

# annual report 2016



people's  
FOOD CO-OP

**A PASSIONATE COMMUNITY**  
WORKING TOGETHER

for **SUSTAINABILITY,**

PROGRESSIVE *Land & Animal* STEWARDSHIP

**HUMAN RIGHTS, SOCIAL & ECONOMIC**  
»JUSTICE«

THRIVING **COOPERATIVE**  
AND **LOCAL ECONOMIES.**

A <sup>SAFE</sup> *Welcoming* **COMMUNITY**

WHERE **ALL** ARE VALUED.

..... **A** .....  
**DEMOCRATIC WORKPLACE**

WHERE ALL *Voices* **ARE VALUED.**  
WORKERS

**ACCESS TO HEALTHFUL FOODS**

OUR CUSTOMERS CAN  
**TRUST.**

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- A photograph of a busy outdoor market street. In the foreground, a woman in a purple tank top and dark pants holds the hand of a young girl in a purple dress. To their right, a woman in a black tank top pushes a stroller. The street is lined with white and brown pop-up tents. People are walking and browsing. In the background, there are trees and a wooden building. A sign for 'DELI GRAINS' is visible on the left. A parking sign with a wheelchair symbol is on the right.
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# Letter from the Board

As I sit down to write this letter to all of you, I am at a loss for what to say. Usually, I can look back and see the theme of the last year clearly. This time, the view was not so clear.

2016 was a year of challenges. Challenges as a country, as a collection of communities, and as a Co-op. Over the year many of you shared your experiences with myself and other board members. We have heard the stories from Member-Owners from across the spectrums of politics, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and ability. Stories of your challenges in the face of our changing country, stories of your fears, but most of all stories of your hopes for the future.

At the Co-op, we faced continued struggles to remain profitable. While I am proud to report that we ended the year in the black, I regret that we only just broke even and will not be able to return dividends to the membership. As an organization that focuses on ensuring value to our Member-Owners, this is a continuing cause for concern. Were it not for the hard work of the Collective Management, we would have faced a loss.

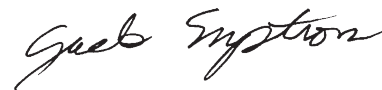
Yet at the same time, the Board and the Collective Management have watched the seeds for a better tomorrow be planted. In the past year, we have explored ways to grow our organization, both as a business and as a hub of the many communities that our membership comes from. We have looked to our values and

begun doing the work of examining our culture, practices, and processes. We have worked to expand our thinking and learn from our mistakes. All with an eye to improving our connections to current Member-Owners and preparing ourselves to engage with new communities with respect.

We are now moving towards nailing down the details of our long-term plan. By doing so, we will likely invite new neighborhoods and communities to join us as Member-Owners. Not just share in the quality ethical food we sell, but to add their own perspectives and voices to our work of changing what a grocery store can be. We will continue to learn from your concerns on how to preserve the essence of People's Co-op, and listen to those new voices on how to respect their needs and values as we expand.

As one of your trustees of the health and vibrancy of this cooperative business, I can tell you I have never been so excited for the next year.

In Service,



Jacob T. Engstrom  
President  
Board of Directors





# Patronage

We, your People's Board of Directors, wish to thank you for your ongoing support of our Co-op. Your choice to shop at People's in 2016 made it possible for the Co-op to turn a modest profit in a very challenging economy and increasingly competitive industry. We are proud to represent you, our fellow Member-Owners, in this organization which continues to be a leader in providing truly local, healthful food and in supporting the many communities we are part of.

Due to the relatively low positive net income that was generated in 2016, the Board has decided not to allocate patronage this year. Member-Owner shopping generated \$18,000 of potential patronage. At this amount, the administrative costs of generating patronage checks outweigh any tax advantage the Co-op might receive by allocating patronage. This would not be an effective way to safeguard our Co-op's financial stability in the current market and as we look to grow. If the Board had chosen to pay out even 100% of the eligible amount, the majority of Member-Owners would receive less than \$2 – not even 0.5% of their annual spending.

Feeling your sustained passion for People's' vision and our Ends, we opted instead to retain this amount to build our collective future. The purpose of the patronage system is to build community wealth and to accomplish more together than we could on our own. Retained patronage helps the income generated by your purchases to make a larger impact. We are currently looking into the potential of other avenues for Member-Owners who want to more directly invest in People's. Stay tuned for new ways to support the sustenance and growth of your Co-op!

Your team of collective managers has been hard at work this year crafting plans for long-term success. Taking your input from last year's engagement events, the Long Term Planning Committee is conducting ongoing research and community engagement to refine our direction. Part of this research hones in on strategies to stay competitive and responsive to our community's needs through our work. We look forward to offering patronage dividends again in the future. We are working to make that future as secure and sustainable as possible – thank you for your ongoing support!

We hope you have enjoyed the many benefits of People's membership in 2016. People's Member-Owners can partake in classes, volunteer shifts as Hands-On-Owners, vote for and serve on the Board, and save substantially through special discounts throughout the year. We hope you find solidarity here and feel great knowing that the purchases you make support the local, cooperative economy. We stand together and WE OWN IT!

