

NEIGHBORING FOOD CO-OP ASSOCIATION



CO-OPERATION:
our **FOUNDATION**

Greenfield Community College
March 16th, 2024

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Thank You!

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS AND ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS
FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION



cobank.coop



cooperativefund.org



stonyfield.com



National Cooperative Bank
ncb.coop



newenglandfarmersunion.org



nfu.org/local-food-safety-collaborative

elevate your identity



identity.coop



Cooperative Development Foundation
cdf.coop



ecrs.com



deansbeans.com



ncg.coop



organicvalley.coop



trustage.com



simplyvoting.com



dorsey.com



FARM CREDIT EAST
farmcrediteast.com



leafund.org



fci.coop



sharedcapital.coop



equalexchange.coop



brazeehuban.com



healthfoodinsurance.com



smu.ca/iccm



realpickles.com



pachamamacoffee.com



fedcoseeds.com



deeprootorganic.coop



valleyworker.coop



lariojanawines.com



federation.coop



13th ANNUAL MEETING



MESSAGE FROM JOHN CRANE, PRESIDENT, NFCA



John Crane
NFCA BOARD PRESIDENT
GENERAL MANAGER
PORTLAND FOOD CO-OP, ME

Dear Co-operators,

Our region is unique in having this community of food co-ops who choose to work together toward a shared vision of a thriving co-operative economy, rooted in a healthy, just, and sustainable food system, and a vibrant community of co-

operative enterprise. I feel honored to have been twice elected to your board of directors and to have spent the past year as board president. My board service has prompted me to learn about and visit many of our member co-ops. In fact, there are only four of our storefront co-ops that I have yet to visit (Cambridge, High Falls, Wolfeboro, and Dorchester...you are on my list). What I have learned is that while each of our co-ops is unique in the same way that each of our communities are unique, there is a common thread of co-operative principles and values that makes me feel at home no matter which one of you I visit. I honor the work you all do to express the value of the co-operative model in your own communities.

I hope that many of you can attend our 13th Annual Meeting. With so many opportunities before us to increase our impact, support each other's success, and communicate our difference, we chose the theme of "Co-operation: Our Foundation" as an expression for this year's gathering. This reflects our desire to rekindle connections as we continue to work together to support one another, share ideas, and build successful food co-ops that contribute to stronger communities and a better future for everyone.

As always, I want to share my appreciation for our executive director and staff, and to my fellow board members. We continue to be committed to the vision and mission of our organization. It takes ingenuity and

dedication to make this happen. I also need to express my gratitude to outgoing board members Rachel Watrous and Kathleen Krider for their years of commitment to our work.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank all of you, leaders of our member co-ops. Your support of and commitment to the NFCA is what makes this all possible. Our goal is to provide the best possible organization that meets the needs of our co-operative community. We are always open to your thoughts and feedback.

Our communities need us now more than ever before and I am eager to see what we can accomplish together as we continue to grow, evolve, and demonstrate the value of the co-operative business model.

I appreciate you all.

John Crane, President

Neighboring Food Co-op Association
General Manager, Portland Food Co-op
john.crane@portlandfood.coop



**CO-OPERATION:
OUR FOUNDATION**

CO-OPERATION: *Our* FOUNDATION



THE 2024 NEIGHBORING CO-OPERATOR AWARD



This year's Neighboring Co-operator award goes to Alice Rubin, a leader whose quiet, unassuming and unwavering commitment to our shared Values and Principles has shaped the co-operative economy far beyond the 8,000 square feet called "The Willimantic Food Co-op."

Alice began her co-operative career back in 1980, making deliveries for a co-operative warehouse in Hartford to a fledgling food buying club in Willimantic, CT. This work was the foundation for a 40-year career with a food co-op that would grow to become a leading voice in the sector, and instrumental in the genesis of many other community initiatives, businesses and organizations, including the Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA).

