For Immediate Release

Thunder Bay worker co-op gains recognition for offering more than jobs

Guelph, ON October 23, 2015. TeamWerks Co-operative, a worker-owned enterprise in Thunder Bay with health as its goal, will receive the 2015 award for co-op engagement at the Co-op Conference and Celebration at the Teatro Conference and Event Centre on Oct. 28 in Milton.

The co-op is owned by more than 40 survivors of mental illness and addictions. Operating eight businesses including a car wash, two coffee shops, a shredding service and a community garden, it provides useful services and a sense of empowerment to its workers.

"One of the most important aspects of TeamWerks' success and sustainability is its ability to employ members who meet business needs while they are pursuing rehabilitation," notes Hugh Nelson of Y's Owl Maclure Co-operative Centre who nominated TeamWerks. In attempt to help workers succeed, the co-operative provides them services such as skills instruction and training, employment plans, referrals, and accommodations and adaptations within the work area.

The healing aspect of the co-op can be found through informal peer supports, social integration, and opportunities for making decisions about the enterprise, he adds.

Doug Dowhos, the co-op's supervisor, can be thanked for many of the co-operative's achievements, notes Vanessa Hammond, chair of the Health Care Co-operatives Federation of Canada. Dowhos cultivates engagement from health care workers, co-op members and the community: "And the message (of what can be accomplished) has resonated with an even wider audience," adds Hammond. TeamWerks has shared its model with other countries.

Three additional trophies will be presented at the Co-op Conference and Celebration. London's Ian Shewan is recognized for advocacy and government relations; lifelong learning leader Gay Lea Foods Co-operative Ltd. earns the Co-operative Spirit Award in the category of co-operative education, and Peggy Baillie of Eat Local Sudbury Co-operative Inc. is acknowledged for her exceptional work in food co-op development.

Principle Six, or "Co-operation among Co-operatives" is the key theme of this year's conference. The event, organized and hosted by the Ontario Co-operative Association, brings together leaders, stakeholders, staff and members from new, emerging and established co-ops for a full day of learning, networking and celebration. Students, interns, and others new to the co-op sector and/or considering starting a co-op also find value in this conference. For more information, visit: www.ontario.coop

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Co-operative enterprises build a better world

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