We look forward to talking with you at the Annual Meeting!

In service,  
Your Board of Directors

# The Co-op by the Numbers

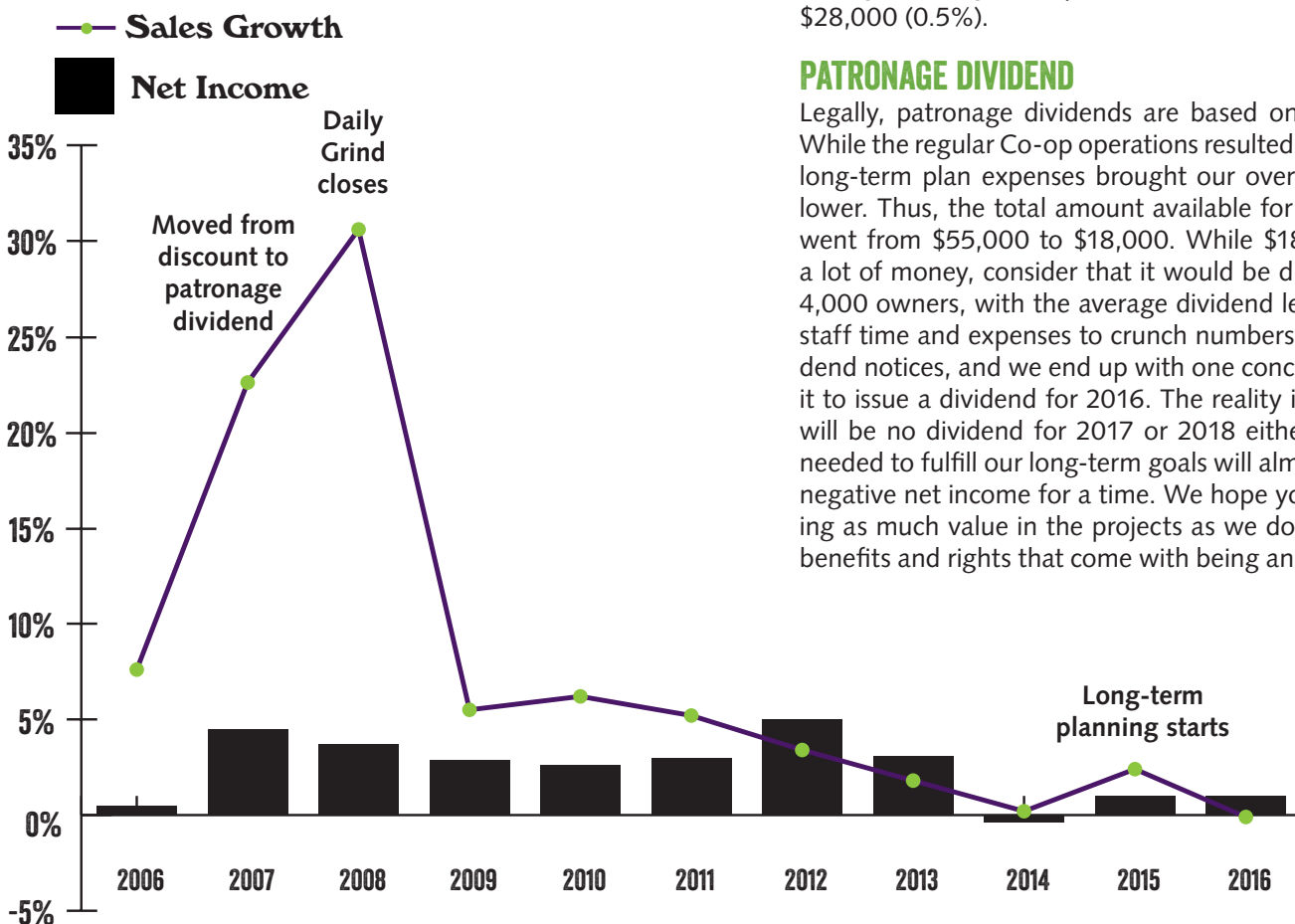
## BY MILES UCHIDA, FINANCE MANAGER & COMANAGER

As we get into the thick of finalizing and implementing our long-term plan, the theme is “preparation”. There isn’t much to report for 2016, which is actually good news! While the Collective Management was upping our investment into our future, our financial goals have been to try and hold our ground, maintain cash, and stay well positioned to finance whatever projects we end up putting our energy towards. I think we’ve done just that.

## Sales

Our sales for the year were basically even with 2015 (-\$8,000, or -0.1%). Given the state of competition and the capacity of our current store, that’s not too bad. Nationally, over 40% of food co-ops had lower sales in 2016, so we are not alone in these challenges.

There’s definitely no shortage of new competition for natural food stores in Portland. Green Zebra opened a new store in the Lloyd District in early 2016, a PSU location in early 2017, and has more stores planned. By the time you read this, Market of Choice and Natural Grocers will both be open less than 1.5 miles away from the Co-op. With our store bursting at the seams, the time is certainly ripe to turn it up a notch.



