

IN MEMORY OF KATIE ZABRONSKY

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PHOTO BY JUN TAN

Katie Zabronsky, who was a Coop member for only four years but made a lasting impression, died on Nov. 18, 2023. Katie joined the Coop in 2019. She worked mostly in food processing, receiving, and stocking. Her partner, Harry Shock, recalled how: "Katie loved the Coop and all its quirks. She always came home from her shift having purchased something new and intriguing. She dubbed these her 'PoW' or 'Purchase of the Week.' It was a very necessary part of every shop. As friends and family returned to NYC, post-pandemic, they all moved into the neighborhood to be near Katie, and, in turn, Katie persuaded them to join the Coop as well."

This is borne out by the testimonies of her many friends. Liz Hart wrote: "Katie adored the Coop and was a huge champion and spokeswoman for it. Before I even moved to New York she made sure to give me a tour during a visit. Katie was so warm. She loved food, cooking, feeding her friends and family, and would often be heard saying, 'It's from the Coop,' whenever she was hosting."

Another friend, Naomi Sabbah, added: "Katie is the reason I joined the Coop! Every time I went to Katie's she would put a snack out on the table or share a new skincare purchase and laugh when I asked where she got it, responding with a smile and a shrug: 'The Coop!' She was a true, pure member in the best sense, never pressuring me to join, or sticking up her nose at me that I hadn't, just being generous with the joy (and items) the place gave her."

Katie was a social worker with the Sanctuary for Families at Queens Family Justice Center, supporting children and teens who had witnessed domestic abuse. Before that, she had worked with the health care consultant Rabin Martin, partnering with the Gates Foundation to broaden access to maternal immunizations, and studied in Uganda where she supported PDI Uganda, an organization in rural, eastern Uganda that supports children's education.

Diagnosed with ovarian cancer at twenty-six, she underwent surgery and chemotherapy. Ten weeks later, she ran a half-marathon to raise \$25,000 for cancer research at Memorial Sloan Kettering. Despite her illness, she received a Master's degree from

the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College.

Katie is survived by her loving parents, Rob and Lorri Zabronsky; her sister, Rachel Zabronsky and brother-in-law, Jake Sabbah (both Coop members); and her partner, Harry Shock (also a Coop member).

During the first few days of COVID, Katie did a hectic shift in the stock room. At one point, a coordinator yelled, "Forget the goji berries! Focus on cheddar cheese!" (Apparently, hard cheese is a good source of protein and does not go bad quickly, so everyone was rushing to buy it.) For Katie, who told this story to many friends, this epitomized the eccentric, hilarious, but also very touching tone of the Coop, one with which she obviously identified.