Under Alice Rubin's leadership, the Willimantic Food Co-op has grown from a 40 member buyers' club in a church basement to a 7,000 member, property-owning, policy-changing, community-engaging, "All are Welcome" co-operative business at the heart Connecticut's "Quiet Corner." Her visionary mindset has had impact beyond the growth and success of the Co-op. For example, she planted the seed for CLiCK, a shared-use commercial kitchen in Willimantic that incubates new local food businesses and supports food justice throughout the area, and helped establish Grow Windham, an educational organization focused on creating space for youth in our local food system.

Alice has contributed to the success of our regional network of food co-ops through active support of the

establishment and growth of the NFCA as well as numerous start-ups in southern New England, including Fiddleheads Food Co-op in New London, CT, and Urban Greens Co-op Market in Providence, RI. Her mentorship has supported the development of other leaders both within her co-op and in our wider community, and she has advocated for greater collaboration among farmer co-ops, credit unions, and other co-operatives in our region. Under her leadership, Willimantic Food Co-op played a key role in helping update state statutes to make it easier to form a co-operative enterprise, working in characteristic collaboration with the NFCA and other member co-ops, credit unions, and partners including the New England Farmers Union and NCBA CLUSA. These efforts will continue to have an impact for co-operative development in the state of Connecticut for into the future. And she has done this while running her own business, Alice's Greenhouse which is where you can find her today, with Bodhi and Finn, making soil blocks and potting tomato plants.

Reflecting Alice's commitment to economic inclusion, the Willimantic Food Co-op Board of Directors has established a solidarity fund in her honor that offsets the cost of membership for low-income individuals. For more information on how you can contribute to the "Go Ask Alice" fund, visit the Willimantic Food Co-op website.

The Annual Neighboring Co-operator

Award is given to a "Staff Member, Director or Member of an NFCA Member Co-op or Partner Organization or representative of such organization for special contributions to the NFCA and the advancement of our Vision."

In honor of recipient, and in recognition of her commitment to co-operative education and leadership development, the NFCA invites our community — individuals, co-ops, and partner organizations — to join us in making a donation to CDF's Cooperative Education Fund.

For more information, on the Neighboring Co-operator Award, please visit www.cdf.coop/nfca



STAFF REPORT



Erbin Crowell
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NFCA



Suzette Snow-Cobb
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
NFCA

Members,

As always, we first want to thank you, our Member Co-ops, for your participation, feedback, and support of your Neighboring Food Co-op Association over the past year. As a co-operative, we exist to enable our members to work together to meet their collective needs and goals, support shared success, and increase our impact for our communities, and we depend on your engagement in this work.

Last year marked our first in-person Annual Meeting since the start of the pandemic. Our theme “Rebuilding Connections, Celebrating Co-operation,” was visible all around us as we gathered to rekindle relationships among our directors, managers, staff, and partners, and welcomed Congressman Jim McGovern of Massachusetts as our speaker. “A major part of food security is making sure that nutritious healthy food is available to people where they are,” said McGovern, “and co-ops are instrumental in making that real.” We also honored Cornelius Blanding, executive director of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives / Land Assistance Fund, with our Neighboring Co-operator Award, recognizing our partnership and his commitment to creating rural community-based economic development throughout the rural South for black farmers, landowners, and low-income communities.

Throughout 2023 we continued to build connections through our peer networking groups, workshops, and trainings. We promoted your co-ops to shopper, producers, and activists at the Green River Festival and Northeast Organic Farming Association conferences. At CCMA we advocated for the importance of our Principles in state law and celebrated with Littleton Food Co-op as they received the 2023 Cooperative Excellence Award. We represented our members through service on the board of NCBA CLUSA, and we participated in the International Cooperative Alliance’s Cooperative Identity Advisory Group, facilitating a global dialog on the relevance of our Values and Principles to issues of our day. And we attended the 20th Anniversary of the International Centre for Co-operative Management at Saint Mary’s University, celebrating with a new cohort of

graduates from the Master of Management: Co-ops & Credit Unions — including April Harkness of Hanover Co-op Food Stores and Natasha LaTour of River Valley Co-op!