## Expenses & Net Income

### LABOR

Despite many challenges, we managed to keep overall labor costs from rising. However, the cost of living in the Portland area is climbing at a ridiculous rate and People’s staff wages did not increase in 2016. Health care costs decreased in 2016 overall, but this expense may continue to see changes. We were forced to change plans mid-year when the fledgling Oregon Health “Co-op” folded. What had been lower rates suddenly shot up again. With the current uncertainty about health care nationally, labor expenses could continue to increase.

### GROSS MARGINS

There’s a fine line between keeping prices competitive and making enough money to fuel the Co-op. Competition is forcing many prices down. Yet in 2016 our gross margin managed to increase a smidge. We continue to work on pricing strategies to stay competitive and provide good value to our customers, which likely means lower margins in the future.

### NET INCOME

Through good planning and budgeting, we managed to show a regular operating profit of \$87,282 (1.5% of sales), compared to \$57,761 (1.0%) in 2015. But when you factor in \$59,000 of expenses geared toward determining the future of the Co-op through a long-term plan, the overall net income drops to \$28,000 (0.5%).

### PATRONAGE DIVIDEND

Legally, patronage dividends are based on overall net income. While the regular Co-op operations resulted in a solid net income, long-term plan expenses brought our overall net income much lower. Thus, the total amount available for patronage dividends went from \$55,000 to \$18,000. While \$18,000 may seem like a lot of money, consider that it would be divided among almost 4,000 owners, with the average dividend less than \$2. Factor in staff time and expenses to crunch numbers, print, and mail dividend notices, and we end up with one conclusion: it’s not worth it to issue a dividend for 2016. The reality is that it’s likely there will be no dividend for 2017 or 2018 either, as the investment needed to fulfill our long-term goals will almost certainly result in negative net income for a time. We hope you will join us in finding as much value in the projects as we do, and all of the other benefits and rights that come with being an owner of the Co-op!

## Balance Sheet

### CASH

Our total cash increased from \$930,000 to \$1,012,000 which represents about 66 days of operational expenses (a very safe amount). It also represents more capital and more leverage for whatever projects are on our horizon.

### LIABILITIES

We have no long-term debt, which puts us in a prime position to grow. Our main liability is accounts payables (bills owed to vendors).

### EQUITY

Our equity continues to grow, both from retained earnings and from owner investments. This also supports our capacity to leverage funds for growth.

### OVERALL

We've continued to improve our financial position in virtually every key measure, keeping us right where we want to be for financial health and sustainability.

## Profit & Loss

| INCOME                                                                                  |                 |                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Sales                                                                                   | \$5,654,409     | \$5,646,335     |
| Other Income                                                                            | \$49,871        | \$49,675        |
| EXPENSES                                                                                |                 |                 |
| Cost of Goods                                                                           | \$3,594,633     | \$3,553,439     |
| Personnel <small>Payroll, Benefits</small>                                              | \$1,459,144     | \$1,455,200     |
| Operating Expenses                                                                      | \$592,742       | \$608,938       |
| PROFIT                                                                                  |                 |                 |
| <b>Net Income</b><br><small>How much money we made before patronage &amp; taxes</small> | <b>\$57,761</b> | <b>\$78,433</b> |

## Assets WHAT THE CO-OP HAS

|                          | 2015               | 2016               |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Cash                     | \$930,046          | \$1,012,679        |
| Inventory                | \$230,851          | \$223,317          |
| Other Current Assets     | \$42,934           | \$40,204           |
| Equipment                | \$292,571          | \$336,743          |
| Land & Building          | \$899,503          | \$909,900          |
| Accumulated Depreciation | -\$484,371         | -\$537,196         |
| Other Assets             | \$67,056           | \$66,349           |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>      | <b>\$1,978,590</b> | <b>\$2,051,997</b> |

