

IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Photo: Michael Barrett, Gay Lea Foods President & CEO (centre), with OCA's Executive Director Erin Morgan, (right) and Youth Program Co-ordinator Lisa Furfaro (left).

Renowned Co-operative Young Leaders (CYL) program moving to new Co-operative Education Centre

GUELPH ON, Feb. 15, 2018 – The Co-operative Young Leaders program has a new location near Aylmer, Ontario for this summer's leadership camp at the Co-operative Education Centre (CEC) owned by Gay Lea Foods Co-operative Limited.

The 51-year old CYL program brings youth from across the province together to learn about and practice leadership through co-operative activities. CYL equips kids to stand out from their peers and define themselves as leaders in a movement that values people and the planet, as well as traditional business success.

"It has long been the dream of those passionate about the Co-operative Young Leaders program that our sector would someday have a 'co-operative home' for CYL," said Erin Morgan, the Ontario Co-operative Association's Executive Director. "Now, in 2018, that dream becomes a reality."

Recognizing the need for a common space where co-operators can come together to learn, network, create and play, Gay Lea Foods has committed to bringing that dream to life by investing in their beautiful property near Aylmer. Espousing the co-operative principles of Education & Training, Concern for Community, and Co-operation amongst Co-operatives, their

vision is to partner with co-operatives from all sectors to grow the CEC – a first of its kind in Canada.

“We’re proud of the important role our sector plays in the Canadian economy and excited to create a place where future co-operative leaders can come together to learn and continue to build momentum in the co-operative community,” said Gay Lea Foods Chair, Rob Goodwill.

Added Gay Lea Foods President & CEO, Michael Barrett, himself a 15-year facilitator at CYL: “We are honoured that OCA has chosen the CEC as the new home of the CYL camp and look forward to working with tomorrow’s leaders, team players, volunteers, creative minds and entrepreneurs as we continue to strengthen and grow the co-operative sector for the betterment of all Canadians”.

Set amongst 98-acres of Carolinian forest, the CEC is an ideal venue for the CYL program, with amenities that will include cabin space for up to 42 guests, a communal hall, breakout meeting rooms, a sound system, LCD projectors and screens and a commercial-grade kitchen.

All future co-operative leaders between the ages of 11 and 18 are encouraged to apply for camp. Registration opens February 23, 2018 and all camp information can be found at www.ontario.coop/cyl.

-30-

For more information on CYL, visit www.ontario.coop or contact Lisa Furfaro at lfurfaro@ontario.coop.

For more information on the new Co-operative Education Centre, including booking information and programming for 2018, visit www.cec-dairymuseum.com or contact Kerr Smith at ksmith@gayleafoods.com.

SAVE THE DATE!

Gay Lea Foods’ third annual CO-OPALOOZA event will be held at the Gay Lea Dairy Museum on Saturday, June 23. Co-opalooza brings local co-operatives from a variety of sectors together to enjoy an afternoon of music, food and family fun. This year marks an extra-special celebration as Gay Lea Foods celebrates its 60th anniversary! More details to follow.