Cross sector collaboration has always been a focus of our work, and during Co-op Month we provided members with tools to engage their communities through our Go Co-op! initiative, working with Cabot Creamery Co-op, REI Co-op, and Mad River Glen to incentivize new member drives through (what else?) plaid skis! We completed an RCDG grant in collaboration with CDF supporting technical assistance to small and rural food co-ops — work that we are carrying into the coming year — and helped incorporate a new start-up. We were the first retail organization to join the Northeast Organic Family Farm Partnership a couple of years ago, and in 2023 we continued our efforts to support our region’s organic dairy farmers in respond to their loss of major buyers. Looking forward, we are excited to work with CoBank and the Farmers Union on policy advocacy in 2024.

As a community, we have relied on one another for support, feedback, and encouragement over the past year, and we want to thank our Board for their collaboration. We also want to thank our partners, and especially CoBank, Cabot Creamery Co-op, Cooperative Development Foundation, Cooperative Fund of the Northeast, DotCooperation, National Cooperative Bank (NCB), New England Farmers Union / Local Food Safety Collaborative and Stonyfiel for their support, as well as our friends at Greenfield Community College for always being excellent hosts.

Our theme for 2024, “Co-operation: Our Foundation,” reflects our commitment to our shared Identity as we lay the groundwork for the Second International Year of Co-ops in 2025. We’re looking forward to gathering with you, again as we look forward. In Co-operation,

Erbin Crowell
Executive Director

Suzette Snow-Cobb
Associate Director



Assabet Co-op Market’s Grand Opening on May 31st, 2023

TREASURER'S REPORT



Rachel Watrous

**NFCA TREASURER
PRODUCE & OPERATIONS MANAGER
FIDDLEHEADS FOOD CO-OP, CT**

As our food co-ops have emerged from the pandemic, working together for mutual support has been as important as ever. Even as we have worked to support our own members and shoppers, our employees, and local producers, we have reached out to one another to share ideas, overcome difficulties, and try new approaches.

We had budgeted for a net income of about \$15.5k for 2023 to support our capacity to connect and serve our members, conduct marketing and outreach, and provide technical assistance and other services. Overall income was negatively impacted by reductions in dues contributions related primarily to the multiyear impact of store expansions and financial challenges, which we consider an investment in the future success and growth of our network. This was offset by support from organizational partners, grants related to work with organizations including CDF, the Local Food Safety Collaboration, and the New England Farmers Union, and income from technical assistance and administration. Management of expenses and reduced personnel costs also contributed to a better than expected bottom line, and as a result we were able to invest in materials and infrastructure, and provide a bonus to staff, ending the year with a net income of about \$25k. This has resulted in an average annual net income just above our goal of \$10k over our thirteen years.

Thanks to the commitment of our members, collaborative partners, and sound financial management, the NFCA continued to build a foundation for sustainability enabling us to serve our members and invest in opportunities over time.

Rachel Watrous, Treasurer
Previous Interim General Manager
Fiddleheads Food Co-op

2023 FINANCIALS BALANCE SHEET

	Dec 31, '23	Dec 31, '22
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking & Savings	\$218,146	\$158,479
Accounts Receivable	\$9,985	\$16,728
Other Current Assets	\$4,508	\$2,015
Total Current Assets	\$232,639	\$177,222
Fixed Assets	\$999	\$1,941
Other Assets	\$9,631	\$10,562
Total Assets	\$243,269	\$189,725
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$2,425	\$2,671
Other Current Liabilities	\$55,442	\$20,429
Total Current Liabilities	\$57,867	\$23,100
Long Term Liabilities	\$46,318	\$50,000
Total Liabilities	\$104,186	\$73,100
Total Equity	\$139,083	\$116,625
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$243,269	\$189,725

