

Keystone Development Center Newsletter

Cooperating throughout the Mid Atlantic

Sept-Oct 2010

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Featured Article



Greg Boulos has just returned From Turin Italy where he attended the Terra Madre Conference, one of the biggest pro-local farming conferences in the world.

Dear Friends of KDC,

Wow, October was Co-op Month and we sure did have a great one! On the 5th we were all in Washington DC for the official USDA celebration of Co-op Month. The same week in Philadelphia, KDC hosted Cooperation Works! our national network of cooperative development practitioners on October 6th and 7th. Friends and colleagues from all over the country joined us at the Marriott next door to Philadelphia City Hall to talk about the future of co-op development. We also went on some interesting tours of Philadelphia area co-ops and had refreshing morning yoga lessons.

Other great news coming out of "October is Co-op Month" includes Representative Chaka Fattah committing to furthering the cause cooperative development in urban areas across the United States. Kudos to Bob Noble and Lisa Stolarski, two KDC consultants, for pursuing the possibility of working with Fattah's office on a new urban cooperative development initiative.

Details below, read on!

→ More on "KDC's Cathy Smith Leads National Organization," From Sept. 2010

In the September article entitled "KDC's Cathy Smith Leads National Organization," our reporter reported that Cathy Smith is the Chair of the Leadership Circle of Cooperation Works!, the national organization of cooperative development practitioners. However, it was not clear from reading the article that the Leadership Circle Chair of Cooperation Works! is also the Chair of the Board of Directors and is elected by a vote of the entire membership.

We are happy to report that Cathy has been asked to stay on as Chair of both the Leadership Circle and the Board of Directors for another year by the membership of Cooperation Works!. Congratulations

once again, Kate!

→ View From My Doorstep: An Interview with Greg Boulos

Greg Boulos is the initiator of over 12 'green' companies, including Pennsylvania's new FarmCorps program. Greg is a partner in Blackberry Meadows, an 85 acre organic farm in Natrona Heights PA. He is working with KDC on a worker-farmer cooperative food-hub project in Fayette County. He is the Mid-Atlantic regional governor for Slow Food USA and has recently returned from Turin Italy where he represented the Mid-Atlantic at Terra Madre, a bi-annual global conference of Food Communities.



Greg Boulos

KDC: Thanks for meeting with us, Greg, it's very exciting to learn about your trip to Italy. What exactly is Terra Madre?

GB: Terra Madre is a celebration of local food efforts from around the world. It's our global community of food stewards, primarily the farmers and food producers, with passionate chefs and enthusiastic consumers from everywhere. The conference has been in Turin Italy for the past four bi-annual conferences (8 years). In 2008 producers from 154 countries attended. The conference is hosted by Slow Food and the focus is on producers and products with cultural or historical significance and on preserving the biodiversity of foods.

Terra Madre runs in conjunction with Salone Del Gusto, which is a much bigger conference and a 'foodie' event. Terra Madre is more about food production and Salone Del Gusto is about cooking and eating. The conferences are right next door to each other and you can attend Salone Del Gusto as a participant in Terra Madre.

Terra Madre is concerned, however, with things like the politics of food distribution, water systems, the impacts of resource mining on agriculture, desertification, and other major issues effecting the security and resilience of the world's food supply.

KDC: Are the governments of these various countries involved in Terra Madre? More specifically, does Terra Madre concern itself with policy?

GB: The Italian government is a sponsor of the conference. Many governments are supportive of their countrymen's participation in Terra Madre, Ethiopia comes to mind. Prince Charles of Britain has been an avid supporter as well. Many governments are supportive of the participation of their local chapters. And there is a policy element to Terra Madre, the conference amplifies the voices of farmers world-wide on a number of agriculture related issues.

KDC: How did you get involved in Terra Madre. Greg?

GB: I was invited as the Mid-Atlantic regional governor of Slow Food USA. As a regional governor I coordinate local Slow Food chapters and share information between chapters. I also help get new chapters started in the Mid-Atlantic region.

KDC: How does that fit in with your various other projects?

GB: My job in life is to set up green companies and catalyze ecological businesses. I have contributed to the starting of at least 12 ecological businesses in the past couple of years as well as these new chapters of Slow Foods. Starting a new chapter is similar to starting a green business, there are by-laws that must be understood, regular meetings, an IT element and communications. Right now I am in the midst of producing a newsletter to help bridge programmatic information for Mid-Atlantic Slow Food.

