

Kristi Ceccarossi
Member # 4659
33 Lillian Street, Greenfield
Daytime/evening phone: 413-210-1803
kceccarossi@gmail.com
CEO, co-owner, Common Media

Why do you wish to serve on the Board?

When my wife and I were returning to the valley from Boston in 2013 and deciding where to settle and raise a family, we chose Greenfield very intentionally; Green Field's played a major role in our decision. We are longtime co-op grocery store enthusiasts and members, but Green Field's was like no other co-op we'd experienced. Its size and presence within a Main Street landscape in a socio-economically complex town, its scrappy but steadfast energy and its notable and enduring commitment to local ag/producers and organic practices, among other things, have always impressed me. Over the years, as we have become connected and integrated into the area — and as our family has grown by three children — the co-op has been a critical third space for us, a regular resource we rely on (sometimes almost daily) and an expression of the character that has defined our lives here.

I want to serve on the board to do what I can to help the co-op continue to thrive as a fundamental anchor in our downtown. As a business owner in downtown I have both a personal and professional interest in seeing this happen. I want to help the co-op weather the challenges of a post-pandemic economy and to support its presence, participation and leadership in the larger community. Often people in my particular season of life (parenting young children) take a step out of civic work because time is stretched, but as our population slowly shifts with more families like ours making a home here, I feel an obligation to support the people and places that make Franklin County the place we've all chosen to call home.

What do you see as the significance of the co-op and what is your relationship to the Co-op/that significance in the community?

The co-op is the centerpiece of Main Street, and that is especially emphasized now with Wilson's closing. It is the consistently most active commercial space on Main Street. In non-Covid times, its function was not just practical but also essential to nurturing the community. People meet there, build relationships there, change their relationships to their neighbors and the place where they live there. I have always loved what I have

perceived as a cross-section of the town in the co-op, though I know there is a need and a commitment to do better to serve a wider population at Green Field's and McCusker's. But location and the generous, spacious welcome both physical spaces provide already do a lot in that direction. The co-op is also the physical manifestation of the fruits of our local farmers — the produce and so many products there reflect the breadth and labors of so many other businesses that are essential to the county and the valley at large.

The co-op is the primary place where my family shops for food because of its commitment to local, organic food and because of our commitment to the co-op. Before the pandemic, it was also a primary place where we gathered in public. We are there with an embarrassingly large load at least once a week (three children) and during non-Covid times, we were often passing through at least one or two more times a week to work, gather with friends or hold a business meeting. Our frequent visits have introduced us to so many people in the community we may not have met or encountered otherwise, including the staff and other members.

How has your work/life experience taught you the general skills listed on page 2 of the Board information sheet? Please be specific. Which of the specialized skills (listed on page 2 of the information packet) or other community or organizational experience would you bring to your board service? Again, please be specific.

I'm going to address both of these questions in this answer.

I have worked in a leadership role in newsrooms, in public media (WGBH and the Commons News), on a large organic farm and in digital services over the past 15 years. My work has required me to understand and oversee large budgets, hire and manage personnel and, as such, practice communication and group processes on a daily basis.

My career began as a newspaper reporter and editor around New England and Florida, which I always point to as the best education I've ever received in the art of listening. I spent 10 years getting curious with people, distilling sometimes highly complex information and creating a narrative that was compelling and accessible with all that I'd heard.

When I moved to the valley, I worked at Red Fire Farm for three years and coordinated all wholesale and logistics, including our relationship to Green Field's, and performed the role of HR manager, which meant scaling the staff up to a large crew at the height of the season across multiple farming locations.

Currently I co-own and lead a digital agency (Common Media) based in downtown Greenfield. The company has been in operation since 2007, but under my direction since 2018. In 2019, we moved our office to Main Street. We build and manage websites for mission-driven clients and we regularly contribute to and provide pro bono services to community organizations. We're a team of 12 with an annual revenue is \$1.6 million. We are not co-operatively but our ethos is very similar; we are committed to a fair, ethical and balanced way of doing business and seek to actively contribute to and support the community we live and work in.

I also have practical experience with real estate acquisitions as the owner/landlord of multiple residential properties in the county.

After reading the enclosed article, "Policy Governance and the Role of the Board," do you have any questions, concerns, or comments about Policy Governance?

None but a stated willingness and commitment to learning and understanding the intricacies of FCC's governance and policies.

Is there anything else, relevant or irrelevant, that you would like us to know about you?

It seems worth noting that I am from a working class, under-educated Italian American family from Boston. I spent the first 20 years of my life with no relationship to or even awareness of places like the co-op. When I moved to the valley to study at UMass I got my first introduction and it was bumpy. I saw the aisles of whole foods and organic products, the shoppers and eating habits that bore no resemblance to me, my family, or how I grew up. And I saw prices that seemed impossible compared to major chains. I was actively uncomfortable in spaces like Green Field's but I consciously experienced a shift in that over time. My connection to food and agriculture changed, I developed a different sense of community — and these critical changes were nurtured by individual relationships. I am very interested in cultivating this kind of shift for others and I am very committed to making the co-op a place that is welcoming of and in service to everyone in Franklin County, with a personal awareness and sensitivity to issues of class.