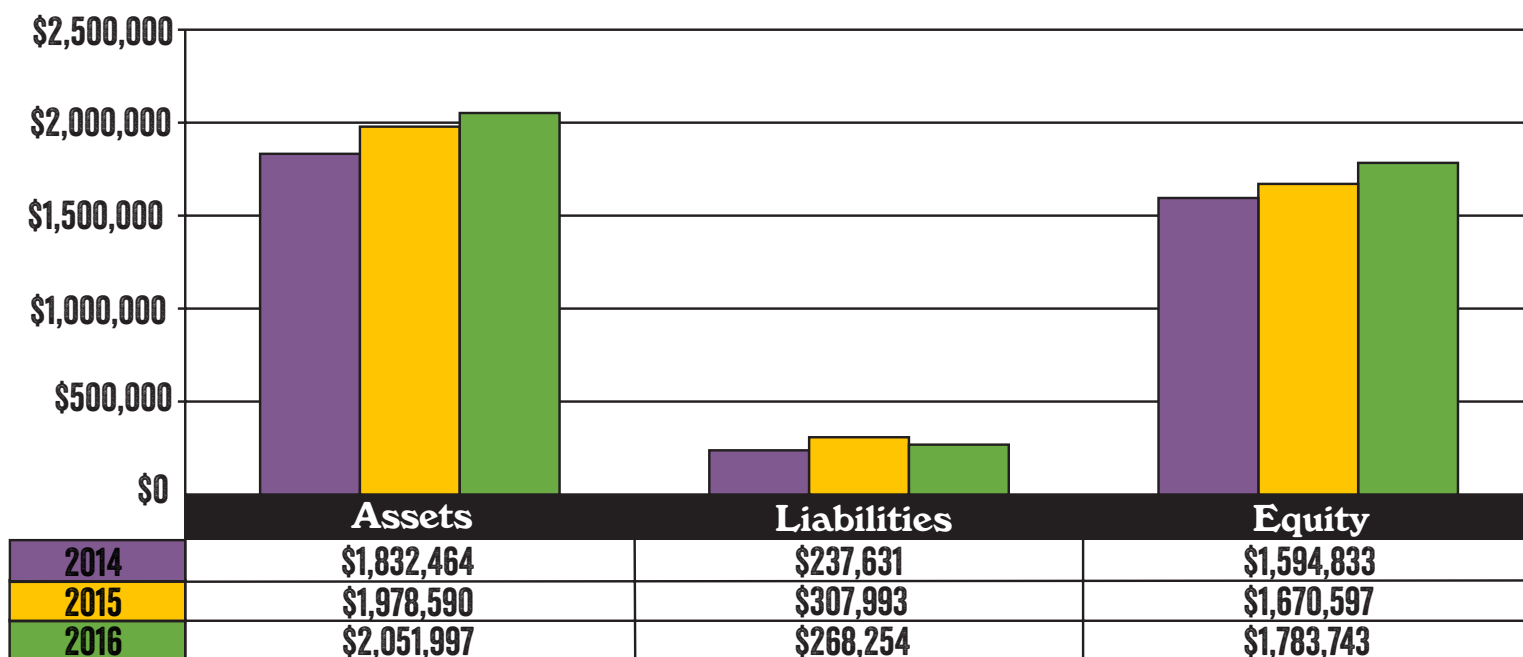
## Liabilities WHAT THE CO-OP OWES TO OTHERS

|                             | 2015             | 2016             |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Accounts Payable            | \$124,317        | \$125,900        |
| Patronage Dividends Payable | \$117,824        | \$38,587         |
| Other Current Liabilities   | \$65,852         | \$103,767        |
| Long Term Liabilities       | \$0              | \$0              |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>    | <b>\$307,993</b> | <b>\$268,254</b> |

## Equity WHAT WE OWN

|                                       | 2015               | 2016               |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| PeopleShares<br>(Member-Owner Equity) | \$876,280          | \$928,797          |
| Retained Patronage Dividends          | \$500,736          | \$500,736          |
| Current Year Earning                  | \$51,904           | \$1,248            |
| Retained Earnings                     | \$241,677          | \$352,962          |
| <b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>                   | <b>\$1,670,597</b> | <b>\$1,783,743</b> |

## How does this compare to other years?



# Long-term Planning

## BY THE LONG-TERM PLANNING COMMITTEE

2016 was a busy year for People's goal of creating a long-term plan. Like any undertaking of this size, the long-term planning process has involved the inspired work and input of many people, lots of research, and the nurturing of new and existing relationships. People's Long-term Planning Committee (LTPC) had to write and rewrite our timeline while working to make the many pieces of various tasks and ideas fit into an emerging picture. In 2016, we laid the crucial groundwork for creating a successful plan and we are looking to building on that work moving forward.

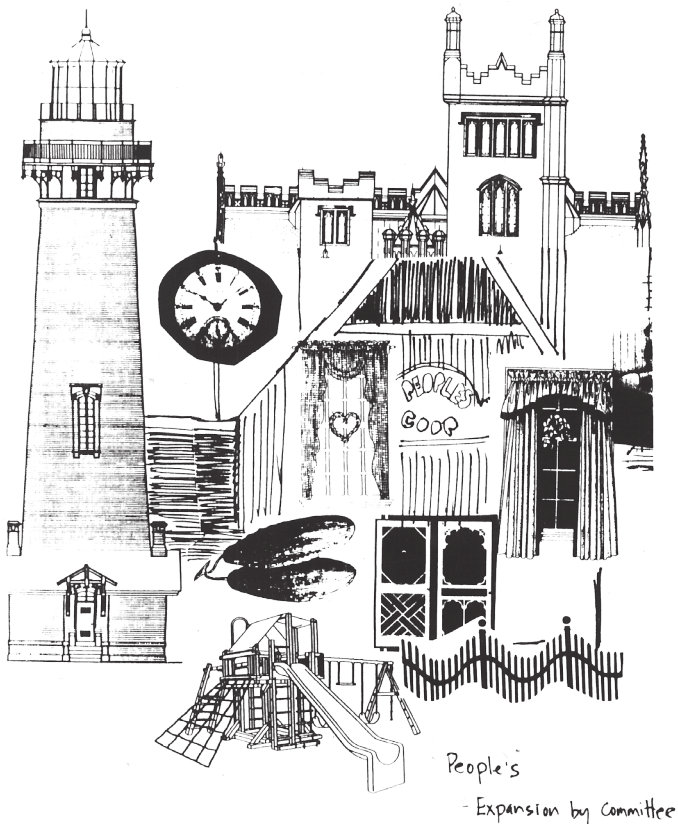
### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