PROFIT & LOSS

	Jan - Dec '23	Jan - Dec '22
INCOME		
Member Dues	\$224,290	\$209,918
Sponsorship Support	\$51,150	\$53,875
Consulting	\$37,640	\$58,214
Other Income	\$12,502	\$6,145
Total Income	\$325,582	\$328,151
Cost of Sales	\$150	\$3,186
Cost of Sales - Frozen Foods	\$-	\$3,036
Cost of Sales - UPC Code	\$150	\$150
Total Cost of Goods Sold	\$150	\$3,186
Gross Income	\$325,432	\$324,965
EXPENSE		
Interest Expense	\$1,431	\$8,206
Board of Directors	\$430	\$877
Personnel Expense	\$212,566	\$266,776
Activities	\$64,187	\$41,137
Donations	\$4,500	\$500
Taxes	\$8,640	\$561
Depreciation Expense	\$5,018	\$1,294
Other	\$6,201	\$2,942
Total Expense	\$302,973	\$322,292
Net Income	\$22,459	\$2,673



Some of our Neighboring Co-ops celebrating the 2023 Co-op Month theme: Co-operation: Our Foundation; during our yearly Co-op Month Weekly Photo Contest.



NFCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF



IMAGES FROM OUR 2023 BOARD RETREAT (from Top Left): John Crane, NFCA Board President, General Manager, Portland Food Co-op, ME; Kathleen Krider, Former Board Member, Willimantic Food Co-op; Mary Mullally, Interim General Manager, Hunger Mountain Co-op, VT; Erbin Crowell, Executive Director, NFCA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Crane, President (General Manager, Portland Food Co-op, ME)

Mary Mullally, Vice President (Interim General Manager, Hunger Mountain Co-op, VT)

Rachel Watrous, Treasurer (Previous Interim General Manager, Fiddleheads Food Co-op, CT)

Michael Wells, Secretary (Board of Directors, Putney Food Co-op, VT)

Kathleen Krider, (Board of Directors, Willimantic Food Co-op, CT)

Katharine Arnold, (Board & Manager, Buffalo Mountain Food Co-op, VT)

Chris Whiton, (Operations Manager, Littleton Food Co-op, NH)

Lucy Georgeff, (General Manager, High Falls Co-op, NY)

Thank You!

As we look back on the past year, we want to offer our profound thanks to a few people who moved on from their roles in the NFCA in 2023, and that have contributed so much to our work over the years.

Sue Miller served as Co-General Manager of Upper Valley Food Co-op, White River Junction, VT since 2010, and has been an invaluable member of the Board of Directors since 2015, including two years serving as President. Her unflagging commitment to the NFCA, our original vision, and our Member Co-ops has made all the difference, especially in the last few years of the uncertainty and instability brought on by the pandemic. We wish her all the best in her retirement and are excited to continue working with her in new ways.

Bonnie Hudspeth was originally recruited to the NFCA as a contractor in 2011, bringing her experience as Project Manager for the successful launch of Monadnock Food Co-op to help support a new wave of start-ups in our region. So much of the NFCA's evolution was supported by Bonnie's energy, creativity, and innovation, and we offer our great appreciation of all her contributions as we look forward to her continued success.

Alexis Alexander had already been active with the NFCA as a staff member from GreenStar Food Co-op when she was hired in 2021 to help us expand our activities in peer networking and logistics. We are so thankful for her contributions to our ability to serve and connect our member co-ops at such a critical time and wish her all the best in her new endeavors.

