

Willy Street Co-Op
1221 Williamson Street
Madison, WI 53703
Sarah Dahl, Human Resources, 608-251-6776
www.willystreet.coop

Background Information

Willy Street Co-Op, founded in 1971, provides a wide range of discounted organic products to customers. According to the Co-Op principles: “We strive to uphold owner values in all our activities through adherence to co-op principles, sustainable lifestyles and social responsibility in our activities. We also strive to give equal consideration to the needs of members and the right of workers to participatory management and a humane work environment. After all these years, we are a thriving business because we have a tradition of quality foods, customer service and education as well as a strong connection to our neighborhood and history.” Willy Street Co-Op has nearly 11,000 members and employs over 125 people. The Co-Op employs 5 people with autism and many others with disabilities.

| Willy Street Co-Op |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employs 5 people with autism and others with disabilities.• Donates thousands of dollars to the community each year.• Informs employees about the benefits of organic food for the people with autism.• Offers flexible job assignments to employees with disabilities. |

Story

Willy Street Co-Op has employed people with autism for many of years. Two of their current employees with autism have been employed for over 10 years. This demonstrates the loyalty that has been established. “Every day they come in with a smile and it touches you to see that,” Sarah Dahl, human resources exclaims. These employees with autism take great pride in their work, and, because of this, they are very successful. From repackaging raisins in the receiving department, to stocking shelves in the store, there is a great variety in the work these individuals perform. Willy Street Co-Op offers a flexible working environment.

Reported by Tyler Weigman, Edgewood College, March 2007, for Professor Denis Collins (dcollins@edgewood.edu) and the 2007 Good Samaritan Award, co-sponsored by the Samaritan Counseling Center and Edgewood College.