

OLD CREAMERY CO-OP, ENDS, MISSION, VALUES AND PRINCIPLES
FINAL DRAFT 12-9-2011

Ends/Purpose

Through a thriving cooperative enterprise, we encourage a vibrant healthy community and a sustainable local economy. We define “our community” as including:

1. Co-op member-owners
2. Non-member customers
3. Co-op staff and their families
4. Local suppliers
5. Local residents (including seasonal residents)
6. Local businesses
7. Local organizations (including non-profit organizations, civic associations, and local governments)
8. Larger cooperative community
9. Past and future generations of Old Creamery Co-op members and customers
10. The living landscape, wildlife and natural systems that sustain us in our unique and beautiful Hilltowns

Mission

The Old Creamery Co-op is a retail store and café offering conventional, local, natural, and organic products to meet our customers’ need for quality and convenience at a fair price. The Co-op supports the local economy by employing local people and selling local products whenever possible. The Co-op is a hub of activity and a social gathering place where dialogue and education are valued and fostered. We promote local and regional production, practice environmental sustainability, and welcome and reflect diversity. The Co-op is open to all.

Values

The Old Creamery Co-op believes that communities are vital, healthy and sustainable to the degree that they are:

Connected and Communicative:

1. Members conscientiously foster and support the positive aspects of the community.
2. Members come together to discuss and solve problems affecting the community.
3. Members are aware and responsive to the needs of the community.
4. The community creates time and spaces to gather, support and celebrate each other.

Inclusive and Supportive:

1. All community members are respected and respectful and value difference.
2. Members remain open to new ideas and perspectives about the community.
3. Members appreciate and foster the diversity of the community.
4. Visitors to the community feel welcomed and appreciated.

Interdependent and Resilient:

1. Natural and agricultural resources and cultural heritage are valued, protected and conserved.
2. Working lands and wild lands are recognized as essential elements of the community.

3. Members who live in, work in, or visit the community value the contribution each makes towards the overall health of the community.
4. The “triple bottom line”, meaning planet, people and profitability, is used to assess the Co-op’s contribution to the community.

Thriving and Dynamic:

1. The community offers jobs with working conditions that are safe and respectful, and that allow people to care for and provide for themselves and their families.
2. Members assume responsibility for one another and ensure that all are nourished, sheltered, safe, and cared for.
3. Community members have the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve personal growth and satisfaction and contribute to the community.
4. The community respects and nurtures creative innovation while respecting the wisdom of the past.

Principles

The International Cooperative Alliance has established the following principles under which consumer cooperatives generally operate. The Old Creamery Co-op uses these guidelines to put our values into practice.

Voluntary and Open Membership- Co-operatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

Democratic Member Control- Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives such as the Creamery, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote); co-operatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.

Member Economic Participation- Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

Autonomy and Independence – Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

Education, Training and Information – Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives - Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

Concern for Community- Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.