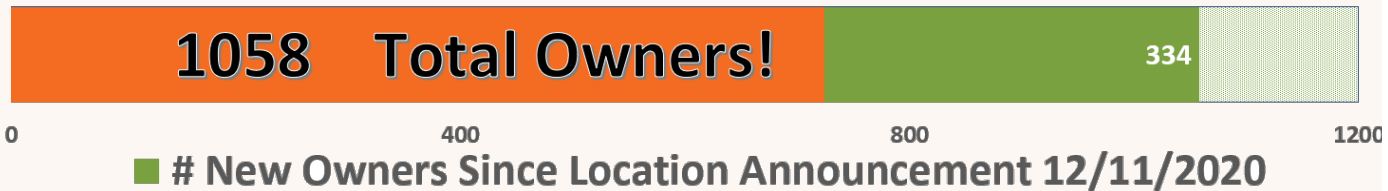


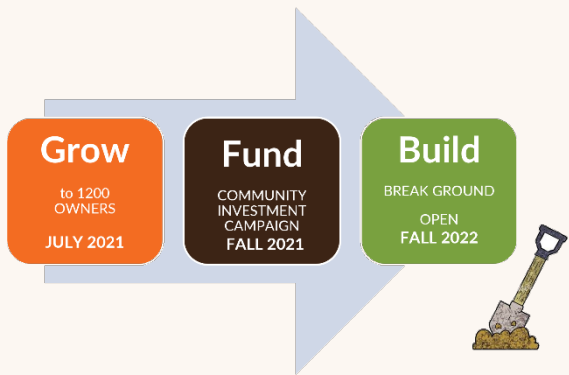


bi-monthly eBlast for followers and supporters of the Food Shed Co-op - June 4, 2021



We hit a major milestone of 1000+ owners! Join today to help us reach our goal of 1200 owners and open our community-owned grocery store by the fall of 2022! Click [HERE](#) or on any *Become an Owner* button!

Invest in Our Community



The Food Shed Co-op will begin a capital campaign this summer to raise the funds necessary to build our grocery store. To do this our owners and supporters will have the opportunity to invest in our community owned grocery store. We are not the first ones to build a co-op this way. Co-ops across the country have raised the capital to open their stores and expand operations for centuries by allowing owners to invest in the store beyond ownership shares. Check out our friends at the Oshkosh Food Co-op who recently (amidst the

pandemic, no less!) raised over \$1.6 million dollars from their community and have begun store construction. Go Oshkosh Food Co-op! [Click here](#) to read more.

History of Food Co-ops (Part 1 of 3)

by Caron Wenzel, Board Director

Humans have always cooperated because, of course, we are a social species. The concept of a co-op as a formal business type, though, is fairly new in terms of social endeavors. The earliest

co-ops and the 'great-grandparents' of co-ops today, were actually started by no less a personage than Benjamin Franklin in the 1700's. His first "Co-op" was a volunteer Fire Department started in Philadelphia, PA. Founded in 1752 by Benjamin Franklin again, the first cooperative business in the U.S. and still in business today is a mutual fire insurance company. The very first dairy and cheese cooperatives formed in 1810, and soon other types of agricultural cooperatives followed in an effort to combat the uncertainty of farming and agricultural product sales. Cooperatives formed in America are as wholesome as apple pie.

There was also a parallel cooperative movement occurring in Britain around the same time. The Industrial Revolution led to social inequities among people working in the newly created mills and manufacturing businesses. But, Robert Owen, a successful Welsh textile manufacturer, philanthropist, and reformer, sought to change that. His mill in New Lanark, Scotland offered social support programs for the workers, and eventually the town became a place of pilgrimage for political and social reformers of the era. Owen was a pioneer of "utopian socialism" and the cooperative movement. He also sponsored or encouraged many to experiment with utopian communities, such as New Harmony, Indiana. Owen was the progenitor of the concept of workers in clean, productive towns with "*unions of them, federatively united, formed in circles of tens, hundreds, and thousands.*" Thus a movement was born.



