

Recognition from Peers at the CCMA 2018 Awards Banquet

The annual granting of CCMA awards for excellence and service is managed by the Cooperative Development Foundation (CDF: cdf.coop) with assistance from past winners of these awards and sponsor support from National Co+op Grocers. CDF also manages several cooperative funds including the Howard Bowers Fund, whose board grants scholarships for food co-op education and training, including CCMA attendance. Over \$40,000 in grants to co-ops were made by the Bowers Fund in 2017, and a silent auction of donated items, held during the conference, raised added thousands of dollars. (Find the Fund at cdf.coop/bowersfund.)

With a quick series of inspirational images, Stuart Reid and Jacqueline Hannah from Food Co-op Initiative (FCI) presented reminders of the past decade's resurgence of food co-op startups. Presently, FCI is working with 120 startup groups across the country. Adding to their encouraging report, the National Co-op Bank announced a \$100,000 grant to FCI to further its work.

Startup of the Year is awarded by FCI to a recently launched co-op that is achieving outstanding results. This year, recognition went to Sugar Beet Co-op in Oak Park, Illinois, and the conference audience got a glimpse of its snappy look and impressive accomplishments. In its second year, ending mid-2017, Sugar Beet (sugarbeet.coop) achieved strong growth in owners, services, and profitability, with sales reaching \$3.6 million. Recently, the co-op was positioned for further improvements by being accepted as a member of National Co+op Grocers. The award was received on behalf of Sugar Beet by Chris Roland, its general manager.

Cooperative Excellence recognizes a retail that has made significant progress in meeting member needs. BriarPatch Co-op (Grass Valley, California) was introduced by Carolee Colter of CDS Consulting Co-op, who noted the co-op's extremely high employee satisfaction, its strong organizational unity, and its growing community impact. In the current year it anticipates sales of around \$33 million and an ownership base exceeding 10,000. Some 14 BriarPatch board members and staff were present to accept the award and the crowd's applause.

In recognition of **Cooperative Innovation and Achievement**, Steve Saltzman from Self-Help Credit Union had nominated Durham Community Market, and his colleague at Self-Help, Darrow Isaacman-VanWertz, presented the award. Led by its general manager, Leila Wolfrum, Durham Community Market is a consumer/worker hybrid. Now in its fourth year, it has grown strongly and profitably and is a member of National Co+op Grocers. Known for its thinking outside the box, Durham Community Market is expanding co-op impact by hiring a very diverse workforce and delivering outstanding community outreach programs—including weekly \$3 dinners that attract hundreds of people to cooperative food and culture.

Two awards were given for **Cooperative Board Service** in recognition of outstanding dedication and leadership in governance. Michael Healy of CDS Consulting Co-op introduced Laura Miklowitz of Hendersonville (N.C.) Community Co-op, who has served for 17 years and is the board facilitator. After joining the board during a period of turmoil, Miklowitz was a driving force in a major and successful expansion of the co-op.

The second award for board service went to Alan Weisberg of BriarPatch Co-op, an effective leader in the evolution of this very successful co-op. The large BriarPatch contingent, their co-op having received the award for excellence, came up front in order to thank Weisberg, who joined the board in 2004 and also was the first person from that co-op ever to attend CCMA.

Bill Gessner of CDS Consulting Co-op gave a stirring introduction to Barry Smith of Flatbush Food Co-op (Brooklyn, N.Y.), with further tribute from the co-op's board president, Sheila Lieberman. Smith started this co-op in his basement in 1976 and has been its general manager ever since, 42 years to date. Presently at \$17 million in annual sales and operated by a staff that reflects its extremely diverse community, Flatbush Co-op generates sales per square foot at more than twice the national food co-op average. Lieberman noted that Barry's life has been equally dedicated to the greater co-op world during all those years; Gessner commented that he has "a tremendous set of skills that he hides from everyone" (including "worrying"). Barry Smith received a standing ovation and an award for his remarkable **Cooperative Service**.





Page 10 above: Stuart Reid and Jacqueline Hannah of Food Co-op Initiative present Sugar Beet Co-op General Manager Chris Roland with the golden grocery cart, the award for **Startup of the Year**.

Page 10 below: Board President Drew Peng, board member Beth Hopping, General Manager Leila Wolfram, and Darrow Issacman-VanWertz of Self Help Credit Union accept the **Cooperative Innovation and Achievement Award** on behalf of Durham Co-op Market, one of the announced co-op hosts (with Weaver Street Market) of CCMA 2019.

Page 11 above left: Bill Gessner of CDS Consulting Co-op, and Flatbush Co-op board members Vice President Charlotte Chaykin-Mirer and President Sheila Lieberman, honor General Manager Barry Smith for **Cooperative Service**.

Page 11 above right: Laura Miklowitz, board director and facilitator at Henderson Community Co-op, accepts a **Cooperative Board Service** award after an introduction by Michael Healy of CDS Consulting Co-op.

Members of the board and staff from BriarPatch Food Co-op. General Manager Chris Maher, 3rd from left, accepted the **Cooperative Excellence Award** on behalf of BriarPatch. Board President Alan Weisberg, 9th from left, received an award for **Cooperative Board Service**.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN CENTER FOR COOPERATIVES