



## INDIVIDUALS RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ONTARIO CO-OPERATIVE SECTOR

**GUELPH, ON – September 20, 2023.** Three individuals were recognized by the Ontario Co-operative Association (OCA) for their outstanding commitment and contributions to the Co-operative sector in Ontario, at the OCA’s Virtual Annual General Meeting on September 20, 2023. Recipients included Ian Shewan, Juliet 'Kego Ume-Onyido, and Jeff McCallum.

**Ian Shewan** received the award for his immense contributions to the sector over his career, having devoted over thirty years to co-op related law practice, while also advocating for policy and legislative changes that have created a more even playing field for co-operatives in Ontario. Since 2006, he has been a valuable member of OCA’s legislative and regulatory committees, providing guidance, expertise and a passion for the co-operative model that has helped the association accomplish many of its regulatory developments.

Peter Cameron, OCA’s Co-op Development Manager says: “If you had a question about the Co-op Act, Ian was the man to call. He always had a way of asking what it was a group was trying to accomplish and then showing them there was a co-operative way to make it work. He was very generous with his time and because of that, has made a significant contribution the co-op movement as a whole.”

**Juliet 'Kego Ume-Onyido** was honoured for her outstanding contribution to awareness, diversity and equity building within the co-operative sector. A passionate advocate for financial literacy and economic opportunities for women and girls, and an active proponent of the co-operative movement and the solidarity economy, Juliet has co-founded two co-operatives that focus on leadership and empowerment for BIPOC women and youth. Through her work supporting Rotating Savings and Credit Associations and the ROSCA Network, she is helping to bridge the gap between formal co-operative institutions and these informal co-operative structures, helping to transform local economies into vehicles of inclusivity that cater to the needs of all.

Michelle Christmann, OCA’s Education Manager adds: “Juliet is a captivating and articulate speaker, with an energy that lifts a room, inspires passion, and pushes people to learn, grow and most importantly, *to do*. She is a compelling advocate for a stronger and more diverse co-operative sector in Ontario, and every interaction with her will leave you feeling powerful enough to believe you can - and will - change the world. Generous in spirit and with sharing her expertise and her wealth of knowledge, she embodies everything about what it means to truly be co-operative.”

**Jeff McCallum** received the award for his outstanding contribution to the Co-operative Young Leaders (CYL) program. A dedicated volunteer facilitator and team lead for CYL since 2006, he has also given countless hours to various CYL Advisory Committees, ensuring the programming, curriculum, and atmosphere at the annual summer camp was the best it could be. Jeff has always shown up for the next generation of co-operative leaders with great enthusiasm and excitement, changing lives through his own co-operative spirit, and sharing his passion for co-operation, leadership, communication, and teamwork.

OCA's CYL Director Carol Fleming shares: "Jeff is a passionate advocate for the co-operative sector and lives the principles and values every day. He has been an invaluable resource to OCA and is always willing to go the extra mile to help. Jeff has inspired many youth and facilitators to think about serving the greater good by supporting the co-operative sector. We are grateful for his commitment, time, expertise, and guidance over the years; he is an inspiration to us all."

Since their inception in 1999 and over the past twenty-four years, more than 130 extraordinary individuals and organizations have been recognized for their contribution to the co-operative sector in Ontario with a Co-operative Spirit Award. The OCA Board and staff were thrilled to honour this year's well-deserving recipients.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Contact Jennifer Ross, Executive Director at 1.888.745.5521 x 22 or at [jross@ontario.coop](mailto:jross@ontario.coop).

**ABOUT THE ONTARIO CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION (OCA):** Our **vision** is an Ontario where co-operatives contribute to the sustainable growth and development of our communities, and to the overall social, economic, and environmental well-being of the province. We believe that co-operatives, together, build a better world. Our **mission** is to support, promote, advocate, and provide educational programs and training for Ontario's co-operatives. Visit us at <http://www.ontario.coop> for more information.