KDC: What's going on with Slow Food USA?

GB: Slow Food USA is engaged in a major biodiversity initiative called Renewing America's Food Traditions (RAFT). This is an effort to revive food items with historical and cultural significance for the United States. For instance, the Leicheston Long Wool Sheep was a great family farm animal because it produced great wool, and also milk and lambs. Same with the Red Devon breed of cattle, they produced meat and milk and were also used as draft animals. Because the current industrial farming culture focuses on either "meat only," and so they favor Angus, or "dairy only," favoring only the top milk producer, the Holsteins, animals like the Red Devon and the Leicheston Long Wool Sheep are in danger of becoming extinct.

Slow Food USA is involved in a variety of other initiatives; we are concerned with providing healthy food for children and are beginning to work with school lunch programs around the country. We are also engaged with community gardening projects and host farm to table dinners. Essentially, Slow Food USA does for the rest of the United States what PASA does for Pennsylvania - bring together a community of conscientious eaters and producers to advance the local food revolution.

However, each Slow Food chapter (or Convivium) can be focused on their own local food interests, there is no mandate that the chapters have a specific focus as long as they are concerned with promoting local (slow) foods. The Pittsburgh chapter is particularly interested in increasing the supply of local and sustainably raised meats and getting away from industrially processed beef, poultry, etc.

KDC: What was the best part of the Terra Madre conference, Greg?

GB: Networking. It's like the global version of the PASA conference, farmers holding the front lines for fresh and local. There is a strong sense of community and brother/sisterhood amongst the participants. For me the best part is being able to connect with food shed leaders from around the world and share their stories.

KDC: Thanks Greg. Shifting gears here; how did FarmCorps come to be?

GB: It started from a need to cultivate young farmers, folks interested in being more active in the local food revolution. It is collaboration between PASA and the Student Conservation Association. The idea is to get crews of young people out to the farms in order to accomplish two things: 1) to help aging farmers and 2) to educate and foster young people to become farmers. FarmCorps started in 2009 after three PASA members in western Pennsylvania had become incapacitated. Two died and one was temporarily

in a wheelchair due to the dangers of being a farmer. Many farmers really need the help. We are hoping a small percentage of FarmCorps 'tourists' will become candidates for farm ownership down the road because succession planning is also a big issue in farming. We want to open the door for young people to connect if they have a calling to be farmers. FarmCorps will give them the opportunity to find out if farming is right for them and if it is, then it will allow them to foster the relationships that will enable their future in farming. It will connect them to academic and government programs and give them on-farm experiences that will keep them involved.

The project is currently run by a former Student Conservation Association team leader trainer and FarmCorps co-founder Bryan Ritti. Chelsea Atwood and Erica Peifer also helped run the FarmCorps project this summer in conjunction with the Allegheny County Department of Parks and Recreation at the Round Hill Farm, a demonstration farm in Elizabeth PA. The crew was hired and given two acres to grow food for Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.

Over 1000 people helped grow food by volunteering for activities on this farm. We are assembling the final report now.

KDC: What can we expect from FarmCorps in the future?

GB: If FarmCorps is fully funded we're going to launch a regional program to engage ten times as many young people in farming. The program is highly adaptable and is complementary to current initiatives, so there will be a strong synergy to connect with academic institutions, government agriculture programs and community groups interested in team building and community services related to farming.

KDC: Greg, this interview column is called "A View From My Doorstep."

What do you see when you step outside of your door?

GB: I see my farm: chickens, pastures and orchards. Our vegetable fields over the ridge. Right now, I see leaves everywhere, especially the vibrant apple leaves in the orchard.

 [Chaka Fattah Spearheads Urban Co-op Initiative](#)

Congressman Chaka Fattah (D-PA), Chairman of the Congressional Urban Caucus, will lead a new initiative to support urban cooperative business development throughout the United States. Fattah, an eight term Congressman from Philadelphia, will partner with the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA), a Washington-based federation of cooperatives from all sectors of the economy, and CooperationWorks! (CW), a national trade association of cooperative development centers and individuals.



