



COCO 2014-2015 Board nominee statements

Nous ne sommes malheureusement pas en mesure de traduire ce document à temps pour distribution. Si vous avez besoin de support pour comprendre les déclarations des candidat(e)s, n'hésitez pas à nous le demander à l'assemblée. Merci de votre compréhension.

There are 2 positions up for election at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). There are 3 nominees, 1 of which is an existing Board member running for a 2nd term. Please read their statements, listed below in alphabetical order by family name, to get to know them better. You will have a chance to meet them in person at the AGM.

Happy reading!

From your friends at COCo.

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Eryn Fitzgerald

My name is Eryn Fitzgerald and I spend my days organizing community-university partnerships at Concordia University. As the Community Relations Coordinator, I have the pleasure of supporting social change activities among both campus and community organizations. I regularly connect students, staff, faculty, and not-for-profit organizations in areas such as seniors advocacy, urban planning, women's rights, and poverty reduction, to name a few. Given my constant immersion in a diverse number of projects, I believe that I could be helpful to COCo in brokering strategic alliances.

Presently, I am a board member of the Peter McGill Community Council and a member of the Westhaven Neighbourhood Committee. These roles have exposed me to wonderful lessons in grassroots organizing and have allowed me to flex my facilitator muscles as we design participatory processes for citizens. I am also deeply passionate about sustainability in all of its dimensions. I currently lend this energy to the board of Sustainable Concordia as well other adventures in urban agriculture and institutional greening initiatives. As a result, I am well-versed in consensus-based, non-hierarchical decision-making.

In addition to my skills in governance and organizational development, I am



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keen to bring COCo my experience in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. Prior to joining the university, I managed community relations for a large corporation, traveled widely to make radio documentaries, established an award-winning restorative justice organization, and organized cross-cultural conflict-resolution activities with a national youth organization.

I present myself as a candidate for the board after much reflection on my volunteer experience with COCo and on my current personal and professional objectives. I benefited greatly from the anti-oppression training COCo provided in 2012 and I enjoyed working closely with staff members to facilitate an activity around this topic. Two years later, I am interested in serving on COCo's board because I continue to believe deeply in COCo's mission and I am now confident that I have as much to contribute to COCo's aims as I have to learn from the experience of being a board member.

Alice Isac

I would like to join the team of board members at COCo because I am passionate about community development and education. I am excited by the possibility of working with others who share these interests so that we might have meaningful exchanges and also generate great learning opportunities.

This fall, I will begin a graduate program at Concordia University in Educational Technology. I have some experience in teaching and animation, and so I am hoping to be able to develop these skills and to also use the knowledge I will acquire in order to eventually design training programs for various groups (community, private, public, etc.). I am very keen to employ the work of Paolo Freire in my thesis, and I am eager to see how democratic learning methodologies can play out in more traditional educational and professional settings.

I am also a founding member of Coopérative d'Habitation Fleur de l'Île, a cooperative housing project that will soon be located in the Côte-des-Neiges area of Montreal. As part of a dynamic and diverse group of people, we are quite literally building this cooperative from the ground up. Although much of my current work has revolved around meeting with various industry



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professionals and drafting policies and regulations, I am planning to be involved with the pedagogical services committee. This committee will be primarily concerned with training new members as they learn what it means to live within a cooperative framework, as well as take on their respective responsibilities within the community.

I believe that my educational, personal and career aspirations align with COCo's mission to support community groups as they grow. While sitting on this committee, I hope to learn many great things that I will apply to the other areas of my life, as well as contributing the knowledge and skills that I am developing.

Jon McPhedran Waitzer *(running for 2nd term)*

Having spent the past two years on COCo's Board, I believe this organization plays a unique and important role in supporting Quebec's community groups and social movements. I'd like to spend the next two years helping to carry this work even further, collaborating with COCo's staff, Board, and membership to bring our mission and strategic directions to life.

During my time on the Board so far, I've been excited to help COCo develop its internal systems and processes while also contributing to projects that support the work of other community groups. I'm passionate about COCo's capacity to work effectively and efficiently without a hierarchy, and to be a role model for other groups that would like to explore similar ways of working. I've contributed to this by helping to develop and update a number of organizational policies, from hiring to decision-making. I've also organized and facilitated staff-Board working sessions around horizontal accountability, feedback, and Board/staff roles & responsibilities. In supporting COCo's work with other groups, I've focused my energy on helping us move in the strategic directions of supporting social movements and promoting community-driven action research. I'm really enthusiastic about the potential of these two initiatives, and I'd love to be able to keep pushing them forward!

I think my professional background and current work both place me in a strong position to support COCo's mission as a Board member. I'm the Director of Head & Hands, a community organization that's been working to empower



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youth in Montreal for over 43 years. We're a COCo member organization, we work non-hierarchically, and we have a strong history of involvement in both social movements and community-driven research. We also invest a lot of energy in cultivating anti-oppressive practice within our work. Serving on COCo's Board has let me bring the perspective of a member organization into a number of key discussions, and I'd like to continue playing that role over the next two years. Before joining Head & Hands, my background was in management consulting and international project management. I worked with McKinsey & Company in Montreal and Ashoka in Berlin, and advised clients from the public, private, and social sectors on strategy and organizational development. That experience has helped me understand and provide input on COCo's training and facilitation work, and this is also a contribution I'm hoping to carry forward into a second term on the Board.