NFCA MEMBER REGISTER 2023

MEMBER CO-OPERATIVES

1. **Belfast Community Co-op**, Belfast, ME (Joined 2021)
2. **Blue Hill Co-op**, Blue Hill, ME (2017)
3. **Brattleboro Food Co-op**, Brattleboro, VT (2011)
4. **Buffalo Mountain Food Co-op**, Hardwick, VT (2011)
5. **Cambridge Food Co-op**, Cambridge, NY (2019)
6. **City Market, Onion River Co-op**, Burlington, VT (2011)
7. **Fiddleheads Natural Foods Co-op**, New London, CT (2012)
8. **Flatbush Food Co-op**, Brooklyn, NY (2018)
9. **Franklin Community Co-op** (Green Fields Co-op Market, Greenfield, MA, and McCusker's Co-op Market, Shelburne Falls, MA (2011)
10. **GreenStar Food Co-op**, Ithaca, NY (2016)
11. **Hanover Co-op Food Stores**, Hanover & Lebanon, NH, and White River Junction, VT (2011)
12. **High Falls Food Co-op**, High Falls, NY (2021)
13. **Hunger Mountain Co-op**, Montpelier, VT (2011)
14. **Leverett Village Co-op**, Leverett, MA (2011)
15. **Littleton Food Co-op**, Littleton, NH (2011)
16. **Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op**, Middlebury, VT (2011)
17. **Monadnock Food Co-op**, Keene, NH (Associate 2012, Opened 2013)
18. **Morrisville Food Co-op**, Morrisville, VT (Associate 2013, Opened 2017)
19. **Old Creamery Co-op**, Cummington, MA (2012)
20. **Plainfield Food Co-op**, Plainfield, VT (2011)
21. **Portland Food Co-op**, Portland (2016)
22. **Putney Food Co-op**, Putney, VT (2011)
23. **Quabbin Harvest Co-op**, Orange, MA (2014)
24. **River Valley Co-op**, Northampton and Easthampton, MA (2011)
25. **Rutland Area Food Co-op**, Rutland, VT (2011)
26. **Springfield Food Co-op**, Springfield, VT (2012)
27. **Upper Valley Food Co-op**, White River Junction, VT (2011)
28. **Urban Greens Co-op Market**, Providence, RI (Associate 2012, Opened 2019)
29. **Wild Oats Co-op Market**, Williamstown, MA (2011)
30. **Willimantic Food Co-op**, Willimantic, CT (2011)
31. **Wolfeboro Food Co-op**, Wolfeboro, NH (2019)

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

1. **Androscoggin Food Co-op**, Berlin, NH (2018)
2. **Assabet Co-op Market**, Maynard, MA (2012)
3. **Caledonia Food Co-op**, St. Johnsbury, VT (2020)
4. **Charles River Food Co-op**, Watertown, MA (2021)
5. **Common Share Food Co-op**, Amherst, MA (2012)
6. **Dorchester Food Co-op**, Dorchester, MA (2012)
7. **Electric City Co-op**, Schenectady, NY (2018)
8. **Great River Co-op**, Walpole, NH (2012)
9. **Kingston Food Co-op**, NY (2020)
10. **Mad River Market Co-op**, Winsted, CT (2017)
11. **Newburgh Food Co-op**, Newburgh, NY (2020)
12. **North End Food Co-op**, Waterbury, CT (2023)
13. **Port Jervis Food Co-op**, Port Jervis, NY (2022)



Dorchester Food Co-op celebrating their Grand Opening on October 14th, 2023



SOME WAYS TO BUILD CO-OPERATION - *Today!*



Northeast Organic Family Farm Partnership
In 2022, the NFCA was the first retailers' organization to join the effort to help save 135 Northeast Organic Dairies that lost their contracts with major buyers. Since then, twenty-two member co-ops joined in the effort, continuing throughout 2023 by encouraging shoppers to take the pledge to support our organic dairy farmers and increasing sales of their products. Learn more, join in: <https://www.saveorganicfamilyfarms.org>.



New England Farmers Union
As we prepare for negotiations on the next Farm Bill and look forward to elections in the Fall, the NFCA and the New England Farmers Union have partnered with CoBank to strengthen to voice of our region's farmers and consumers. Your food co-op helps by joining the Farmers Union. <https://newenglandfarmersunion.org>



In June, NFCA Executive Director Erbin Crowell participated in the ICA General Assembly in Brussels, Belgium, as co-operators from around the world reaffirmed their commitment to sustainability.