Representative Chaka Fattah, 2nd District Pennsylvania

Rep. Fattah, Pennsylvania's senior member of the House Appropriations Committee, said, "Cooperatives provide an excellent means for economic development and community enrichment. This new initiative is catching on in our cities and urban areas. The cooperative movement is a perfect fit with the agenda of the bipartisan Congressional Urban Caucus and I am pleased to provide this effort with a strong voice in Congress." He continued, "These cooperatives will create jobs and wealth by helping new local businesses that are owned and controlled by their members."

Cindy Bass, Senior Policy Advisor for Congressman Fattah, said, "Our office has a record of working with the successful and well-established cooperatives in Northwest Philadelphia such as Weavers Way food co-op. I will be assisting the Congressman as we help to advance urban cooperatives and boost our national economy."

The new initiative as outlined by representatives of NCBA and CW will include seeking authorization of funds for technical assistance for urban cooperatives across the United States, an effort to change Small Business Administration policies which currently prohibit participation by cooperatives in federal small business loan guarantee programs, financial assistance for cooperative business start-ups, and pilot programs in Philadelphia and possibly other cities.

Lisa Stolarski, CW Urban Circle Chair, is optimistic about the possibilities this effort will present to cooperatives in the United States, saying, "a successful authorization of an urban cooperative development program could pass Congress in 2011 and could potentially be appropriated as early as 2012, the year declared by the United Nations as the International Year of Cooperatives."

Adam Schwartz. NCBA Vice President of Public Affairs and Member Services.

is pleased to be working with the Congressman on this initiative, stating that "the NCBA looks forward to working with Congressman Fattah and the co-op community in developing an urban cooperative development program."

According to a recent study by the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives there are over 29,000 co-ops in the US, employing over 2 million workers, paying \$75 billion in wages, with \$650 billion in sales, and \$3 trillion in assets.

Modern day cooperative businesses trace their origin back to 1844 in Rochdale, England, when a group of weavers and other skilled workers established a member-owned and member-controlled retail food store. Their "Rochdale Principles," which included the distribution of surplus on the basis of patronage and cooperative governance on the basis of one member, one vote, have been replicated widely.

A flexible business model, cooperatively structured businesses of various types have been established over the years in many countries around the world from small consumer retail food co-ops and worker-owned entrepreneurial ventures to large agricultural purchasing and marketing co-ops; from housing coops to credit unions.

For more information about the Urban Cooperative Development Initiative feel free to contact Urban Circle Chair Lisa Stolarski, at 412.969.7896, or email her at stolarski@kdc.coop.

→ Mariposa Food Co-op to Relocate

Philadelphia, PA-- Mariposa Food Co-op announced today that it will relocate from its existing storefront to a renovated structure that will provide five times more shopping space and amenities for the West Philadelphia community. After decades in its current location, Mariposa has purchased the landmark Belmont Trust Company Building which most recently served as the home of Beulah Tabernacle Church. Mariposa plans to relocate all of its operations into this new home at 4824 Baltimore Ave by next summer.



Mariposa staff at gathering

"We are the grocer that specializes in healthy sustainable food. and the only

food co-op in the neighborhood." said Kara Ja'Nice Crews, convener of Mariposa's Board of Delegates. "The new store will allow us to reach every person looking for great food in a community setting."

In the 1970s, Mariposa began as a buying club, providing its membership with high-quality, local and organic food for the last several decades out of a charming, but tiny storefront at 4726 Baltimore Avenue. Following the international cooperative principles, Mariposa is owned and controlled by its members. Since 2000, Mariposa has experienced an unprecedented increase in membership, now boasting over 1000 members. The expansion and relocation will allow Mariposa to grow and meet the demand from the neighborhood.

"Mariposa has been a part of the fabric of West Philadelphia for decades," said Monica Allison, president of Cedar Park Neighbors. "We are thrilled to support them as they make their move to this new, gorgeous home."

Mariposa has brought together a unique collection of partners to support its expansion efforts. These include: The Merchant's Fund, University City District, The Reinvestment Fund, Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, Wharton Small Business Development Center, Penn Law's Entrepreneurship Legal Clinic,, Fresh Food Financing Initiative, CDS Consulting Co-op, North Country Cooperative Development Fund, The Community Design Collaborative and Re:Vision Architecture.

"Currently, only members of Mariposa can shop at the store," said Esteban Kelly, staff member of Mariposa's Education Committee and member of the Mariposa Board of Delegates. "In the new building, Mariposa will implement an expanded membership policy. This will open our doors to everyone and allow non-members to shop, while retaining benefits and incentives for members."

