

## ABOUT THE STEERING COMMITTEE

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### Gretchen McIntyre

Gretchen has a Masters in Accounting and is working towards her CPA license in Florida. She became interested in local, organic food while living in San Francisco, where the abundance of successful farm fresh markets and cooperative food stores inspired her to bring a similar vision to the local food system of this area.

### Elizabeth Nesbit

Elizabeth is a life-long resident of Alachua County, currently residing in NE Gainesville with her husband and two children. She studied Psychology at the University of Florida and works in publishing with her own business, Child Care Publications, Inc. She also works for her family-owned business, Alta Systems, Inc. – a local printing company. She has traveled across the country visiting many co-operatives, farms, and schools along the way and she is committed to applying her experiences and research to participating in, supporting, and improving the local food system.

### Wesley Hogan

Wes is enrolled in the Masters of Architecture program at the University of Florida, specializing in sustainable building design. He is currently employed with the Florida Community Design Center - a non-profit architecture and design firm in Gainesville that assists with community redevelopment projects. He would love to assist with the development of a “green” building for the future Co-op market.

### Noah Shitama

Noah is currently working as a self-employed carpenter, builder, renovator, and designer. He lives in Gainesville, where he was born, with his wife and two children. He received his bachelor's degree in Religion from Emory University in 2001. Since then he has worked toward developing his abilities and knowledge in the two realms of food and shelter; or farming and building, in hopes of cultivating a more practical understanding of how to develop a sustainable community and culture. The most vibrant groceries that he has visited have all been cooperatively owned, so he is excited and committed to bringing one to be here at home.

### Matt Vargas

Matt was born in New Jersey but has been a Floridian since age 3, growing up in Tallahassee. He graduated in 2000 from the University of West Florida with a degree in Environmental Studies and afterwards worked with agricultural scientists at UF's North Florida Research & Education Center in Quincy, FL on a project that sought to improve the economics and ecology of the Southeast's peanut-cotton cropping system by integrating Bahia grass and cattle into the rotation. He worked with a non-profit in southern India to help develop project proposals for small farmers, women & tribal populations. On returning, he worked at the FL DEP laboratory in Tallahassee, FL performing microbiological analyses of Florida surface and groundwater. In 2005, Matt joined Florida Organic Growers' (FOG) organic certification program, determining compliance of organic farmers, livestock producers, and foods processors to the USDA National Organic Program. In January 2008, he joined the parent organization (FOG) to help develop their education and outreach programs.

