



COMMON GROUND

**IMPACTS  
REPORT**

**2020**





# LETTER FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

## Gary Taylor

We at Common Ground have always prided ourselves on being more than a for-profit business. Of course we must make money to stay viable, but we also feel it's of the utmost importance to contribute to our community. This past year has been especially tumultuous, but your co-op has risen to the challenge. Because our Ends are so robust, Common Ground was able to use them to guide our way through this uncertainty. We have always reported annually about the impacts of our four Ends, and as we have seen new priorities come up in the past year, we have been able to use them to guide our responses to these current issues.

With COVID-19 running rampant, we had to make countless swift adjustments in a short period of time. We made operational changes for the sake of people's safety, to inform our stakeholders about the virus, to get food to our most at-risk citizens, and to keep our doors open. Our staff, owners, customers, farmers and their families all had to make adjustments to live in this "new normal" and, hopefully, we are finally getting to the other side of it. In our Impacts Report, you will read about some of these changes, including the start-up of our curbside pick-up program and our overall response to this health crisis.

In this past year, we have seen a long needed resurgence of calls for social justice. As the center of a vibrant inclusive community, our co-op would be remiss to not address the issues regarding the treatment of our Black neighbors here and across America. In this report, we outline our response to help bring attention to and stand in solidarity with this movement.

It occurs to me that in this no-longer-normal world, we have repeatedly heard the call that "We Are In This Together." But our co-op has always known this; we have been striving for togetherness, support, solidarity, and advocacy in our community since 1974!

As you read through our 2020 impacts report, please know that none of this is possible without you.

Let's keep making our community a better place... together!

# RESPONSE TO COVID-19

**optional leave of absence available to all staff  
without risk of losing employment**


**staff hazard pay of \$50 per week in the form of  
an IOU to be used at Common Ground**

**pre-packaged bulk products  
cancelled classes & events  
hourly sanitation rounds**

**temporarily closed all self-serve stations  
temporarily closed kitchen, cafe, & bakery**

**established designated shopping times for  
senior and at-risk shoppers // 7:30 - 9:00am**

# THE INCEPTION OF CURBSIDE PICK-UP



**MARCH 21  
STAY-AT-HOME ORDER  
ISSUED; COMMON  
GROUND DEEMED AN  
ESSENTIAL BUSINESS**

**MARCH 26:  
OFFERED PHONE-IN  
ORDERS WITH LIMITED  
ORDERING MENU**

**AUGUST 2:  
ONLINE CO-OP SHOP  
LAUNCHED**

**ONLINE ORDERS NOW  
MAKE UP CLOSE TO 10%  
OF STORE SALES**

# CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

Urbana has a special way of taking care of each other when times get tough. We saw this during the pandemic through the Channing Murray Foundation & Cunningham Township's creation of the Bucket Brigade. Buckets of food (valued at \$60 a piece) were assembled and delivered to our Urbana neighbors in need.



Common Ground crowd-funded for the Bucket Brigade during July and August of 2020. The Co-op matched every donation received and converted those funds to huge food donations for the Bucket Brigade. Our owners donated over \$2,500 in just two months.

With the Co-op's match, over \$5,000 was donated in the form of Co-op foods and face masks to the Bucket Brigade. With each bucket valuing around \$60, together we fed over 83 local families during the pandemic.

# CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

In May 2020, the murder of George Floyd sparked a new wave of racial justice movements across the country. In an act of solidarity, Common Ground commissioned six Black Illinois artists to display their work on the planters outside the Co-op alongside a Black Lives Matter banner.

The artwork centered around BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) as their primary subject with the purpose of elevating Black voices, promoting representation & empowerment, and standing in support of our Black neighbors.

A very special thank you to our artists: Mookie, Keenan Dailey, Kofi Bazzell-Smith, Nailah Davis, Ja Nelle Davenport-Pleasure, and Haiku.



# END #1

## THE CO-OP IS THE CENTER OF A VIBRANT, INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

**100%**  
OF STAFF EARNED A LIVING WAGE

**47%**  
OF STAFF WORKED FULL TIME  
& QUALIFIED FOR BENEFITS

**16**  
LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS  
RECEIVING DONATIONS

**4**  
EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

**\$44,908.07**  
RAISED IN ROUND UP FOR GOOD

**85** COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS  
THROUGHOUT 2020

In 2020, we started accepting RedCard, the University of Illinois' meal plan for student athletes.

We also participated in a FINI grant, a Link match program in association with The Land Connection, which incentivized buying fresh produce for SNAP recipients.

## FOOD FOR ALL

The Food For All program is designed to make the Co-op accessible for everyone by helping our customers eat healthy and save money. The FFA Equity Grant gives qualified Co-op customers free ownership & a 10% discount on Co+op Basics food staples and all of our produce.

**74**  
new food for all  
owners in 2020

**\$11,196**  
given in food discounts  
& equity grants in 2020

**\$6,129**  
raised for food for all  
in 2020



# END #2

## THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT IS STRENGTHENED

At Common Ground, we believe cooperation extends past our four walls. We believe in supporting other cooperative businesses and strengthening the co-op movement as a whole.

**11**  
COOPERATIVE  
VENDORS

**\$293,118**

SPENT WITH  
COOPERATIVE VENDORS

*\$50,600 more  
than 2019!*

ORGANIC VALLEY  
LONG CLAWSON DAIRY CO-OP  
EQUAL EXCHANGE

FRONTIER CO-OP  
AURA CACIA  
JUST COFFEE  
ALAFFIA

SIMPLY ORGANIC  
MAPLE VALLEY CO-OP  
ALVARADO STREET BAKERY

In order to support other cooperative businesses, Common Ground itself has to thrive, too. We thrive most with more owners, frequent shopping from owners, and engaging owners through our annual elections in September.

**265** new  
owners

**5184** active  
owners

to be active, an owner must shop once a year

**90%** of sales  
from owners

**9052** total  
owners

whose equity is paid in full

**11%** of active owners voted in the election,  
highest turnout on record

# END #3

## THE CO-OP SERVES AS AN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE ON FOOD ISSUES

The Co-op works hard to serve our community, from recipes to classes to our Grow On program for kids. Our classroom is a great and vibrant space that is used for more than a dozen classes every month, staff meetings, and as a space where folks gather to share food and build community.

**In mid-March 2020,  
Common Ground cancelled all classes for the  
remainder of the year.**

**25**  
COOKING &  
WELLNESS CLASSES

**400**  
CLASS  
PARTICIPANTS

**In August, Common Ground pursued more  
virtual education opportunities**

**COOKING WITH KIDS VIDEO SERIES**  
(in partnership with The Land Connection & Champaign Farmers Market)

**SEASONAL COOKING VIDEOS**  
(in partnership with the Urbana Free Library)



# END #4

## THE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM IS EQUITABLE, ROBUST, AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND



We define **LOCAL** as food sourced within 100 miles of the Co-op. We define **REGIONAL** as food sourced 100+ miles away & from any state that borders Illinois (including Michigan).

**\$846,774**  
invested in local foods

**69**  
local producers,  
located within 100 miles

**5**  
new local vendors  
in 2020

**7**  
regional producers

**\$39,760**  
invested in regional  
producers

**LINCOLN SQUARE MALL  
300 S. BROADWAY AVE. SUITE 166  
URBANA, IL 61801**

**OPEN DAILY 7:30AM - 9:00PM**

**COMMON GROUND**  
**food co-operative • urbana, illinois**