During the spring and early summer of 2016, our primary task was to get input from Member-Owners, shoppers, and our broader community about their vision for the Co-op. In these outreach events we asked folks what kinds of impact they wanted the store to have, new projects we could take on, the values they see as really vital, and ways that we could be doing better. Members of the Long-term Planning Committee, the Board, and the Collective

Management spoke with organizations working throughout the Portland area to learn about the the work they are doing, what needs they're aware of that aren't fully met, and how these things intersect with People's Ends. The Committee also surveyed and talked to many of our farmers, producers, distributors, and vendors about their experiences of and hopes for the Portland market. Over the course of this outreach period there were three public visioning events with the People's community. The Long-term Planning Committee intentionally tried to create space to listen to people who are often not involved in community planning decisions. After all of these conversations, People's Collective Management (CM) came together to consider what was learned and to add their ideas for People's vision.

### SHARED VISIONS

Several clear community desires emerged from the outreach, which the LTPC and CM crafted into Vision Statements. These are intended to focus and direct the Co-op's work towards our Ends



People's Expansion, as envisioned in a People's newsletter from 1993.

## 10-Year Vision Statements

1. People's Food Co-op collaborates with the communities it impacts to strengthen the local food system.
2. People's Food Co-op attends to the empowerment of our workers, who ensure the health of operations and the financial sustainability of our cooperative.
3. People's Food Co-op engages with community members in order to provide relevant and affordable food and goods.
4. People's Food Co-op nurtures fruitful relationships between individuals, businesses, and organizations in pursuit of our Ends.





Long-term Planning Engagement in 2016.

for the next 10 years in a way that embodies our community's common visions and values.

We think that these vision statements effectively encompass the main themes of our outreach efforts: food affordability and accessibility, working to strengthen our local food system, working more collaboratively with our community and community organizations, and ensuring the financial sustainability of the Co-op. After completing the outreach phase of our planning process, People's LTPC turned to researching possibilities for how we'll fulfill that 10-year vision. This research comprised the bulk of the committee's work during the second half of 2016. Committee members surveyed the community and development work happening in Portland, and considered possibilities for projects and partnerships which could help fulfill our vision statements. At the same time, the Collective engaged in some of the internal work required to launch a project of this size, including discussing more specific directions for possible plans, taking a critical look at our product buying guidelines and considering how they impact our work towards our Ends, and working to solidify the 10-year vision statements.

There are still a lot of questions to be answered: How will a project (or series of projects) that fulfill these visions take shape? How do we keep doing the work of building relationships with farmers and offering the best food possible? How can we more actively

and effectively prioritize food affordability and accessibility? What would it look like to extend our Collective Management structure to more projects, while increasing vitality and effectiveness for our workplace? We're digging into those questions to find innovative answers. We are oriented to do this while maintaining our current store so that it will continue to thrive and serve our community in inspiring ways.

We're doing all this work while keeping our current store relevant and vibrant amidst a very competitive natural foods market and the struggles that are affecting co-ops nationwide. Once we've made a formal plan that the Collective is excited to implement and meets the criteria that we laid out at the beginning of this process, we'll announce our plan to you, our Member-Owners.

If you have questions, please let us know! We can be reached at [planning@peoples.coop](mailto:planning@peoples.coop), or fill out a comment card in the store. We'll answer your questions as best as we can and share them on our blog at [peoples.coop/blog](http://peoples.coop/blog).

# Our Passionat

BY SOFIE SHERMAN-BURTON, MARKETING AND MEMBERSHIP MANAGER & COMANAGER

I often find myself saying that People's wouldn't exist if people didn't want it to, but I'm writing it again because it's the core of so much of my work at the Co-op. By "people" I mean the staff and the Board and all of the work that they put in, to be sure – but just as integral are the Member-Owners and shoppers that walk through our front doors. The events that we hold, the donations that we dole out, the articles in Grassroots, and the many other activities that we participate in are all a reflection of the values that we've outlined together in our Ends. Here's a snapshot of what we accomplished together in 2016:

# 479

**NEW MEMBER-OWNERS**

## Member-Ownership

The number of new Member-Owners has been on the decline for a number of years, ever since we moved from a monthly to a quarterly discount in 2015. In 2016, only 479 new Member-Owners joined the Co-op – almost 100 less than in 2015! There are a few reasons we think this might be happening:

- Our Co-op is small. Our sales have started to level out, and maybe we've reached the number of Member-Owners that our little store can support, too.
- It's possible that our Member-Owner benefits aren't attractive to folks that are prospective members, but are looking for bigger discounts.
- There are more and more options for buying natural foods in Portland. We might be seeing fewer new shoppers (and thus Member-Owners) as a result.

**70%** Sales to  
**Member-Owners**

**7%** Voter turnout  
**at elections**

# 71

**Co-op sponsored  
special events &  
classes in the  
community room**

## Event Highlights

### HUMANS OF COLOR YOGA

In October, we started offering a twice-monthly free yoga class for people of color to come together in community and movement. Now every Saturday, the class strives to address the current social climate using yoga as a platform for release and restructuring.

