

*Plainfield Co-op September 2020, President's Report*  
*By Cat Klarich*

It has been quite a year since the member-owners of the Plainfield Co-op met last September. Our beloved Co-op was in a desperate financial straight and the membership was presented with 4 distinct paths, ultimately voting to cultivate our current model. The message was clear, we needed to work together and pledge support for our little store and its loyal staff. With nearly 50 years rooted in this community, the Plainfield Co-op is your store. Showing its commitment to the Co-op, the membership purchased pre-paid gift cards which saved thousands of dollars in processing fees and pledged to shop more at the Co-op. Together we pledged over \$87,000- 4 times more than was pledged in the previous year! Thank you for your patronage!

Gaining momentum from your enthusiasm and support, we focused on financial stability and increasing staff compensation. After the 2020 Budget was drafted and approved, we set out to hire a new General Manager. Staff members, Chloe and Jezebel stepped up and joined the Hiring Committee. They were invaluable, providing their expertise and insight at every step, even sacrificing their Saturday's mornings! We hired Peter Youngbaer, the former Executive Director of the People's Health and Wellness Clinic. During his tenure there, a flood ravaged downtown Barre. Peter was first on the scene, literally pulling up his rubber bootstraps. Despite this natural disaster, they saw patients that same day- in the garage! We certainly did not anticipate Peter's emergency management skills would come in handy his first weeks on the job or that the staff would literally be putting their lives on the line to do there's. While the Plainfield Co-op has weathered its share of crises, nothing could have prepared us for the impact of a global pandemic. Prioritizing the health and safety of the staff, members, and customers, the store closed temporarily. In a special emergency meeting, the Board of Directors unanimously approved "hero" pay for the employees. They are essential workers, critical for their role in providing this vital service to the community. Under the leadership of Peter and his staff, the store adapted its model to safely serve the community with curbside pick-up, an express window, and this summer, the store re-opened its doors! We appreciate your flexibility as you adjusted the way you shop with us.

We are reminded, now more than ever, that the Co-op is more than a store. The store is the engine that drives the Co-op's impacts for the community. The better the store is, the further our impact will reach. In the spirit of our 7<sup>th</sup> Guiding Principal, *Concern for Community*, we welcome a new Membership Coordinator, Leah Tedesco, who will help us reach our goal of enhanced member engagement, advocacy, and outreach to the community. We need your continued patronage and invite you to shop with us. Everyone is welcome and you do not need to be a member to shop! By spending your dollars at the Plainfield Co-op, instead of stopping at the local gas station, you support local farmers, bakers, crafters, brewers, and candle stick makers. Your support also ensures the capacity of the co-op to provide its staff with a living wage. As we navigate through this current crisis, we are humbled by your appreciation and continued patronage.

We want to hear from you! Thank you, as always, for your feedback. Looking ahead at our long-range plans to be more accessible, affordable, and have a positive impact in the community, one thing is certain- we cannot do it without you!

In Cooperation,

