Letter from Wellspring's Co-Directors

2020 was a year of growth and change within the Wellspring Cooperative network as we faced the challenges of Covid, a renewed commitment to racial justice, and a greater urgency to create economic alternatives in the face of a deep economic recession. While the pandemic caused real economic hardship for our cooperative businesses, they have been able to reorganize and adapt through the creativity and dedication of their workers. Our organization also grew through new relationships with kindred spirits who brought two new cooperatives into the Wellspring network (names of coops). We celebrate these leaders who are doing the hard work of building a new economy day by day in their cooperatives. Wellspring also benefited from the vision and commitment of a great network of leaders who bring their skills and passion to the organization’s boards and committees.

"THANKS FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP AS WE CONTINUE TO BUILD A COOPERATIVE ECONOMY IN SPRINGFIELD."

Together they share a cooperative spirit that enriches the Wellspring community. We are grateful for the many contributions we have received from these leaders to build Wellspring's capacity over the past year. This annual report also documents the significant progress that Wellspring has made towards greater financial stability, due to the impressive efforts of our Development Committee and the strong support of the whole organization. Thank you for your partnership as we continue to build a cooperative economy in Springfield. With this success Wellspring was able to expand its staff by hiring a Communications Coordinator, which represents an important milestone in the growth of our organization. We are grateful to our donors and supporters whose generosity has made this growth possible.

Fred Rose & Emily Kawano
Our Work

_Wellspring’s mission_ is to create a network of mutually supportive worker-owned cooperatives to provide low income families with pathways out of poverty and help stabilize and revitalize blighted neighborhoods in Springfield. Wellspring’s cooperatives provide jobs with on-the-job training for low income residents, and profit sharing so poor families can build wealth to invest in homes and education. Wellspring companies produce goods and services for our anchor institution partners among others, including local hospitals, colleges and universities.

Year in Review

- This past year we added two new co-op’s to our Wellspring Cooperative Network! Farm Bug is a cultivator-owned craft cannabis cooperative that aims to create jobs and wealth building opportunities for those who have suffered the most from the racist war on drugs. Chronic Trips Café is a community gathering space by the canal in Holyoke offering healthy food and drink including premium coffee and locally sourced specialty food items.

- Wellspring has embarked on a national co-op collaboration with three other place-based co-op developers to explore the development of a national co-op, starting with a childcare cooperative. The collaboration includes Wellspring Cooperative, Cooperation Jackson in Jackson, MS, Co-op Cincy in Cincinnati, OH, and Cooperación Santa Ana in Santa Ana, CA, all of which are non-profit co-op developers that are building a network of worker cooperatives with a commitment to racial and economic justice.

- We had a great Wellspring Cooperative General Assembly in December where we welcomed four new board members and one new staff member. Thank you to our five retiring Board members who served on the board for many years.

- This past year we continued our public education efforts, including our 4th annual Co-op Boot Camp, Wellspring’s university for co-op training, and made new connections through various outreach events.

- Wellspring Harvest operated the Go Fresh Mobile Market last summer in partnership with the Public Health Institute of Western Mass to support food access from farm to community. We operated an emergency food program in response to Covid-19 that delivered weekly produce boxes to 600 food insecure families in Springfield.

600 Produce Boxes delivered
In 2020 we adapted to the realities of the pandemic by focusing on supporting our current cooperatives through difficult economic times, supporting emerging cooperative businesses interested in our network, and participating in a national childcare cooperative network to meet this urgent community need. In such an uncertain and difficult year for our businesses, Wellspring Cooperative helped cooperatives in our network access $100,000 in funding through emergency federal grants including Payroll Protection Program funding.

Wellspring supported our existing cooperatives Wellspring Harvest, Wellspring Upholstery, and the Old Window Workshop to respond to closures of local institutions and loss of markets due to the pandemic. This included supporting personnel changes, identifying new market opportunities such as direct to consumer sales, applications for government and foundation Covid-19 financial support, and loan revisions. Old Window Workshop had to shut its doors because of personnel changes, and Wellspring is currently in the process of identifying options for reorganizing the company. In response to the urgent need for childcare exacerbated by the pandemic, Wellspring worked with co-op development partners across the country to establish a national CareShare childcare cooperative. We finalized and are currently offering a joint co-op training program geared towards participants in each community.

Wellspring Cooperative stands in solidarity with the uprisings for racial justice in our communities, throughout our country, and in the world. We stand in solidarity with the Black community—our worker-owners, customers, and partners—in the fight against systemic racism and injustice. We believe that Black Lives Matter, and recognize that Black people are, and have long been, the target of systemic racism and brutality in our communities to an unmatched extent. We recognize the Black Lives Matter Movement as the leaders at the forefront of a global fight for racial justice and believe that this work starts at the community level.