### FOOD JUSTICE & THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

In January, we teamed up with Know Your City for a panel discussion in honor of MLK Day. Five community leaders discussed Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy of equality and justice, and how the central issues of the Civil Rights Movement continue to impact food security today. The room was packed!

### HARVEST FESTIVAL

Great weather, great bands, and great food converged to make last year's Harvest Festival the biggest in our memory. We had a great time! Hope you did too!

### CO-OP 101

In 2016, we held quarterly events we called Co-op 101! Designed for new Member-Owners or folks after more information about the Co-op, three staff members shared information and stories about the Co-op's structure, products, building, and more. These were not very well attended, and we're working on other kinds of Co-op focused events that Member-Owners and the public might be more interested in. Got an idea? Send it over to [marketing\\_membership@peoples.coop](mailto:marketing_membership@peoples.coop).

# ate Community

## Register Roundups

This year, we had two donation drives at the register for organizations with timely needs that were doing work aligning with our ends.

- In August, shoppers contributed \$3619 for our local Black Lives Matter chapter, and an additional \$500 was matched from the Co-op's donations fund.
- In November and December, shoppers raised \$7364 for Standing Rock, the majority of which was donated to the Sacred Stone Legal Defense Fund. Co-op community members also donated numerous coats, dry goods, toiletries, tents, and other items to Standing Rock. Once winter hit and the camp requested that allies stop coming, remaining donations were donated to a local shelter serving the houseless community.
- Register roundups more than doubled the total number of dollars that the Co-op donated in 2016.

Staff and customers alike expressed a lot of satisfaction from the funds that we were able to raise at the register together over these two drives. It's amazing to see how much we can raise just by contributing the change left from our purchases. At the same time, we don't want to ask customers for money every time they shop at the Co-op and particularly don't want to alienate customers that don't feel they can share their change. We'd like to continue timely register round-up drives as community need arises, but don't plan to implement them on a regular basis.

# \$8,202

## TOTAL DOLLARS DONATED TO COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

+ \$1,000 to Greeley Forest Garden via the People's Cooperative Community Fund & \$1,300 to the Federation of Southern Co-ops & Working World

# \$10,983

## RAISED AT THE REGISTER FOR BLACK LIVES MATTER PDX & STANDING ROCK

## Donations We Were Really Excited About

**SOUTHERNERS ON NEW GROUND** or SONG is a regional Queer Liberation organization made up of people of color, immigrants, undocumented people, people with disabilities, working class and rural and small town, LGBTQ people in the South. Last year, National Cooperative Grocers – the national co-op of co-ops – was hosting all of their meetings in North Carolina, despite the State's passing of HB2, commonly referred to as the "Bathroom Bill", which forced trans folks to use bathrooms and other facilities based on the gender on their birth certificate. People's donated \$250 to SONG, and encouraged other co-ops across the country to do the same to support SONG's work organizing against HB2 and across the South. NCG donated \$5,000, and co-ops around the country contributed an additional \$2,350 to SONG.

**FAMILIAS UNIDAS POR LA JUSTICIA** or FUJ is an independent farmworker union of indigenous families located in Burlington, Washington representing over five hundred Triqui, Mixteco, and Spanish speaking workers at Sakuma Bros. Berry Farm. Last spring, in effort to be formally recognized by Sakuma Bros. Berry Farm, FUJ went on a weeks-long tour of the West coast. We pitched in to help cover gas and other expenses. In September, FUJ finally won a historic secret ballot election, becoming the third independent farmworker union formed in Washington in 30 years and the first union led by indigenous workers.

# Food Access

## BY SOFIE SHERMAN-BURTON, MARKETING AND MEMBERSHIP MANAGER & COMANAGER

Natural foods stores have a reputation for being expensive. People's is certainly not free from that association, and while we do price comparisons regularly to make sure that we are offering lower or competitive prices on the products that we sell, we recognize that our products may still not be accessible to everyone in our community. Some of that is difficult to avoid: because of our strict buying guidelines, some of our products are more expensive. We also have limited space, so we often find ourselves having to balance price with the rigorous standards that our Member-Owners and shoppers expect.

Beyond working to keep our prices low and our margins competitive, there are three primary ways that we try to make healthful foods affordable for as much of our community as possible: the Food For All discount, Double Up Food Bucks at the Farmers' Market, and the Co-op Basics program through National Cooperative Grocers (NCG).

### Food For All

The Food For All discount is available to any Member-Owner that is experiencing financial difficulty and is applicable to all products in the store. Based on the honor system, Member-Owners can sign up for the 5% discount for six months at a time. Folks can renew the discount for as long as they need and just have to fill out a form at the register with basic information to apply.

