

OCA Board Member Profile



Shylah Wolfe, Director
Representing Local Food and Farm Co-operatives

- 1. Tell us a bit about yourself (i.e., your background (where you grew up, education, children, which co-operative you work for, your position, etc.)**

I grew up in Southwestern Ontario - rural and agricultural area. I went to McMaster University for a BA in Psychology and University of Saskatchewan for a Masters Certificate in Co-ops and the Social Economy from the School of Public Policy. I also have a Red Seal in Culinary Arts. Currently, I work for Local Food and Farm Co-operative as Project Manager, wherein I perform the general executive duties of running the co-op and support the needs of the Northern and Southern coordinators who work with food and farm co-ops in their regions / communities.

- 2. How long have you been involved in the co-operative movement, and what do you love most about it?**

I have been working directly with co-operatives for eight years. I got involved with co-operatives through food, as a caterer and chef for an art-focused community co-op cafe. Since then I have become involved in a handful of food based co-operatives, particularly multi-stakeholder co-ops.

What I love most about co-operatives is the potential the model possesses to disrupt and democratize local economies.

3. If there is one thing you would want people to know about co-ops, what would it be?

That members have the power in the organization.

4. Why is your co-operative a member of OCA?

We are a member because we highly value the principles of education and co-operation amongst co-operatives.

5. What do you think are some of the benefits of being a member of OCA?

Benefits would include access to co-operative development resources and to privileged communication with the provincial government.

6. Why did you decide to join the OCA board as a Director?

I joined the Board to learn from the leaders in the co-operative sector and to advocate for food and farm co-operatives!

7. How has your past experience helped you in this role?

I have learned from many other co-operatives how varied governance weaknesses and strengths can be between different Boards. I believe I have taken the best of lessons from those differences to understand the pitfalls, to avoid and core competencies required for good board governance.

8. What do you think are some of the opportunities and challenges facing OCA in the next 3 - 5 years?

I would say that the opportunities lie in advocating and preparing a generation for co-operative conversion in succession planning of SMEs, as boomers age out of the labour market / business.

9. What is your vision for OCA?

My vision is to assist civil society (through policy advocacy and education) in a transformation of the economy towards people and planet over profits.

10. Share a fun/silly thing that not many people know about you!

I have gone skydiving over a glacier in New Zealand!