

Vernon Oakes to Receive Tom Nees Award for Exceptional Service from Community of Hope

Night of Hope to spotlight Oakes' contributions to cooperative development and community resilience

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EINPresswire.com/ -- of Hope has announced that Vernon Oakes, longtime cooperative leader and General Manager of Columinate, will be honored with the Tom Nees Award for Exceptional Service at this year's Night of Hope celebration on October 3, 2025.



The Tom Nees Award honors individuals who embody a spirit of service and leadership in promoting health, housing, and community well-being throughout Washington, DC. Vernon Oakes, through decades of leadership in cooperative development and his nationally syndicated [Everything Co-op](#) radio program, has elevated voices, organizations, and solutions that strengthen communities.

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Vernon Oakes

Oakes' relationship with [Community of Hope](#) spans nearly four decades. While serving on the Stanford School of Business Alumni Consultant Team in 1986, he was introduced to the organization's mission and was soon invited by the organization's founder, Tom Nees, to join the board. He served diligently for 18 consecutive years. He also took on the role of Interim General Manager, maintaining stability during a crucial leadership transition. Oakes played a key role in hiring the current President and

CEO, Kelly Sweeney McShane, who has been at the helm for nearly 25 years.

“It is an incredible honor to receive this award from Community of Hope, whose mission and service align so closely with the values of cooperation and community empowerment,” said

Oakes. "This recognition is a testament to the power of working together for lasting change."

Community of Hope has been a cornerstone of DC's health and housing support for 45 years, providing medical, dental, behavioral health, and housing services to thousands of families each year.

Event Details:

Award Reception: October 3, 2025, 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Location: Intercontinental at the DC Wharf

Followed By: Night of Hope: 45 Years of Impact

About Community of Hope

Founded in 1980, the mission of Community of Hope (COH) is to improve health, end homelessness, and partner with communities to make Washington, DC more equitable. They operate three community health centers, a community resource hub, and a Family Success Center. Health services include medical, dental, emotional wellness, pharmacy services and extensive patient support for 15,716 patients in 2024. They work to end and prevent homelessness by providing housing and supportive services for 1,601 families and individuals in 2024. A Family Success Center connects over 500 people a year to resources. Community of Hope is building a strong and sustainable organization that is caring for families, improving lives, and leading change.

About Vernon Oakes

Vernon Oakes is the General Manager of Columinate, a nationwide consulting and management cooperative. He is one of the founders and host of Everything Co-op, a radio show that has featured over 400 interviews with cooperative leaders, educators, and community builders across the country. His career has been dedicated to promoting cooperative ownership, financial empowerment, and community well-being.

For more information about Vernon Oakes and his contributions to the cooperative movement, please visit [NCBA CLUSA](#).

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