

## INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR CO-OPERATIVES EDUCATION PROGRAM

**Guelph, ON. October 14, 2014.** The *All 4 Each* program - a suite of youth, co-operative and community engagement initiatives presented by the Ontario Co-operative Association (On Co-op) - was awarded the Award of Excellence in the Mobilization and Involvement category by the International Summit of Cooperatives.

The TOP.COOP award was presented to Kerr Smith, Education Manager of On Co-op by Charles Gould, Director General of the International Co-operative Alliance, during an awards ceremony held in Quebec City on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

"It is an incredible honour to be recognized with an international award for *All 4 Each*," said Kerr Smith, Education Manager of On Co-op. "This affirms that the various components of *All 4 Each* combine to produce a sustainable, efficient and effective program for mobilizing and connecting co-ops and credit unions with their local schools."

*All 4 Each* is a unified brand of fully-developed, informative, interactive and entertaining resources, presentations and lessons designed to be delivered by leaders from the co-operative community and graduates of On Co-op's Co-operative Young Leaders program, thereby building solid relationships between co-operatives/credit unions and their local teachers and youth

The *All 4 Each* program builds awareness of the co-operative model and values among high school students through professionally-written lessons and activities which seamlessly align with the Ontario school curriculum. Other components of *All 4 Each* include 'train the trainer' mentorship sessions for professional development of co-op sector leaders and youth presenters, fully-developed presentations on co-ops and credit unions as society's 'best kept secrets' and the "Create A Co-op Challenge," a provincial competition which encourages young people to research and then create their own co-operative enterprise (at least on paper).

The *All 4 Each* program is a huge success in Ontario and elements of the program are used in other provinces. It has even been translated into French. There is considerable international interest in franchising the program. "All 4 Each has been described as lighting in a bottle those in the education system," Kerr Smith says. "So far, we have partnered with Ontario co-ops and credit unions to reach more than 5,000 high school 600 university students and the demand for the program means that there are many opportunities for other credit unions and co-operatives to come on board."

The TOP COOP award is the most recent recognition for *All 4 Each*. In 2012, Kerr Smith received the William Llushko young co-operators award for his work in creating *All 4 Each*, and in 2013, the US-based Co-operative Communicators Association recognized "From Beards To Eternity: Our Co-operative History" – the *All 4 Each* historical component with its the 'Best Presentation' award.

PHOTO: Kerr Smith, On Co-op Education Manager (left), and Mark Ventry, On Co-op Executive Director (right) being presented the TOP COOP Award of Excellence for Mobilization and Involvement by Charles Gould (centre), Director General of the International Co-operative Alliance.

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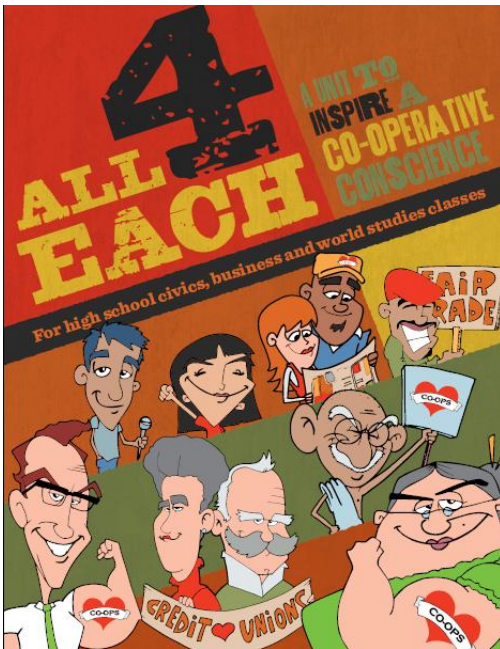


## ABOUT THE TOP COOP AWARD

2014 marks the first year for the international TOP COOP competition, which honours organizations such as On Co-op that have distinguished themselves through the expression of their co-operative values in their marketing creativity and their communications strategies. The eight winners from six countries were selected from a total of 30 entries from 10 states around the world. The finalists in each category were determined by a jury of 24 members from 16 countries.

## ABOUT ALL 4 EACH

*All 4 Each* is the internationally recognized and award-winning youth engagement program from On Co-op. *All 4 Each* connects co-operatives and credit unions with the schools and young people in their communities through a professionally produced suite of engaging and entertaining materials, curricula/lessons and interactive presentations. *All 4 Each* lessons have been designed to fulfil specific learning expectations of Ontario's secondary school curriculum in areas including business fundamentals, entrepreneurship, Canadian and world studies, civics and social change. Lessons can be delivered by teachers, or specially trained co-operative sector representatives. The fifth lesson of the *All 4 Each* program engages students in hypothetically creating a co-operative enterprise, builds on material presented earlier, and supports the Create A Co-op Challenge.



## ABOUT CO-OP WEEK

Canada's national [CO-OP WEEK](#) (October 13-19, 2014) is a time to celebrate and promote the role, accomplishments and contributions of our co-ops and credit unions. Co-op week events help raise the visibility of co-operative organization, and and promote the vibrancy and strength of the co-operative and mutual sector.

The co-operative sector is truly diverse and we are proud to offer a broad range of products and services in so many communities. From childcare to beer, financial services to solar power, there really is a co-operative for everyone and every need.

This year, as we "THINK co-operative", we will be celebrating the contributions co-operatives and mutuals make locally, and how that contribution contributes globally. Co-op Week is the ideal opportunity to encourage more people to think about the co-operative options around us and the benefits they provide across Canada. Co-op Week is a uniquely Canadian phenomenon. In the US, October is Co-op Month. In the UK, they celebrate Co-ops Fortnight in June/July.



## **ABOUT CO-OPERATIVES**

Co-operatives are community-focused businesses that balance people, planet and profit. Co-ops are democratic and value-based, formed to seize local opportunities and meet the needs of their member-owners. As a trusted place to do business, co-operatives are chosen by more than 1 in 7 people worldwide. Twice as many co-ops remain in operation after ten years as other types of business enterprise.

Co-ops exist in virtually every sector of the economy, from agriculture and local food, retail and financial services, to housing, manufacturing, child care, funeral services and renewable energy. The co-operative business model is almost 170 years old and is utilized in 100 countries.

**There are 1,300 co-operatives, credit unions and caisse populaires in Ontario, operating 1,900 locations in 400 communities. Ontario's non-financial co-ops have more than \$30 billion in assets and \$2.1 billion in revenue. The sector is owned by more than 1.4 million members, and is supported by 49,000 volunteers.**

## **ABOUT ON CO-OP**

The Ontario Co-operative Association is an information and resources network with a mission to lead, cultivate and connect co-operatives. On Co-op believes that co-operatives build a better world. We are the trade association and capacity-building organization that develops, engages, educates and advocates for Ontario's 1,300 co-operative businesses.

The Ontario Co-operative Association provides its member-owners with programs, resources and networks that support their organizations and facilitate growth and opportunity. From the strong foundation provided by our membership, On Co-op builds co-op awareness and vitality, and unites the co-operative movement in Ontario.

### **Audrey Aczel, Communication and Events Manager**

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