In 2016, we saw use of the program decline for the first time since at least 2010 and by a whopping 22% percent. There are a few factors that might contribute to that decline:

- The demographics of our neighborhood have shifted in the last few years with the burst of development along Division Street. This shift has a likely effect on the demographics of our shoppers.
- Member-Owners mostly find out about Food For All from cashiers, who often let them know about the discount when they are paying with an EBT card (the way that folks use SNAP

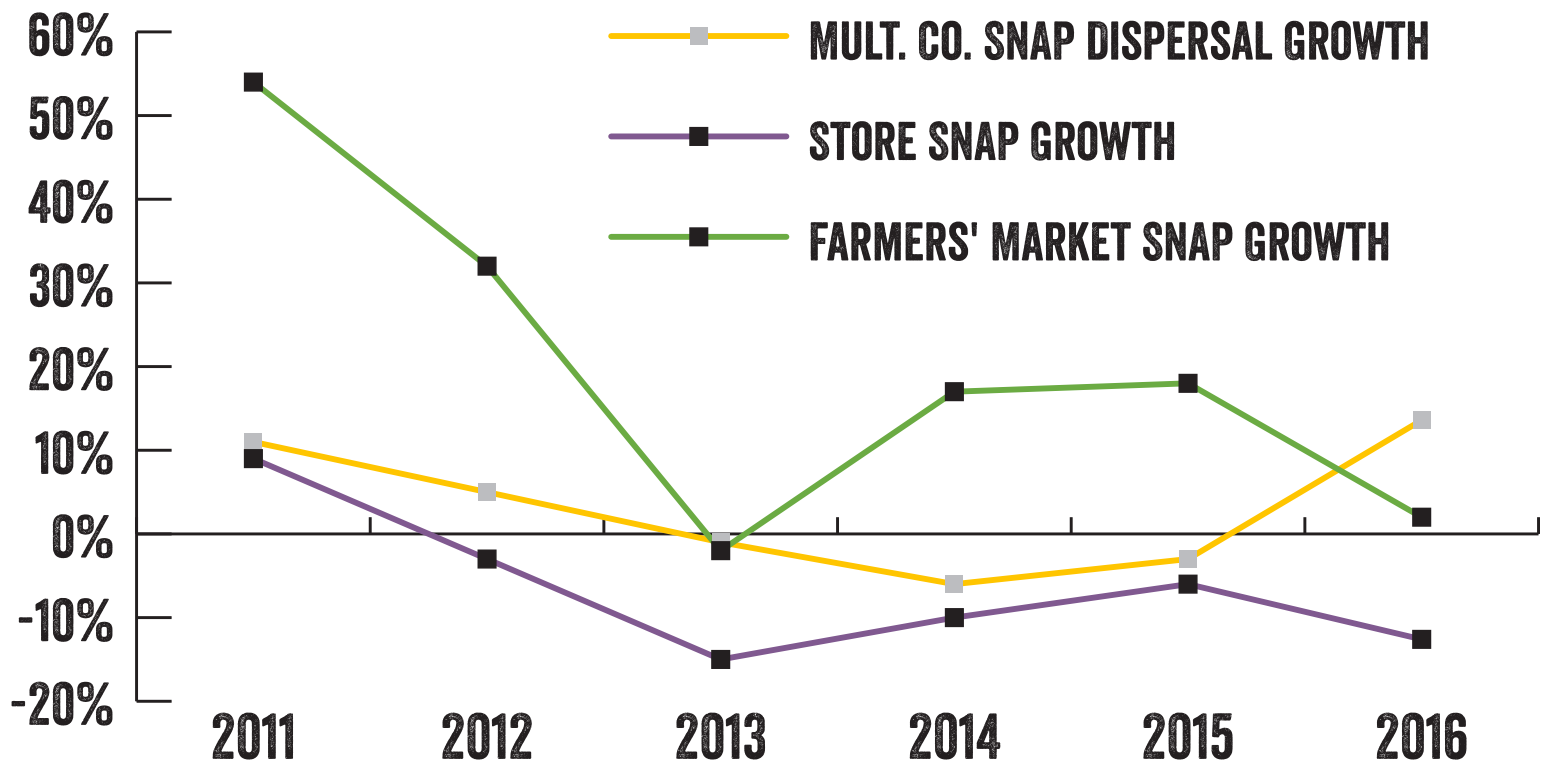
benefits or "food stamps"). EBT dispersal rates sharply declined in Multnomah County in 2016, and we saw a significant decline in customers paying using EBT cards. As a result, we likely told fewer Member-Owners about Food For All, though that wasn't our intention.

In December, noticing that we were under budget for the Food For All discount, we increased the discount from 5% to 10% for the last few weeks of the year.

Ultimately, we want to be able to support Member-Owners that need a discount at People's and want this benefit to be used by Member-Owners who need it regardless of how the County is dispersing food stamp funds. If numbers continue to decline in 2017, we'll need to reconsider the program: how we let Member-Owners know, how folks sign up, the percent discount, and other details.



# Farmers' Market, Store, & Multnomah County SNAP Growth



## Double Up Food Bucks

People's started a SNAP matching program at the Farmers' Market in 2014, where people using an EBT card (or "food stamps") at the Farmers' Market received up to an extra \$5 per week to spend at the market. This program is great for folks using SNAP benefits because it gives them extra money to spend at the Farmers' Market. It also benefits farmers because folks have more money to spend at the market.

