

# **OMBUDS PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET**

## What is a GreenStar Ombudsperson?

The Ombuds program was created to assist members of the GreenStar community (members, staff, vendors and others) in getting questions, concerns, suggestions, problems or complaints (involving the Co-op) addressed. We are guided by four main ethical principles: confidentiality, neutrality/impartiality, independence and informality.

## What does a GreenStar Ombudsperson DO?

- Acts as an impartial and confidential "sounding board" for concerns
- Explains GreenStar policies/procedures
- Helps develop a range of options
- Refers to appropriate channels to address concerns
- Identifies perceived gaps, inconsistencies, problematic trends or policies

## What does a GreenStar Ombudsperson NOT do?

- Serve as advocates for anyone in the GS community
- Establish policy
- Spend a disproportionate amount of time with any one person seeking help.

### **Guiding Principles\***

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

The Ombudsperson holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence, and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so. The only exception to this privilege of confidentiality is where there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm.

#### **NEUTRALITY/IMPARTIALITY**

The Ombudsperson, as a designated neutral, remains unaligned and impartial. The Ombudsperson does not engage in any situation that could create a conflict of interest.

#### **INDEPENDENCE**

The Ombudsperson is independent in structure, function, and appearance to the highest degree possible within the organization.

### **INFORMALITY**

The Ombudsperson, as an informal resource, does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure related to concerns brought to his/her attention.

# When should you contact the Ombudsperson?

Many problems can be handled through the normal channels. First consult the person responsible for the specific area, such as a department head or supervisor (by asking for assistance at the front desk). If you are not comfortable doing so, or if you still need information or assistance, contact the ombudsperson.

#### **Contact Information**

To contact the Ombuds with your concerns, please call: Evie Weinstein 607-227-8516, or D. Scott 607-227-6780 Or email: ombuds@greenstar.coop