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Dear Grant Selection Committee,

I grew up quite literally in the aisles of the 3 Rivers Co-op in Fort Wayne, IN. My grandparents were founding members when the Co-op opened the year I was born and members of my family have been a part of the organization from opening day to today. As a child I roamed the aisles absorbing knowledge about natural, healthy, sustainable food, the love of a supportive community, and a sense of responsibility to progress the mission of food justice in the world. As a teenager I washed dishes. As a young adult a stocked shelves and served customers, all the while internalizing the important role that food plays in individual lives, in communities and for the earth.

I went on to complete a PhD in Anthropology focusing on sustainable coffee and chocolate in the Pacific Northwest, continuing to immerse myself in the ways that food impacts lives from the farmer to the consumer. In my professional life I have advised some of the largest food companies in the world, bringing forward knowledge around consumer trends and strategically advising brands on how to better meet consumers health and wellness needs. I bring forward data from hard numbers to authentic consumer stories that highlight the many ways that food can positively impact the lives of their consumers and the environment while working to improve our food system.

As an expert in health, wellness and food and as a human being seeking hope for the future, I could not be more proud of the work that my family and their community are doing through Heartland Communities in my hometown. They are on the front lines of making the world a better place by working to improve all aspects of the food system in their community with positive impact rippling out globally. The world is a better place and Fort Wayne is a stronger, healthier, more supportive community because of the work that they do.

I Arwen Kimmell on behalf of myself as a doctor, daughter, sister, anthropologist, and long time food system facilitator, wholly support Heartland Communities vision 2050 "Greater Fort Wayne Area Regenerative Food System," project. And intend to participate as Indiana's integrated agriculture food and cultural systems grow.

Warm regards,

Arwen Kimmell, PhD