

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On Co-op to expand on 50-year legacy of the Co-operative Young Leaders Program

Guelph ON. September 19, 2017. The Ontario Co-operative Association (On Co-op) has been provided with an opportunity to evolve and expand on the Co-operative Young Leaders ([CYL](#)) program, thanks to being awarded a \$15,000 grant from the 2017 [Libro Prosperity Fund](#).

The thirty recipients of the Fund were announced earlier this month, and marks a fitting way to commemorate the 50th anniversary of CYL, which was celebrated earlier this summer at [Gay Lea Foods Co-operative](#)'s second annual Co-opalooza in Aylmer ON.

On Co-op will use the funds to develop "CYL Start up," an incubator program that will equip participants with the skills, mentorship and economic action plan to go out into the community and launch a viable co-operative business.

"This program will complement our current host of educational programming, including CYL Base Camp (which launched this past summer), the six-week CYL program and the All 4 Each High School Curriculum program," notes Lisa Furfaro, On Co-op's 2017 CYL Program Co-ordinator. *"It will be an incredible opportunity for CYL grads and other youth residing in the St. Thomas and Elgin County areas, who have an entrepreneurial spirit."*

The new program's home will be the [Gay Lea Heritage Museum](#) site in Aylmer, and offer both education and training on the co-operative business model and local community development, while raising awareness for youth engagement and career opportunities within the co-operative sector. Most importantly, it will contribute to Libro's objective of increasing rural youth retention and helping grow prosperity in southwestern Ontario in three key areas: regional economic development, youth leadership and money-smarts.

"We are truly grateful for the support we are getting from Libro, which will allow us to develop the natural progression of youth from CYL into the greater co-operative movement, while building our leaders of tomorrow," says Peter Cameron, On Co-op's Co-operative Development Manager and Acting Executive Director. *"We are also very appreciative for the partnership with Gay Lea Foods Co-operative, for providing us with a venue and resources to host this new program - what an awesome example of Principle Six: Co-operation among Co-operatives!"*

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Peter Cameron

1.888.745.5521 x 23

pcameron@ontario.coop

ABOUT THE ONTARIO CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

The Ontario Co-operative Association exists to strengthen and unite the co-operative movement in Ontario. We believe that co-operatives are the solution to creating stronger communities, which help to build a better world.

Our members are organizations that believe in the co-operative principles and are invested in the future of the movement. With their commitment, we are able to deliver co-operative research, education, advocacy, networks, tools and resources, that support the success and sustainability of all co-operatives and the movement as a whole.

On Co-op is an information and resources network with a mission to *lead, cultivate and connect co-operatives*.



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Libro is southwestern Ontario's largest credit union with \$4 billion in assets under administration and more than 103,000 owners across southwestern Ontario. As a co-operative financial institution with more than 70 years of history, Libro supports the well-being of people, businesses and communities by providing high-quality financial coaching and profit sharing.

Libro offers a full range of financial products and services for consumers, businesses and farms, including savings and chequing, investing, and borrowing. Great service can be experienced through 31 branches, online, telephone, mobile devices and a network of 4,000 ATMs across Canada.

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