years, even after acquiring a storefront, the Co-op relied on the labor of volunteers to source the food, to distribute it, and to staff the store. Volunteerism and an impulse toward building community led to the Co-op potlucks and to regular publication of the Scoop. So much heart and soul has been poured into the Co-op community!

Fast forward to today, and we're a thriving grocery store, serving anyone who wants to buy the food we have on our shelves – much of it organic, local, or bulk. We now hire dozens of employees who keep the store running smoothly. We're still a cooperative, which means that we're democratically governed, and those who opt in to member-ownership have a vote and a stake in the business. The Co-op still relies on the volunteerism of people stepping up to serve on the board of directors, and members still gather and build community through the Co-op potlucks.

As an anchor business of downtown Decorah with a membership numbering in the thousands, we have the potential and drive to contribute to the community – looking outside of ourselves and striving to make Decorah even better. Since we're a food cooperative, the local food system is one place where we can make a difference.

That's why the Oneota Co-op Board of Directors, in collaboration with the Iowa Food Hub, is spearheading the launch of the Grow the Good grant program. Now in our 50th year of business, we're looking to expand our impact with this seminal endeavor. We're inviting our members as well as partner businesses and organizations to contribute to a pool of funds that we will grant to farmers and food entrepreneurs who are developing our community's food system. The more resources we can put in the hands of producers, the more vibrant our community's food supply – central to the mission of our co-op.

So, join the Oneota Co-op Board of Directors in contributing to “Grow the Good” through this grant program! A round up at the register is happening over the next couple of weeks. Keep in mind that when you round up, you can tell your cashier to add on a few dollars if you like! Let's keep up the generous and community-minded spirit of the founding members of the Co-op and look toward an ever-more-vibrant next 50 years!



GROW THE GOOD