In May of 2016, the People's Farmers' Market joined a federal grant to increase the amount matched from \$5 to \$10, along with many other Portland-area markets. As a result, the SNAP matching funds increased 57% over 2015. The program, known as Double Up Food Bucks, is funded through the end of 2017 so we expect to continue to see a similar increase this year. We really hope that the Double Up Food Bucks will find funding and continue into 2018 and beyond.

## Co-op Basics Expansion

Through our membership with National Cooperative Grocers (the national co-op of over 200 co-ops) we're able to get better pricing on lots of items that we sell, particularly in the grocery department. Some of these products – like Field Day staples, Equal Exchange bulk coffee, and Organic Valley dairy products – are part of a special program called Co-op Basics, which offers lower prices on staple items. In 2016, we increased the Co-op Basics products that we offered through a special program with NCG. This means we're offering more foods that fit our buying guidelines for really competitive prices. We hope that this makes a difference for folks shopping at the Co-op on a budget, and ultimately makes the Co-op more inviting and accessible for our community.



While we have made recent strides in our work to offer more affordable products and access to great food through these programs, we know that this work isn't over. Especially as a part of our long-term planning process, we're constantly thinking about ways that we can continue to offer really excellent food at a price that any shopper can afford. We hope that we can find really innovative, exciting ways to do this work. Have you heard about programs at other grocers or have an idea? We invite you to share it with us! Send it to [planning@peoples.coop](mailto:planning@peoples.coop) or grab a comment card in the store.

# Democratic Workplace

**BY PADRICE STEWART, PERSONNEL MANAGER & COMANAGER**

People's Board delegates the operation of the store to us, the Collective Management. Operating the store means that we do the majority of the work that it takes to support our Ends:

- ◆ We keep the store open, clean, beautiful and as safe and welcoming as possible. We make sure that the store is well-stocked with the best-on-the-market raw, prepared and packaged foods according to our carefully considered buying guidelines and the diverse needs and means of our community members.
- ◆ We interpret sustainability as the understanding that everything we do now impacts the realities that may flourish in another time, so we try to remember that everything we touch comes from somewhere and is going somewhere: from how the food arrives in and leaves the store, the materials we use to maintain our building, our energy requirements and our own bodies.
- ◆ We engage our community members and the larger communities that we are a part of in an attempt to support awareness of this land that we now belong to, and the humans who belonged here before us. We work as well as we can within the realities of commerce to keep food systems vital, and healthy food affordable for all.
- ◆ We are trying to come up with a long-term plan and grow our business, according to diverse community members' needs and desires. (Shoot dang, we aren't even insisting that we only have input from "stakeholders"!)
- ◆ We struggle to balance these needs, literally, on spreadsheets and in accounting software.
- ◆ We also struggle to care for all of our own real human needs and provide longer-term employment with true quality of life so that we can continue to make People's go.
- ◆ We do all of this collectively, striving for equity, using our team structures, areas of responsibility, strong communication skills, individual initiative and commitment to personal growth, and our support and accountability for each other.

The Collective Management knows that we are doing well and that we can do better. We set out in 2016 to try to find answers to some of the big questions that were propelling us forward to help to shape our long-term plan. We wanted to work with other organizations that share the values that we express in our Ends and we wanted to engage with each other, Member-Owners and the Board of Directors to deepen community alignment around our Ends so that People's stays People's while we grow with the changing times.

We are working toward having more and more space for those of us in our communities who don't get a lot of space under capitalism and patriarchy. We are people of color, women, and gender variant. We need more space for those of us who speak English as our second language and the many of us who are feeling the strain of the inflated economy in Portland. We are making more room in the conversations that influence our direction for growth, in our hiring processes, in our learning, and in our actions. We all feel the places that we are stuck, and understand how imperative it is that our physical space needs to change to make more room for all of us.

## THINGS WE DID THAT WE FEEL GOOD ABOUT:

- There is more affordable packaged food in the store. This feels good because we understand that sometimes scratch cooking creates an additional barrier to food access.
- Humans of Color Yoga in the Community Room, the Black Lives Matter and Standing Rock fundraisers feel like a success because we are standing up for the values expressed in our Ends in more informed and concrete ways.
- We continued to learn about white supremacy and the harm it does, and to challenge it amongst ourselves and community members.
- We made room to talk with each other, relief staff and the Board about challenging issues that came up around our fundraisers.
- We managed to do a small cost-of-living increase by opting for less with our health insurance plan. We introduced a small reimbursement for vitamins and herbal supplements for everyone insured at People's.
- More of us elected to take the People's match in our retirement plan.
- More of us stayed on at People's than in previous years.

## NOT YET:

- We will need a lot more space to offer a larger variety of affordable foods and stay financially viable.
- Didn't make it to a \$15 starting wage.
- Workers often feel like they can't get to every part of their jobs.

Although this work is not without challenges, we'll continue working toward our Ends – the goals that tie our staff, the Board, Member-Owners, and shoppers together in community.

# 2016 in Photos





people's  
FOOD CO-OP