Go Co-op!
Each October, the NFCA joins NCBA CLUSA in celebrating Co-op Month. Thirty one co-ops participated in Co-op Month activities including joining our webinar to share strategies for using Co-op Month to support cross sector collaboration and consumer awareness of the Co-operative Movement, promote food co-op membership with Cabot Creamery Co-op offering a raffle of products from Cabot, REI Co-op, and Mad River Glen and utilizing "Go Co-op" materials to identify co-op produced products. See more: <https://nfca.coop/go>



Co-operative Development Fund
In 2023, the NFCA completed a USDA grant project in collaboration with CDF to provide technical support to small rural food co-ops across the Northeast – work that will continue in 2024. <https://cdf.coop>



Join the International Center for Co-operative Management for a Study Tour of Mondragón, Spain, June 15-23.

Witness first-hand this vibrant co-operative economy, connect with students, innovators and leading scholars, and expand your knowledge of our movement. For more information, visit <https://managementstudies.coop>



The Co-op 5K
April 20 – May 3, 2024 (Remote)
Help CDF celebrate 80 Years! Run, walk, roll or stroll with the Neighboring Food Co-ops team in 2024, building community as we raise funds for co-operative development. For more information and to sign up, visit <https://nfca.coop/5K>



CCMA Food Co-op Conference: Rising Tides Lifting Communities Through Cooperation
May 30 - June 1, 2023

We're proud co-sponsors of the largest gathering of U.S. food co-op leaders in the country as returns to the Northeast – hosted by Portland Food Co-op! <https://ccma.coop>



Co-op Impact Conference
2-3 October 2023
Held in Washington, DC, IMPACT 2024 will bring together hundreds of co-operative leaders from across sectors and industries, as well as developers, professionals, academics and policymakers. <https://ncba.coop>



