



**cgC** | common ground  
co-operative

# Helping people with disabilities move toward self-sufficiency

## *A Sponsorship Proposal for your Consideration*

We need your help to maximize opportunities to enhance the lives  
of individuals with developmental disabilities

## Transforming Lives

*Common Ground Co-operative offers a unique model of wrap-around support leading to employment.*



***Developmental Disabilities are chronic limitations in intellectual ability, with difficulties in many common daily activities or life skills. Causes are often unknown, but could have resulted from conditions of pregnancy and birth, or they may have genetic causes.***

*-Surrey Place Centre*

### Training and support:

Social and counseling support services, and skills based training that provides an opportunity to earn an income while learning and working in the community.

Since 2000, Common Ground Co-operative (CGC) has been creating social enterprise opportunities for adults with Autism, Down Syndrome and other developmental disabilities.

As an award winning, charitable service organization we continue to promote the inclusion of persons with developmental disabilities in the workplace, while creating exciting self-employment enterprises in both the food service and sanitation industries.

Participants work together, within community throughout the City of Toronto. These include a commercial kitchen that provides wholesale baking and catering, three independent Coffee Kiosks and a Toy Sanitation company that sanitizes toys used in behavioural therapies.

CGC is empowering the participants by giving them ownership, responsibility and decision-making authority to run the businesses. Our support helps to ensure that their enterprises meet a double bottom line of both financial and social success.

The day-to-day operations of the enterprises are made possible with the support of Job Coaches who provide an effective learning environment by working alongside our clients, allowing them to develop and utilize their personal and professional skills and strengthen the development of the Enterprises.

Our commitment helps to ensure that some of the most vulnerable people in our city are given an opportunity to develop financial independence and a sense of self-worth.

CGC has been recognized by many associations and organizations as an agency that delivers a unique and innovative approach to services, including; The Toronto Foundation's 2009 Vital Idea Award, Queen's Medal, City of Toronto Access Award, Disability Day Award, June Callwood Award, International Day of Disabilities Unsung Hero Award, Ontario Co-op Association Spirit Award, the 2014 Council for Exceptional Children's (Chapter 56) Business, Community or Agency Award (awarded to

our Lemon & Allspice Social Enterprise Program and the 2014 Council for Exceptional Children's Ontario Award for Business, Community or Agency.

We take great pride in participating in research projects that reflect the social return on investment for those we support, their families and the broader community. As a research partner with both Brock and Queen's Universities, we have been able to show that what we do makes a difference in the lives of many.

Common Ground Co-operative is a member of the Ontario Co-operative Association and is an incorporated, social co-operative comprised of members who contribute to our initiative. Membership gives you the opportunity to be involved on committees and as member of the Board of Directors.

### Education:

Literacy Skills and Job Training Programs that enhance and improve the skills and knowledge required for full or part-time employment.

### Employment:

Participants gain valuable workplace experience, engage in commercial activity, and positively impact the local economy while fully supported by a job coach.



*With the help of Job Coaches, provided by Common Ground Co-operative, the Coffee Shed at Surrey Place Centre employs 17 people with special needs*

## *Programs like Financial Literacy, help to build important life skills*



### **Andrew's Story**

*"My name is Andrew and I have a disability. I work at a Coffee Shed located in downtown Toronto.*

*My disability doesn't stop me from achieving my goals. I love to act and working at the Coffee Shed gives me the opportunity to have some extra money to help me do that.*

*I tried working at a major grocery store but it didn't work out because my employer said I wasn't fast enough for the job. That's why I love being a partner in the Coffee Shed. Everyone works together and I'm working with people who are just like me; at the other job I was the only one like me and I felt alone.*

*With the help of Common Ground Co-op, my Job Coach makes sure we're doing our jobs in the best way that we can. I get to make decisions and choices that affect me and my co-workers and I never tell anyone that they aren't fast enough for the job because even though we are a team, we are all different from each other".*

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*To bring together talent and knowledge to develop and support social enterprises in the form of small business partnerships among people with developmental disabilities, to provide the dignity of meaningful and sustainable employment.*

### **IMPACT**

*Common Ground Co-op has provided education and training for more than 14 years and has a 90% graduation and employment rate as defined by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.*

More than 100 youth with disabilities have completed our academic and job skills program comprised of:

800 hours of life and social skills for increased employability including

- 100 hours each of numeracy and financial literacy training
- 120 hours of job placement
- 40 hours of TTC training
- Food Safety and WHMIS training.

### **OUTCOMES**

57 people with developmental disabilities are currently working in one or more of 5 enterprises which means they:

- have a say in the way their work place is organized and operated
- interact with customers who appreciate their work and product
- learn the pride of ownership while working cooperatively
- recognize that their hard work leads to business expansion and long-term employment contribute to the life of the community

# Corporate and Personal Donor Opportunities

## Corporate Bridge Builder

*Pledge to give support to Common Ground that will encourage and foster relationships with your company. Through volunteer opportunities, tours and presentations, your company will be recognized as contributing to the social development of persons with developmental disabilities who are part of our unique programs. Meet with us to discuss how we can assist you with your company's corporate social responsibility mandate, and where your contribution can have an impact.*

## Personal Donor

*Every amount contributed to Common Ground Co-operative goes directly toward the support that each person receives from Job Coaches and trainers who provide wrap-around supports that include skills training, leadership, mentorship and individual planning.*

## Fundraising Event Sponsorships

*Every year, over 100 people come together to raise funds at our annual bowl-a-thon fund raising event. There are many ways for both corporate and personal donors to be involved, contact us to discuss how you can be involved.*

**Contact us to discuss these opportunities or donate online  
Visit our website at  
[www.commongroundco-op.ca](http://www.commongroundco-op.ca)**

*"I had other jobs but when it came time for me to get faster or when they asked me to add to my workload that's when it fell apart; at the Cookery, I feel like I fit right in"*

*-Beth, Lemon & Allspice Cookery*



Make a Donation  
Through [CanadaHelps.org](http://CanadaHelps.org)

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