

## **Sarah Jensen video transcript**

Hi there! My name is Sarah Jensen, and I am a director on the board of Castlegreen Housing Co-operative here in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada, located on the traditional lands of the Fort William First Nation, Signatory to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850.

Castlegreen Housing Co-operative was first founded in 1973 by a group of people looking to address the housing accessibility crisis in our city, and now nearly 50 years later we still look to answer that call, like so many other housing co-operatives across Canada and around the world.

My co-op story began 15 years ago, when my mother and I moved into Castlegreen. From the time I was seven years old, my mom wanted me to understand the importance of being an active member of our vibrant community – and her foresight coupled with the welcoming neighbourhood that became a family full of mentors shaped my deep sense of commitment to community.

It wasn't until I was in my late teens that I realized that our co-op had also served another purpose – it had supported me and my single mother, who was newly re-entering the workforce, from the precarious question of homelessness and provided space for both my mother and I to grow with the support of our newfound co-op family.

Growing up in a co-op provided me with so many opportunities and so much support as a young person – from encouraging my leadership skills when I became Community Garden Committee co-ordinator at fourteen, to running for the Board of Directors at 18, to sending me to a co-operative leadership camp that I now am so lucky to work for as the Youth Engagement Co-ordinator, to paving the way for my passion for the co-op sector that shapes my career aspirations and my dedication to the co-operative values in everything I do.

Co-operative identity is at the heart of who we are as human beings – we search for that connection to community in everything we do, and through fostering that strength in community we can come together and make the world a better, more co-operative community for all.

I hope our stories will inspire you to look for the same opportunities in what you do to make the co-operative difference, too.