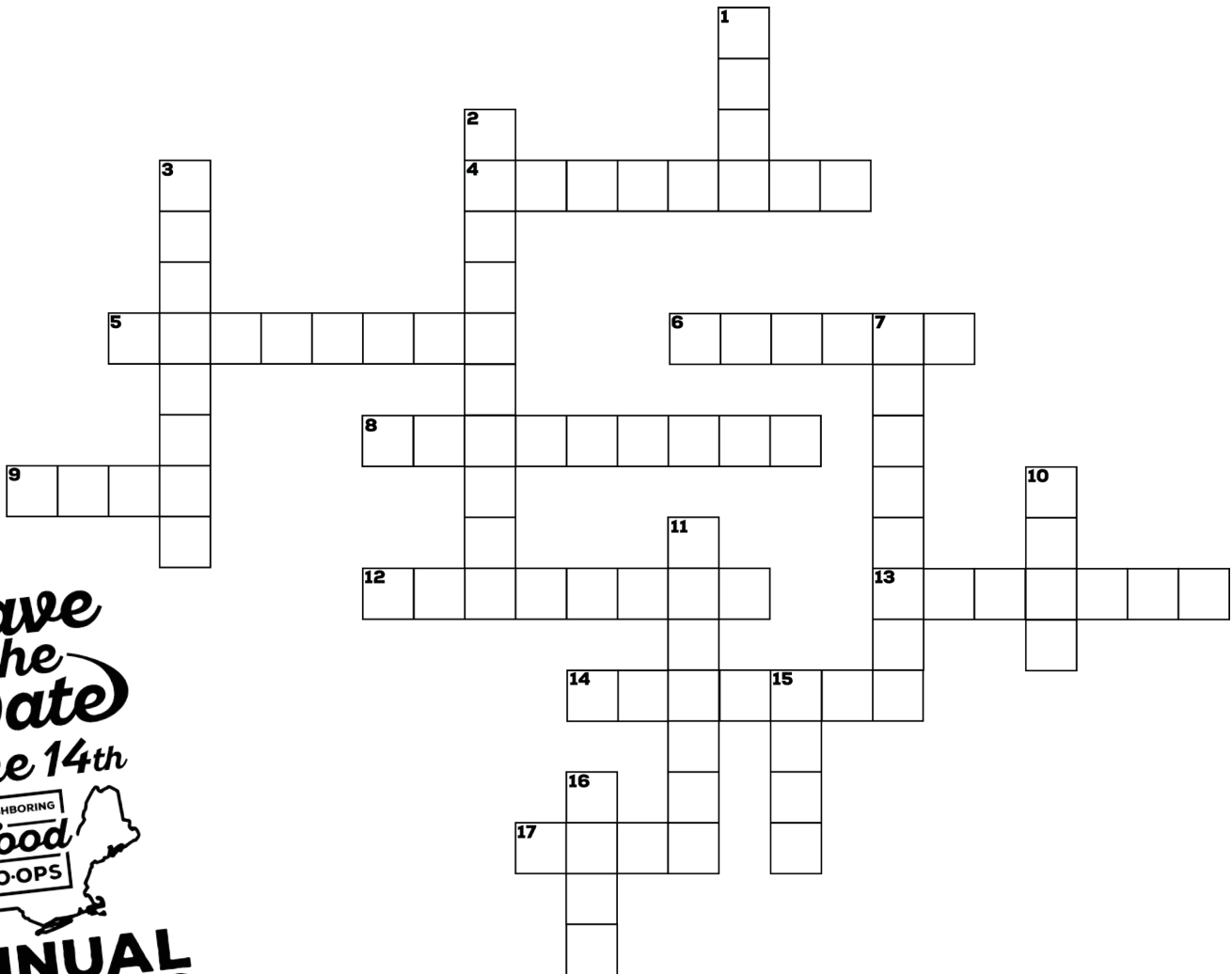
NFCA ANNUAL MEETING
Saturday March 15, 2025
Please mark your calendars now and plan to join us for our 14th Annual Meeting next year as we bring together our member co-ops, partners, and speakers for a day of networking, dialog, and collaboration. <https://nfca.coop>



Suzette Snow-Cobb, Associate Director, NFCA, at NFCA's booth at the 2023 Green River Music Festival last June.



Complete to enter a chance for \$500 CD credit from ICCM - St. Mary's University!



ACROSS

4. principle 4's first word
5. education, _____, & information
6. one _____, one vote
8. self-help, self-responsibility, _____
9. tree symbol in co-op logo
12. what is the N in NCBA
13. for short, the next International Year
14. _____, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others
17. More Than Good _____.

DOWN

1. _____ hunger by 2030
2. M in CCMA stands for
3. Number of NFCA Annual Meetings
7. _____, equity, and solidarity
10. year Dorchester Co-op opened
11. town where a co-op opened its doors in 2023
15. targets for 2030 for short
16. dot. _____

Two ways to be entered to win a \$500 CD Credit toward the cost of educational programs with the International Centre for Co-operative Management at Saint Mary's University, Fill out an Annual Meeting Evaluation Survey. Have fun---do this Co-op Crossword!

E-mail your entry, or text a photo of completed puzzle to Suzette@nfca.coop, 413.824.0232 by 3/22/2024 to be included in our drawing.



Congratulations

TO OUR NEIGHBORING CO-OPS
CELEBRATING ANNIVERSARIES IN 2023!



Neighboring Food Co-op Association // P.O. Box 93, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370 USA // info@nfca.coop // <https://nfca.coop/>

The Neighboring Food Co-op Association is a regional federation of food co-ops working together toward a shared vision of a thriving co-operative economy, rooted in a healthy, just and sustainable food system, and a vibrant community of co-operative enterprise.



Layout and Design by Justin Jankus Creative Services

