

AMANDA PRESGRAVES



Share a little about yourself

I am endlessly curious about the ways we eat, think, move, and live—and how those threads nourish both our inner world and community. In my personal and professional life, I explore these connections as a Professional USA Off-Road Triathlete and Ultra-Runner, mindset coach for teen athletes, and author of *The NonRecipe Book*.

I serve as the Director of Community Enchantment for the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition, where I infuse energy into building community and expanding access to trails, walking, and biking. Here in the Shenandoah Valley, the most joyous moments are made when integrating food, movement, and community into simple, everyday moments (ideally, all of it together!!). If you don't find me coming into the Co-op every day to snag something, you'll catch me running around town, pedaling and running up mountain to a new sunrise and sunset, buried behind the corn (and weeds) in my garden, whipping up nonrecipes in the kitchen and making sure that I always have a friend to share it with.

Why would you like to serve on the board of Friendly City Food Co-op?

Food is one of the most powerful tools to create connection, equity, and resilience in our communities. The Friendly City Food Co-op is a cornerstone of our local food system and as a place of neighborly connection - it's important to me to continue supporting its role as a place where nourishment extends beyond the plate into community, justice, and sustainability.

I've completed the first term (three years) on the Friendly City Food Co-op Board, and I am seeking a second term because I've seen firsthand the impact of thoughtful governance and collaboration, and I want to keep contributing to the Co-op's growth and inclusivity. In my first term I chaired the Nominations Committee and served as interim Secretary, gaining valuable experience in Policy Governance and collaborative leadership.

What particular skills, knowledge, and/or life experience do you bring to Friendly City Food Co-op that enables you to support and advance its mission?

Most importantly, I CARE, and am 1000% behind the mission of the Co-op and the work they (WE!) do in the community. I also bring a unique and experienced professional and personal perspective at the intersection of community building, health, food, and business. Before my current role for SVBC, my background includes



AMANDA PRESGRAVES CONTINUED...

launching food businesses, consulting in agriculture, sustainability and innovation, working with nonprofits and startups to grow equitable, people-centered systems, and publishing *The NonRecipe Book*. As a mindset coach and professional athlete, I am skilled at holding space for process, resilience, and growth—qualities I see mirrored in the Co-op's mission and strategic priorities. On the board, I have experience translating and aligning with the broad vision into clear end policies, supporting accountability and cultivating leadership through nominations. I'm deeply committed to advancing the Co-op's strategic priorities around equity, community connection, and sustainable growth.

Please share an example that demonstrates your respect for people and their differences; how have you worked to understand the perspectives of others?

How we do one thing is how we do everything. Understanding someone's perspective and valued journey is the foundation of empathy and caring for each other—it drives us toward connection and seeing our oneness.

Without disclosing the personal details and conversations, a recent specific moment surfaced when a wheelchair-bound individual trusted me with their story. It felt like the most important thing for me to do was hear their perspective and advocate for their experience. For me, expanding my perspective so I can better understand others takes many forms such as racial equity training, reading books from diverse authors, exposing myself to voices and leaders across cultures and experiences, and leading with inclusivity and openness -whether that is in a group run or organizing a community event.

A primary motivator of mine to work for a local nonprofit was to be connected with where my feet were - the individuals, direct opportunities, emotions, and place. That means hearing, understanding and amplifying the voices and actions of a spectrum of folks in our region - expanding a broad range of goals. Through my work with the Coalition, I have the fortunate role to be community-facing, and each conversation not only enhances my perspective and meaning I carry, but every story and experience motivates me.

The item I can't live without at the co-op is... The entire 99¢ Table—the uncontained thrill I get from the surprise variety from spring through late fall—brings me such joy. Whatever I can fit in my pockets, stuff down my shirt, or squeeze in my backpack/on my bike. Peaches! Blue potatoes! Cucumbers! Squash!! It's the first option people have as they enter the store, and I often find it lends itself to great conversation starters with others and attracts people who wouldn't otherwise think they could find options that work for their budget. I've received recipe ideas from other shoppers in this moment, and hope to have offered some creation inspiration as well.