It is time for deep rooted change. Wellspring supports the Movement for Black Lives and its demands to re-channel funding away from the militarization of communities and toward investing in communities at the forefront of the struggle for justice. Increasing employment opportunities for communities of color is core to Wellspring’s mission. Due to institutionalized racism people of color, most especially Black people, have long been excluded from access to jobs, fair housing, education, health care, healthy food, and other important resources. In building worker-owned cooperatives within communities of color, our work is part of the larger fight to build a just, democratic, and sustainable world.
Finance Committee: worked with staff to develop a Wellspring Co-op Corporation budget for 2021 and will continue to review WCC monthly financials.

Labor Co-ops Committee sponsored a Zoom webinar for Labor Day with an excellent local and national attendance. Currently the committee is working on material for the Wellspring website to continue outreach and engagement with the broader labor movement.

Governance Committee restarted in the early fall of 2020 to help identify and vet candidates for Board vacancies.

Development Committee helped sustain and support the Wellspring Network through increased donations and strengthening relationships with our supporters.

Cooperative Network Committee was renamed and expanded (formerly the Business Development Committee) to better understand and support the various co-op businesses.

Wellspring Harvest Food Bank Campaign, sponsored by the Wellspring cooperatives in partnership with The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, provided lettuce to the food bank to address the growing community hunger due to the pandemic. Thank you to all who gave in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Donor generosity enabled Wellspring Harvest to contribute 12,000 heads of lettuce to the Food Bank.

Additionally, Wellspring Harvest raised over $240,000 through grants to install environmental controls, purchase a new delivery vehicle, install LED lights, and build a high tunnel to expand production, which will increase the sustainability and efficiency of the greenhouse.

Wellspring Harvest Co-op Cooperative Network Committee was renamed and expanded (formerly the Business Development Committee) to better understand and support the various co-op businesses.

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Our Financial Picture

FUNDS RAISED EXCEED THE $300,000 MARK

Despite this turbulent year, Wellspring’s fundraising increased by 26% over 2019 totalling over $330,000. As individual donors and foundations sought worthy organizations that would make a difference during the economic, political, and pandemic crises, they gave generously to Wellspring Cooperative. Donations eclipsed grant income as our donor base expanded in both donor numbers and average gift size.

Notable achievements included our partnership with The Food Bank of Western Mass. Over $20,000 was raised to purchase 12,000 heads of Wellspring Harvest lettuce for distribution to local food pantries. It is one example of how Wellspring responded to the pandemic’s needs by helping to alleviate increased food insecurity and job insecurity at Wellspring Harvest whose sales dropped dramatically as area school and hospital customers reduced purchases.

Much of the success of this 2020 fundraising year can be attributed to the hard work of the board, committees, and co-directors, the determination and creativity of our co-op workers through this crisis, our partner organizations, and the extraordinary generosity of our individual partners.
2020 was our second year as a member of the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations, MA-CDC. One of the great benefits of being a CDC is that it qualifies us for the Community Investment Tax Credit Program or CITC. Wellspring uses the 50% tax credits allotted to us through the program to leverage larger donations from our partners. We applied for and were allocated $100,000 of credits in 2020, double that of the previous year. With the help of the United Way, who helps solicit large donors from across the state for CITC Program partners, we were able to utilize all but $150 of our credits and raise $200,000.

Thank You

**FUNDERS**
- Catholic Campaign for Human Development
- Davis Foundation
- Beveridge Family Foundation
- Mass Growth Capital
- Peace Development Fund
- Berkshire Bank Foundation
- MassMutual Foundation
- United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley

**IN KIND**
Wellspring is grateful to these generous supporters who provided invaluable pro bono services to advance our cooperative work over the past year.
- Stakeholder Capital
- Amine Benali from LEAF
- Alex Pyle, esq (Sheehan Phinney Bass & Green PA)
- Kathy Gregg, esq (West Hill Technology Counsel)
- Rebecca Calahan-Klein (Sustainable Strategies)

**ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS**
- UMass Amherst
- Western New England University
- Springfield Technical Community College
- BayState Health

We’d like to give a special recognition to our anchor institutions and the numerous collaborators not listed here who are integral to our work.
Thank You to our Donors

