



2023 Board Candidate

Brian Puchala



I am a research scientist at the University of Michigan, in the field of computational materials science. Our family, which includes children, ages 9, 8, and 5, joined the Ypsilanti Food Co-op because we were looking for ways to better support the local community and good business practices, including environmental sustainability and animal welfare. I believe the Co-op's mission to support the local economy and be a model for sustainable environmental, cooperative business practices, and democratic governance is very important to support and it has been an honor to serve on the YFC Board. I hope to continue to bring the board the perspective of a new-ish member and parent of a younger family. My goal as a board member would simply

be to serve the mission of the Co-op and its members to the best of my ability.

1. What role do you think the Ypsilanti Food Co-op will play in Ypsilanti's future?

The Ypsilanti Food Co-op will provide the entire Ypsilanti community with 1) a source of healthy, sustainably produced food, 2) education about sustainable and equitable business practices, 3) a means to collectively support local, sustainable food and business, and 4) a model of democratic governance.

2. In what ways are you working to contribute to and improve the Ypsilanti community?

I've served on the YFC Board for 2 years. Our family looks for local businesses first and we love many of the locally owned restaurants in Ypsilanti. We also enjoy attending events in Ypsilanti and playing in the local parks.

3. If you can find healthy, organic food at another grocery store, why choose the Ypsilanti Food Co-op?

The Co-op has a great selection, especially of local products, a truly excellent bakery, competitive prices, and friendly personal service, including curbside

pickup. Members can make bulk special orders for additional discounts. The Ypsilanti Food Co-op provides a sense of trust that products are chosen with consideration for quality, how they are produced, and how they support the local economy. I also think it is important to support democratically governed businesses.

4. What issue within the food system is the most important to you, and how would you address it?

To me, local democratic control is one of the most important issues, because it gives us a say in so many other issues, including accessibility and affordability of good food, worker and animal welfare, and local production. The Co-op can educate members and the community about the costs of choices we make, and what legal changes can ensure living wages, good working conditions, and humane treatment of animals.

5. What is your past experience with the Ypsilanti Food Co-op and cooperatives in general (working, volunteering, shopping, etc.)? Include what you have done to improve and support the Ypsilanti Food Co-op.

Our family joined the Ypsilanti Food Co-op about 3 years ago and it is our primary weekly grocery shopping choice. I wanted to contribute in some way, so I ran for the Board and have served for 2 years. In that time, we have helped to update the YFC By-laws so the Co-op is assured that we have the legal mechanism to do patronage dividends and capital fundraising.

6. What has the Ypsilanti Food Co-op done for you?

The Ypsilanti Food Co-op has provided us with a great way to get great, healthy food, with great service, while supporting our local community.

7. What skills and strengths would you contribute to the Board?

As a board member I will bring enthusiasm and dedication to building community around the Co-op's mission, a commitment to involving all Co-op members and stakeholders in that mission, and an attention to detail to ensure the board's role as a fiduciary is fulfilled.