2025 FRIENDLY CITY FOOD CO-OP BOARD CANDIDATE



RANDALL BOWMAN

Share a little about yourself

I am a retired internal medicine physician, having practiced in NW Ohio and more recently in Richmond, VA and most recently Harrisonburg, VA. My previous board experience includes having sat on family philanthropy board, having started a free medical clinic which utilized a board of directors and having served on the Board at EMU for 12 years. I enjoy the collaboration that goes with board work and have been impressed with the co-op and its mission in our community. I enjoy fitness activities, reading and traveling.

Have you served on a board before?

Yes, a family philanthropy board in NW Ohio, Fulton County Free Medical Clinic (director) board, & Eastern Mennonite University board (2012-2024).

What particular skills, knowledge, and/or life experience do you bring to Friendly City Food Co-op that enables you to support and advance its mission?

Internal medicine practice with interest in prevention focusing on diet and exercise. Significant previous board experience.

Describe how your career/life has been enhanced by exposure to diverse people, places, or experiences. Please provide a specific example.

Having practice internal medicine for 37 years, I have had the privilege of caring for persons with different ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, etc.

The item I can't live without at the co-op is... Greek yogurt!



2025 FRIENDLY CITY FOOD CO-OP BOARD CANDIDATE

RORY DEPAOLIS



Share a little about yourself

I am a father of two and have lived in downtown Harrisonburg for 25 years. My two favorite hobbies are hiking and biking. My first involvement in the Harrisonburg community was with a group that attempted to get our town council to reconsider building a golf course. I subsequently served on the parks and rec commission where I developed a healthy respect for that department. I was also one of the many who worked tirelessly to get Our Community Place started back when it was just a dream. More recently, I spent three years with Harrisonburg Cohousing, a group that attempted to develop a cohousing community in Harrisonburg. It was derailed by the pandemic but we almost reached our goal!

Why would you like to serve on the board of Friendly City Food Co-op?

In the dark ages, 40 or so years ago, I found it difficult to eat healthy as a vegetarian and sometimes vegan. The coop gives me local choices that are both good for me, and good for the community. I would love to be part of their success.

What particular skills, knowledge, and/or life experience do you bring to Friendly City Food Co-op that enables you to support and advance its mission?

Although new to being a member of a board, I have been involved in committee work for over 40 years, including facilitating discussions and working with teams to accomplish group goals. I really enjoy teamwork. My life experiences in pursuit of healthy eating and an environmentally friendly lifestyle also closely align with the mission and strategic plan of the coop.

Please share an example that demonstrates your respect for people and their differences; how have you worked to understand the perspectives of others?

I was fortunate to be able to share many afternoons with families in rural Rwanda. One mother I visited had just had twins and I congratulated her as one would in the US, assuming she would be overjoyed. She was actual quite stressed since, with twins, she would not have a free hand to work in the fields where she harvests her food. This experience, and many others, taught me to try and understand others without seeing them thru my own lived experience. As an aside, I went back the next year and visited with her and she was doing well. The community had pitched in to help her care for her twins and still work in the fields. Impressively, she had saved enough money to send her five-year-old to a good school.

The item I can't live without at Friendly City is... Local produce & breakfast burritos.



2026 FRIENDLY CITY FOOD CO-OP BOARD CANDIDATE



ZACK BAKER

Share a little about yourself

I recently moved back to the Harrisonburg area after living in Northern Virginia, Charlottesville, and West Virginia. While I've loved all those places, Harrisonburg feels like home, especially because of Friendly City Food Co-op. I've been a proud member-owner for three years, and my weekly visits are a highlight in my routine.

I've been married for four years to my best friend, Emily, and we share our home with two cats. We love to travel, discover new places, and spend as much time outdoors as possible hiking, camping, and fishing in the Shenandoah Valley.

