



LARRY GAST

I'm ready for Chicago Market to open. I want to shop at our store and I bet you do too. Our neighbors also want us to open. They may not know it yet but when we launch they'll wonder how they lived without their community-owned grocery store.

How are we going to get there?

When my wife and I became Owners, we asked the Board what the most pressing need was. "More Owners." We needed to cultivate a critical mass of Northsiders who care enough about their food and where it comes from to invest in Chicago Market. Without more Owners, we can't open.

If the biggest challenge in front of Chicago Market is signing more Owners, I want to help sign more Owners. So how do we encourage a critical mass of future loyal customers to invest in us in droves?

I realized that future Owners had to experience a glimpse of shopping at Chicago Market. They had to see first-hand the value it will add to our community. We had to introduce the city of Chicago to the incredible farmers and producers in the region in-person. We needed to fill our neighbors' fridges and pantries with great food. And more people needed to know we existed.

I lobbied the Board to invest more in Pop-Up Farmers' Markets and I volunteered to help. Behind the leadership of Chicago Market board member Linn Austin, I've helped plan and implement three Chicago Market Pop-Up Farmers' Markets in our community, with three more on the way for 2016. These 12-15 vendor markets are marketed through our incredible Marketing Committee and are strategically located in areas with high foot traffic. They have resulted in many "More Owners" and hundreds of walk-ins, many of whom had never heard of Chicago Market but bought bags full of groceries and suddenly cared about our co-op's future.

This is just one way I know I can help. As a member of the Chicago Market Board of Directors, I will bring continued energy towards signing More Owners and inspiring our community to invest in a very special grocery store. While a resident of Brooklyn I was a proud Park Slope Food Co-Op Owner and have seen the impact this model can have on a community. I want to make that a reality in Chicago.

Thank you.