For more information, please contact Lauren Townsend at 215-939-7621 or expansion@mariposa.coop.

Practitioner's Perspective on Regionalism

Lately the concept of "regionalism" keeps coming up in various fields of concern. On a recent USDA call, technical assistance providers learned about the market advantages of regional food hubs. In southwestern Pennsylvania our nonprofit community has just completed

the "discussion" phase of what is called the "Power of 32" project, a regional visioning project that includes 32 counties in four states. Even Homeland Security is talking about "regional food sheds," and has identified Pennsylvania as smack in the middle of a critical food-security region.

Cooperatives, it turns out, make terrific regional economic anchors. In fact, the most successful cooperatives in the world are in regions where there are clusters of cooperatives of many different kinds demonstrating the principle of "cooperation among cooperatives" and "concern for community." Two of these regions, the Basque region of Spain and the Emilia Romagna region of Italy have some of the highest standards of living and GDP in Europe. Their stories are inspiring and also very similar to each other. The Basque region was destroyed during the Spanish Civil War (Guernica is in the Basque region); Emilia

Romagna, like many places in Europe, was crushed during World War II. Both regions are out-of-the way parts of their respective countries and were not high on national priority list for rebuilding after their respective wars. In both cases, cooperatives caught on as a way to rebuild their regional economies. Today, both of these regions boast significant economic prosperity, 40% of the economy of Emilia Romagna is credited to cooperatives, and the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation in the Basque country is the seventh largest company in Spain with 100,000 worker-owners.

In *We Build the Road as We Travel*, a book about the Mondragon system of cooperation, Roy Morrison says, "On the surface, the Mondragon accomplishment is clear. The cooperators have created an economically strong, democratic, and revolutionary social system from the most slender resources. While they have built up impressive material and capital assets, the essential wealth of the system is its community."

So what can we do to build a strong regional co-op sector? David Thompson posited four characteristics in his 2003 Cooperative Grocer article, "Emilia Romagna: Clustering Co-op Development." Thompson observed that successful cooperative regions are doing the following:

- Clustering: Actively bringing together cooperatives to work together in every way possible by both type and locality.
- Structure: Creating organizational, developmental and financing structures that improve development opportunities, access to financing, direct participation, planning, and communication among the groups of cooperatives.
- Solidarity: Developing both a formal and informal infrastructure ... requires a strong ongoing commitment to purchasing goods and services from within the cooperative sector and within the region.
- Reciprocity: Reciprocity allows each member or each cooperative to know that their investment or contribution will be valued and repaid.

In the United States more cooperatives are thinking regionally than perhaps at any time in living memory. Especially in regard to food hubs, cooperatives are taking the lead on regional initiatives. In Vermont. Massachusetts and New Hampshire over 20



Co-op Columnist Lisa Stolarski

food cooperatives have formed the Neighboring Food Cooperative Association, established 2004, which seeks to develop value-chain relationships with local farmers, positively impact the local economy, make cooperative economic contributions more visible to the public and collaborate for a "vibrant cross-sector cooperative economy."

In 2010 a group of co-ops has formed in the Mid-Atlantic spearheaded by Weaver's Way food cooperative covering co-ops and start-ups in Eastern Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland. Similar to the Neighboring Food Co-ops Association, called the Mid-Atlantic this group seeks to help coordinate local food supplies and grow the overall stability of the regional cooperative economy.

In Wisconsin and Minnesota a multi-sectoral cooperative organization has been operating for several years. The largest regional cooperative organization in the U.S. The Co-op Network was formed by the adjoining of the Minnesota Association of Cooperatives and the Wisconsin Council of Agricultural Cooperatives. Today The Co-op Network boasts 600 cooperative member-businesses owned by over six million people in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

"Cooperation among cooperatives" and "concern for community" are the sixth and seventh internationally recognized principles of cooperation. Regionalism is a powerful way for co-ops to develop the support they need to succeed in building vibrant cooperative economy and it makes a happy marriage between these two very important principles.

➔ October is Co-op Month: A Busy Time For Cooperators

Early October was a busy time for cooperative practitioners from around the country as they gathered on the east coast for the USDA celebration of cooperatives and the Cooperation Works! Annual Meeting.