For work, I'm a Customer Success Manager in the retail industry, helping brands and retailers improve their in-store execution and connect better with customers.

What excites me most is combining my passions of retail, storytelling, and love for good food. My goal is to help the co-op keep thriving so more people can experience the same joy I do every time I shop here.

My passions are simple but intentional: snacks, sustainability, and supporting businesses that align with my values. Friendly City Food Co-op checks every box.

Why would you like to serve on the board of Friendly City Food Co-op?

Last year, I applied without fully showing the heart behind my story. Since then, I've been much more intentional about sharing what I believe in, both on social media and in person. Attending the Co-op 101 class was a turning point where I learned more about what makes Friendly City special and left even more energized to contribute.

I want to serve on the board because I believe the co-op is one of the most important anchors in our community. I would advocate for continued growth specifically around expanding offerings with things like a bakery, a made-to-order deli, a smoothie bar, and more consistent bread aisle options. These are things I've seen done well at other co-ops and believe could be powerful growth opportunities here.



ZACK BAKER CONTINUED...

I'd also like to help grow the co-op's presence online. I started posting on TikTok this year and see a big opportunity to reach youth and college students, get them excited, and help them discover the amazing local goods our co-op offers. I'm eager to contribute my skills in branding, retail growth, and relationship-building to help it in anyway I can.

What particular skills, knowledge, and/or life experience do you bring to Friendly City Food Co-op that enables you to support and advance its mission?

Professionally, I work with emerging and national brands in the consumer packaged goods (CPG) space, where I help them improve visibility, drive sales, and connect better with their customers. I partner with major companies to optimize their in-store execution, build growth strategies, and uncover new revenue opportunities.

I also share thought leadership on LinkedIn, where I highlight examples of strong retail execution. These experiences have taught me how to analyze opportunities, think strategically, and tell stories that resonate with people.

I bring skills in retail expertise, customer engagement, financial understanding, and community-building online & in-person — but more importantly, I bring genuine enthusiasm for supporting local farms, small brands, and sustainable food systems. I want to put these skills to work for the co-op.

Beyond that, I manage an LLC that covers my real estate investments and creative work, giving me hands-on experience with budgets, contracts, and long-term planning. I'm also a content creator and storyteller, which has taught me how to engage people, share ideas, and build community visibility online.

Most importantly, I've been a co-op owner-member for three years, and I want to give back. I bring retail expertise, strategic thinking, and a genuine enthusiasm for supporting local farms, small brands, and sustainable food systems. My goal is to help the co-op continue to grow, thrive, and serve our community for years to come.

Describe how your career/life has been enhanced by exposure to diverse people, places, or experiences. Please provide a specific example.

I've lived in many different towns and cities which have helped shape me in different ways. What I've learned through my career and personally is that we're all connected by the things that nourish us: our food, our stories, and our sense of belonging.

I've had the privilege of working with teams across many backgrounds from small, emerging brands to nationally known companies. One project in particular brought together a diverse team. At first, everyone approached the challenge from very different perspectives, and it took real listening and understanding to find common ground. By taking the time to hear each voice, we discovered insights none of us would have reached without coming together.



ZACK BAKER CONTINUED...

Whether I'm advising a snack brand, filming content, or talking with a small business owner, I try to stay grounded in empathy, curiosity, and a willingness to learn. I believe a successful co-op is one that brings together many voices, and I want to help ensure Friendly City continues to do exactly that.

The item I can't live without at Friendly City is... Number one on my list is the Crucible Kinfolk coffee beans that fuel every single morning.

It's hard to choose because the team does such an amazing job bringing in the newest and best products. Local produce and meats are essentials I quite literally could not live without.

And then there are the favorites that always sneak into my cart: fresh-ground peanut butter, pasta salad, and Nightingale Ice Cream Sandwiches.

The hot bar never misses, and the drink cooler always has something new and refreshing to try. It's nearly impossible to leave without filling a cart up with many things I didn't know I needed.

