

## 2019 Oshkosh Food Cooperative Board of Directors Statement of Nomination

**Warren Bergmann**

762 Congress St. Neenah, WI 54956

I am a semiretired teacher, and have lived in southeast and east-central Wisconsin since 1980.

In the early eighties, I lived in the Riverwest neighborhood of Milwaukee, where I was a member/owner/volunteer at Outpost Natural Foods Co-op, which continues to thrive today. Back then it was located at Holton and Keefe, in a neighborhood that would otherwise have been a food desert. This convergence of healthy eating, social good, and a co-operative business model has remained with me.

For 25 years I worked with students and their families as a public school music teacher and administrator in Milwaukee, Sheboygan, and Menasha. I am still active as a music festival adjudicator, camp orchestra director, and substitute teacher in Oshkosh and Neenah. I volunteer with the social justice organization FitOshkosh.

Last year, my wife (artist and activist Terry Hope) and I embarked on a lifelong Whole Foods Plant-Based diet. We have both experienced remarkable health benefits, and we are spreading the word. We have four adult children, and three grandchildren, in Minneapolis and here in the Fox Valley.

I believe my experiences would bring a valuable perspective to the Board. As a teacher and administrator I have honed communications, interpersonal, creative, and public relations skills. I have a personal commitment to healthy eating and lifestyle, and to community activism. I am a long-time regular customer of local farmers markets, and we are members of the Good Earth Farm CSA. These and my previous co-op experience ensure that I am prepared to take this step.

The co-op is vitally important to its community. It is a major vending opportunity for local growers. It is a source (for some the *only* source) of nutritious food and natural health products. It is a positive economic force as an employer, and as a hub for recycling dollars through the community. And it is a brick-and-mortar and online venue for individuals to come together, connect, and network.

I foresee the Oshkosh Food Co-op as both a physical and online site where co-operative ideals and nutritional ideas will grow, change, and flourish. Our co-op should be a force driving the community's health in multifaceted ways:

- Our wellness and vitality
- Culturally inclusive relationship-building
- Local economic health
- The ethical treatment of animals
- Our planet's health through ecologically sustainable practices

Why co-operatives? I believe we need co-operatives because we are a society that must constantly strive toward democracy, and, at the same time, operates as a market-driven economy. I know of no more practical, vital, and positive enterprise than a business that is established, managed, run, and owned by its customers and its community.