On October 5th many practitioners gathered at the Whitten Building in Washington DC, headquarters of the USDA, to celebrate "October is Co-op Month" with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The group heard a greeting issued on October 1st by President Barack Obama delivered by Dallas Tonsager, Under Secretary for Rural Development. The President wrote:

"I am pleased to send greetings to those observing National Cooperative Month.

When Americans work together, striving for a common purpose, we can change the lives of others in sustainable ways. Thousands of cooperatives across our country work towards this fundamental goal, delivering goods and services that impact countless individuals and communities. As you celebrate this successful, diverse business model during National Cooperative Month, I hope you take pride in your work to support and build local economies and strengthen our Nation.



Cooperator in Chief

I wish you the best."

Barack Obama.

The USDA celebration featured several presentations on innovations in cooperatives and co-op research and education. Participants hear from the Aiken Electric Cooperative about the South Carolina Power Team, from Sacred Heart Hospital of Eau Claire Wisconsin on the multi-stakeholder Producers and Buyers Cooperative they created. Guests also heard from Show Me Energy Cooperative in Missouri and from Iowa State University about their new online program, Cooperatives on eXtension.

The featured speaker, Dr. Brett Hueth of the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives, spoke about the upcoming phase of the USDA funded Study on the Impact of Cooperatives. Whereas Phase I of the Impact Study quantified the impacts of cooperatives in the US economy, Phase II will focus on the less quantifiable social impacts of cooperatives.

That same week, on October 6th and 7th CooperationWorks! held their annual meeting at the Courtyard Marriott in downtown Philadelphia. The gathering was mostly business with officer elections and circle reports. Cathy Smith of Keystone Development Center was asked to stay on for a second year as Chair of the Board of Directors and Leadership Circle, and has accepted the position.

Educational presentations included a workshop on how to start a credit union given by Brian Gately of the the Federation of Community Development Credit Unions. Workshops were also presented on multi-stakeholder cooperatives and about a new online information repository called cultivate.coop. Cooperative tours included Weaver's Way natural food co-op; Childspace, a worker-owned childcare cooperative; Cooperative Home Care Associates, an assisted living cooperative; and a trip out to Lancaster Farm Fresh, Friday morning, an Amish-owned farm produce marketing cooperative.

It was a very eventful week for cooperative practitioners in DC and Philadelphia and thanks goes out to Bob Noble and Tina Johnson, associates of Keystone Development Center, for hosting Cooperation Works! in their home-city.

Position Opening at KDC

The Keystone Development Center (KDC) serving Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey is seeking a ½ time cooperative development practitioner for an annual employment contract. The practitioner will be responsible for providing comprehensive technical assistance to clients forming cooperatives in southwestern Pennsylvania and northern Maryland. This position requires significant self-motivation and comfort working independently.

The ideal candidate will have the following qualities and qualifications:

1. At least three years of cooperative development experience in rural cooperative development.
2. A demonstrated ability to set up and teach all manners of cooperative systems including governance, management and administrative systems, patronage and allocated retained earnings systems. and 521 tax exemptions.

3. Demonstrated skill in performing market and feasibility studies along with skill in writing business plans and developing *pro forma* financials.
4. Experience in grant writing, especially with the preparation of a Rural Cooperative Development Grant proposal.
5. A creative, pro-active approach to the development of cooperatives as a strategy for rural wealth creation.
6. Experience in producing Newsletters.
7. A Master's degree in community economic development or a related field is preferred.

Candidates, please submit a cover letter, resume, and cooperative development portfolio to COOPERATIVE DEVELOPER APPLICATION, P.O. Box 4, Flinton, PA 16640 prior to December 15, 2010. Questions should be addressed to Cathy Smith, Executive Director, at smith@kdc.coop.

Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Keystone Development Center is an equal opportunity provider and employer and does not discriminate on any basis including sexual orientation, race, creed, color, religion, gender identification, sex, national origin, disability, veteran status, or familial status.

On behalf of KDC I would like to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and Holiday Season. Our next newsletter will come out in early January with an update on the urban cooperative development legislation and details about registering for the Farming for the Future (PASA) Conference. Until then everyone, enjoy the harvest!

Sincerely,

Cathy Smith

Editor: Cathy Smith, Executive Director of Keystone Development Center
Reporter: Lisa Stolarski, Cooperative Development Practitioner with KDC

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