

Date: Fri, 7 Jan 2005 11:52(PST)

From: Kathleen Duffy

Subject: PLEASE FORWARD: Interested in starting a food coop?

Hi friends,

I'm doing some research on starting a food coop somewhere around the Logan Square/Humboldt Park/Wicker Park/Ukrainian Village area. This email is being sent out to determine if there is sufficient interest in a community structure like that, and if there are other people out there who would be willing to work with a group to put it together.

A food coop would allow US to build and own a store, stocking the products WE want to purchase, lower household food bills for all of us, support each other locally instead of the bloated corporate structures we have now, and build our community all at the same time. And there is so much room for expansion with this type of structure. Maybe we grow it into a health care cooperative too, where we can negotiate reasonable rates as a group for health insurance. Maybe we plan meeting space into the physical store, so that we can have discussions and talks on topics of interest to the members. Maybe we offer childcare, so members can bring their children when they come in to work or shop. The people that work there will come from inside the community, so we'd be providing at least a few fair wage jobs in our own neighborhoods. We can start from a basic level and grow it into an entity that serves multiple needs for us as a community-- we can make it whatever we want, AND we get to buy good food cheap to boot, and that's just to start.

I'd like to ask all of you to please forward this email widely, to post it to any mailing lists or groups you belong to that might be relevant, or talk about it with your friends and see what the reactions are. It doesn't even just have to be to people living in those neighborhoods I mentioned-- I could see members from all over Chicago, no reason for geographical restrictions. Right now, I'm just testing this idea out, so the more people that hear about it, the better. If you have the skills and want to translate this email into another language so we can hit a wider swath of the community, have at it. I'm trying to see what kind of interest already exists, and whether we have enough collective energy to move the idea forward.

I invite you to write me at deliciae@yahoo.com and let me know your thoughts about this. It would be helpful if you had a general sense of what your level of commitment to a food coop might be, too-- whether you'd join as a member (would require a level of financial commitment to the coop), shop there without being a member, or be willing to be one of the people who works to put the whole thing together. I'm sending this email out on Jan. 7-- if you can circulate this note and get back to me by Jan. 31, I will schedule a general interest/brainstorming meeting for mid-February if there are enough people into it, and we can get to work.

Below is some information on the benefits of coops, excerpted from <http://www.flatbushfoodcoop.com/wtsacoop.html>. There is a wealth of information available on the web about cooperative buying structures-- I encourage you to check it out for yourself to learn how we can create a real cornerstone for the community through this kind of endeavor.

Looking forward to hearing your thoughts on this. Please be in touch soon.

Best,

Kath Duffy