The First Food and Labor Co-ops

In the 1830s, working conditions were poor and laborers organized cooperatives to protect their own economic interests. At one meeting in 1836, where 200 workers discussed cooperatives, a worker sharply asked "***who was reaping the profits of your labor***"? According to Lynn Pitman, "*that year, hatters, tailors, saddlers, and harness makers pooled their monies to start their own producer cooperatives, ensuring workers' control of labor conditions, wages, and sales.*" But could they control the rising prices of food and other necessities, or strengthen their purchasing power? Well, in 1829, workers in Philadelphia opened their own store, so they could buy at cost. Later in 1832, a group of workers and farmers formed the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and Other Workingmen. They, too, were interested in consumer cooperatives and buying clubs.

The Working Men's Protective Union/ New England Protective Union began in Boston in 1845, which officially led to the establishment of more **cooperative stores**. The Union started its own

stores where members could **buy groceries and other supplies**. Originally, the Union stores were open only to members of “men of good character,” those who did not drink or sell liquor. Later, Union members agreed to open their stores to nonmembers who paid market prices for goods. By 1852, the Union boasted 167 stores, with a capital of \$241,000 and sales of \$1.69 million. Five years later, there were at least 800 union stores in thirteen states, mostly in the Northeast.” (Pitman, 2018). Despite its rapid growth, the New England Protective Union did not survive through the Civil War. Labor historian Philip Foner, attests this was due to other grocery stores lowering their prices to undersell the union stores. The issue of credit also became a big and divisive problem at the time.

But these groups’ goals were larger as well: “*to reduce the twelve-hour working day; to eradicate the trucking system, in which they were paid in goods, not wages; and to promote education for themselves and their children.*” (Pitman, 2018). Concerned about working conditions and long hours, members of the Association actually invited a representative from the women workers of Lowell to their 1845 convention to help advocate for the ten-hour workday. **These union stores were part of a utopian vision to change society.**

Part two will discuss Co-ops after the American Civil War to the 1930s.

If you want to be part of this history and future of a cooperative movement, [become a member of the Food Shed Co-op today!](#)

Source: Pitman, Lynn. *History of Cooperatives in the United States* UW Center for Cooperatives, 2018

Meet an Owner - Jessica and Jeff Pawlicki Family, Marengo, IL



OB: What sparked your interest in local, sustainably grown, fresh food?

JP: This is how we live! Being a medical provider and owning two practices in the community, my patients know that this is what I preach! Knowing where your food comes from is a huge benefit to everyone's health and wellness.

OB: What is the one thing about our community-owned grocery store that excites you most?

JP: That there will no longer be an excuse. The location is great and it's easily accessible. I can't wait to have this perfect place for my family's needs and my patients' needs as well.

OB: How did you find out about the Food Shed Co-op and when did you join as an Owner?

JP: It's been something that I've seen and heard about for a while, but never took the time to look into it. After coming

across it again, I knew our views aligned and this was something I needed to do. We recently joined as owners and continue to share the need for growth within our community.

Upcoming Events

FOOD SHED: 2nd Thursday/Sunday Info Sessions

When Thursday, June 10, 2021 at 7:00pm
Sunday, June 13, 2021 at 11:00am

Where: Online, ZOOM

If you'd like more information about the Food Shed, please join us for one of these information sessions. They're online and FREE!

Thursday and Sunday sessions will occur the 2nd Thursday and Sunday of each month from April through September. Join us to get the scoop on YOUR community owned grocery store. Click [HERE to RSVP](#).

Volunteer Opportunities

Spreading the word to potential owners is our #1 volunteer priority right now and we are grateful for everyone's help so we can open our community owned grocery store as soon as possible. We ask that all Food Shed Co-op supporters follow and share our social media posts on any of your favorite social media platforms listed below.



Help us spread the word about our community owned grocery store by sharing our posts with your followers on social media. And why not [BECOME AN OWNER](#) now?

Mission

Our mission is to build a LOCAL food COOPERATIVE promoting a HEALTHY, ETHICAL and RESILIENT COMMUNITY.

Core Values

- Promote and foster better food choices
- Cultivate and strengthen our local economy
- Inspire and empower community
- Champion environmentally responsible practices

Food Shed Outreach

<http://www.foodshed.coop/>



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