

OCA Board Member Profile



Maya Linsley, Youth Director

- 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 hail from Kitchener Ontario, and I graduated high school at Eastwood CI. Currently, I'm living and studying at the University of Victoria BC, and my concentration is on English. I'm a CYL graduate as well as a recent intern facilitator.

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

I've been involved in the co-op movement for as long as I can remember, because of my family's involvement with various businesses. Around when I started attending CYL, my mother was leading the formation of Arise Architects Co-operative, so I've definitely become more co-op-aware within the last four years. My favourite thing about co-op - if I *have* to name one! - is the sense of community it creates. People in co-ops genuinely care about their fellow members, and a sense of goodwill pervades everything. Co-ops

eliminate the barrier between consumer and provider, instead emphasizing a system of mutual benefit.

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

They are genuinely a better option to traditional business models, in both economic and interpersonal terms. A lot of common complaints about capitalism can be answered by implementing the co-operative model. I think a lot of people see problems within traditional structures, but remain inactive because they believe it is the only way - when in fact, co-op is the perfect, tried-and-true alternative.

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

OCA unifies hundreds of co-operatives in Ontario. Each co-op is a community in itself, but participation in a greater community opens more doors and will ultimately enhance an individual community's performance. Co-ops are about co-operation, and what better way to uplift each one than to create a unifying system of co-operation between all?

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

My time at CYL allowed me to realize that I have a real passion for co-operatives, something I'd previously taken for granted in a few different areas of my life. CYL sparked an urge to get more involved and to give back to the communities that benefitted me so much growing up. When I was offered the opportunity of Youth Director, I could hardly say no; it was the perfect next step to further my knowledge and contributions.

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

CYL provides comprehensive co-operative education, so what I learned there has allowed me to go into this with a strong fundamental knowledge of the various types of work done at OCA.

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

We're in a period of great economic upheaval, and now more than ever it is important to spread awareness of the co-operative movement. Co-op has the ability to support Canada's recovery from the pandemic. This is both an opportunity and a challenge for OCA; we need to seize the moment, but also proceed with care. If we can band together and be successful, we can come out of this stronger than ever, and with an even bigger co-operative presence in Ontario.

8. What is your vision for OCA?

To promote the well-being and outreach of co-operatives in Ontario and create a network of support and development for their communities - especially within the context of Covid-19.

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

I studied ballet for 12 years!