Nancy Abdalla
Do-Han Allen
Terry Allen
Zaryah Allison
Francisco Alvarado
Bettye Anderson Frederic
Lee Badgett & Elizabeth Silver
Kristan & Ben Bakker
Luke Bakker
Bill Baue
Daphne & Clinton Berry
Lucy Blakeley & Terry Mollner
Jane Braaten
Sylvia Brandt & James Kwak
Roger Bruno and Ellen Schwartz
Melanie Bush
Robert Butler
Katherine Campbell
Josh Carreiro
Rachel Chapman
Nathan Chung
Pancho Cole
Jessica Collins
Bouzha Cookman
Natalie Cotton-Nessler
Maria Cuerda
Lisa Damtoft
Marc & Mary Dancer
Marydale Debor
Michael DiPasquale
Dianne Doherty
Mindy Domb
Jessica Halem
Holly & Eric Klose
Robin Harris
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Lydia Hemphill
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Mary Hoyer
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Doug & Betsy Gardner Johnson
Emily Kawano and Jim Dee
Frank & Mary Johnson
Terry Johnson
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Margo Jones
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Adriana Fieldman
John Fitzgerald
Peter Gagliardi
Ken Galdston
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David & Jane Gilbert Keith
Herb Gintis
David Greenberg
Patricia Greenfield
Christina Kopp & Ivory Hills
Tracy Kunichika
Jennifer Ladd
Joan Lager
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Norman Levey
Sarah Levy
Penn Loh
Karen Lombard
Paula Loudenslager
Liam Malone
Karen Marek
Katherine & Stephen Martin
Carolyn Mazel
Karen McAmis
Verne McArthur
Micky McKinley
Joshua McLinden
Gail Milliken
Joya Misra
Eric Morse
Sharon Moulton
Sean Mullan
Karen Nakano
Andrea Nash
Valerie Nelson Taylor
Nate Therien & Susan Newton
Dara Nussbaum-Vazquez
Dave O'Leary & Lisa Covi
Eric Peterson
Christina Platt
Katherine Post
Caroline Quattlander
Scott Reed
Todd Rees
Douglas Renick
Chris Rohmann
Fred Rose
Robert Rose
Joshua Roth
Lisa Russell
Jan Saglio
Sara Schley
Schumacher Center for a New Economics
Pamela Schwartz & Joel Feldman
Charles Schweik
Deborah Shriver
Asher Smith-Rose
Elizabeth Solomon
Stories That Move
Michael Suzor
Mary & Alan Swedlund
Alice Swift
Millie Thayer
Brennan Tierney
United Way of Massachusetts Bay & Merrimack Valley
Jon Weissman & Joan Grenier
Tracye Whitfield
Betsy Wolfson
Yeskel-Mednick Giving Fund
Claire Yoo
Valerie Young
Donor Advised Fund at Community Foundation of Western Mass
Donor Advised Fund at Fidelity Charitable Fund
Emily Harding-Morick
Lynn Duggan
David Entin
Jerry Epstein
Jonathan Fedus
Ann Ferguson
Adriana Fieldman
John Fitzgerald
Peter Gagliardi
Ken Galdston
Joseph & Reena Gerard
David & Jane Gilbert Keith
Herb Gintis
David Greenberg
Patricia Greenfield
Christina Kopp & Ivory Hills
Tracy Kunichika
Jennifer Ladd
Joan Lager
Marjorie Sue Laule
Norman Levey
Sarah Levy
Penn Loh
Karen Lombard
Paula Loudenslager
Liam Malone
Karen Marek
Katherine & Stephen Martin
Carolyn Mazel
Karen McAmis
Verne McArthur
Micky McKinley
Joshua McLinden
Gail Milliken
Joya Misra
Eric Morse
Sharon Moulton
Sean Mullan
Karen Nakano
Andrea Nash
Valerie Nelson Taylor
Nate Therien & Susan Newton
Dara Nussbaum-Vazquez
Dave O'Leary & Lisa Covi
Eric Peterson
Christina Platt
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Claire Yoo
Valerie Young
Donor Advised Fund at Community Foundation of Western Mass
Donor Advised Fund at Fidelity Charitable Fund

The Wellspring Network would also like to extend much gratitude for our outgoing board members:

Mary Hoyer
Jon Weissman
Lee Badgett
Joe Gerard
Elvis Mendez
WELCOMING NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Here in the greater Springfield area, we know that in building our network of cooperatives we are building community wealth as part of a larger movement. Solidarity economy is more than just cooperatives. When we connect social justice movements to transform our local economy we shift possibilities for community members that have been historically left out, ignored, and excluded.

Through worker-owned cooperatives, we are supporting vibrancy and resilience for all by creating economic alternatives that are more just, democratic, and sustainable.

Looking Forward

GreenLove Eco Cleaning is an established women-owned and -operated business currently in the process of converting to a worker-owned cooperative.

Farm Bug is an emerging cannabis cooperative that will provide employment to communities of color impacted by the country’s war on drugs.

Chronic Trips Café is an emerging café in Holyoke that will provide healthy juices and refreshments that supplement their outdoor education programs.

CareShare Childcare Cooperative is an emerging childcare cooperative training program created in partnership with other co-ops to support caretakers in starting their own cooperatives.

INTRODUCING OUR NEW CO-OPS

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Follow us on Social Media:

/wellspring.coop
/wellspringcooperativecorp
/@wellspring_cooperative
/@WellspringCoop1

UPCOMING PROGRAMING

Wellspring has developed plans to provide additional skill building workshops, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and cross business services to support our growing network of cooperatives.

We anticipate the launch of a co-op incubator space in Indian Orchard that will include shared co-workspace, business services, training, and a café. Space will be provided by Berkshire Bank as part of their Reevx Labs program to create entrepreneurial centers in underutilized bank buildings. While the launch was planned for 2020, it was delayed until 2021 due to Covid-19. Peer to peer networking events, skill building workshops, and shared learning opportunities are planned for the coming year.

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