

### Co-op Housing leader recognized for helping raise government's awareness of all Ontario co-ops

GUELPH ON, Sept. 25, 2017 — Simone Swail of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada Ontario Region assisted to raise the profile of the Co-operative Movement among Ontario policy makers, and will receive one of three provincial Co-operative Spirit Awards this year.

She will be honoured at the 2017 Provincial Co-op Conference on Sept. 28 at the Courtyard by Marriott at 475 Yonge St., Toronto, attended by dozens of co-operative leaders.

Swail recently completed her term as chair of the Ontario Co-operative Association (On Co-op) and Conseil de la Coopération de l'Ontario joint government relations committee. It successfully gained commitment from the provincial government to: “explor(e) the modernization of co-operative enterprises to enhance their contribution to sustainability and growth for our economy and communities.” The government also announced its intentions to transfer responsibility for co-op incorporations to the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. This is a service that already exists for other Ontario businesses.

CHF Canada Ontario Region Managing Director Harvey Cooper says Swail has contributed greatly in her role as government relations manager. “She has leveraged her relationships at Queen’s Park...and shares her knowledge and expertise to build support for the greater co-op movement,” he adds.

In addition to being an advocate, Swail has worked hard to help grow the next generation of co-op housing leaders, and has overseen the creation of a national youth strategy for housing co-operatives.

Others recognized in 2017 are Michelle Christmann of Quinte First Credit Union whose efforts in Quinte and District communities has elevated financial literacy and co-op awareness, and Libro Credit Union of southwestern Ontario for its dedication to sustainability and willingness to share its social purpose self-assessment tool with other credit unions.

“The “People, Planet and Prosperity: Co-operatives and Sustainable Development” conference, will focus on the UN’s [Sustainable Development Goals](#), and how Ontario co-operatives can and should work towards becoming more sustainable - both within their own organizations and together, as a movement.” says On Co-op Acting Executive Director Peter Cameron.

“We are Not in Kansas Anymore,” is the title of the keynote to be delivered by Gay Lea Foods Co-operative Limited President and CEO Michael Barrett. “In the whirlwind of geopolitics, it is more critical than ever to have a strong foundation based upon co-operative principles,” says Barrett; “sustainability will be discussed as a principle.” Meeting participants will also reflect on food security, governance, climate change, renewable energy, and gender equality. The conference will end with a fundraiser for the Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada.

#### ABOUT THE ONTARIO CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

On Co-op exists to strengthen and unite the co-operative movement in Ontario. We believe that co-operatives are the solution to creating stronger communities, which help to build a better world. Our members are organizations that believe in the co-operative principles and are invested in the future of the movement. With their commitment, we are able to deliver co-operative research, education, advocacy, networks, tools and resources, that support the success and sustainability of all co-operatives and the movement as a whole. On Co-op is an information and resources network with a mission to lead, cultivate and connect co-operatives.

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