

The ComPost

Fertilizer for the Mind.

A Bimonthly Publication of Just Food: Northfield Community Co-op

April/May 2009



Just Wondering

By **Amy Haslett-Marroquin**

Co-op Owner, Mother, Teacher
and Part-Time Farmer, Finca Mirasol

In this photo: Lars is in charge of making sure the chickens get love.

My fourteen year old son and I trudge through the knee-deep snow, hauling water out to our layer hens in the chicken coop. The wind whips, stinging our faces while we stand struggling with the latch that is frozen shut on the gate of the chicken yard. It opens suddenly, causing me to slip on the ice, spilling the water and myself. Laughing, William pulls me up and goes back for another bucket of water. Somehow, we manage to make it to the coop, deliver the water and feed, collect the eggs and latch the gate again. I try hard to stay positive, but I have to let my sentiments slip out. "I'd rather be in Guatemala." William nods "Me too, but somebody has to take care of the birds."

Our family cannot claim to be true Minnesotans. Most winters we escape, for as long as our jobs allow, to my husband's homeland: Guatemala.

This year, instead, we brought a bit of Guatemala here.

We began a farming cooperative with four other families to raise chickens, the Northfield Area Latino Farmers. Like any new venture, the first season involved a lot of learning and little earning. While the summer work of raising broilers was shared with all families involved, the winter work of caring for the laying hens has fallen to my son and me. And though delivering water in 20 below weather is not on my top ten list of ways I like to spend my day, it feels like the right way to spend this winter. These hens are the first that we are keeping as breeders. It's the beginning of a new way of doing things for us.

And how is this bringing Guatemala here?

Well, you see... we are keeping the rooster.

Let me explain...

February 27, 2006

Yesterday, I walked up the stairs of my parent-in-laws' half-finished house in the rain forests of Guatemala to find my seven-year-old daughter leaning most of her body out of the opening in the wall that will (hopefully) someday contain a window. Pulling her in, I asked her as calmly as I could, exactly what she thought she was doing. "Just wondering," she answered. I nodded, pointed out the distance to the

ground and insisted she could wonder just as effectively on her sleeping mat. Nicktae glanced at me with that exasperated look that she has come to master, and repeated, "But I'm wonder-ing." I suddenly understood as she motioned to all that was in her view as she leaned out of the opening. I looked at the palm trees with her and followed her pointing finger to see an army of ants climbing up the huge leaves carrying loads twice their size. "Isn't it amazing?" I smiled as I realize my daughter was just being Guatemalan.

I'm quite certain that it begins in my sister-in-law's backyard with the cocky rooster that prances about his female companions all day. The initial noisemaker is perhaps irrelevant, but I have this theory that if we silenced the leader, the rest would quiet and the chorus of echoing cock-a-doodle-dos which begins at 2 a.m. every morning would cease to exist.

My sister-in-law, Suzy, laughs at this and tells me I'll get used to their crowing. I'm afraid, though that it's another one of those gringo flaws that I can never quite overcome—adding to the list of not being able to create a perfectly round tortilla, or make a fire in the wood stove which lasts longer than fifteen minutes, this gringa does not sleep through a village full of Guatemalan roosters crowing. I've been telling folks that gringo roosters are much more respectful, waiting to wake the world until dawn, when the world is ready for waking. I do not actually know this as fact since at our farm in the states we decided to eliminate our young roosters before they became annoying. I shared our "harvest" story with Suzy and the delicious rooster stew that was the by-product, and suggested we could do the same with her manly bird. She looked at me aghast and asked us how we got baby chicks if we got rid of the roosters. I was a bit embarrassed to admit that our baby chicks come in the mail. Yes, to avoid the hassle of dealing with a rooster we veer away from the natural cycle of nature. How very gringo of us.

The longer we're here, the more I begin to wonder (and I have lots of time to wonder when awake at 2 a.m.) what

we folks in the US of A sacrifice in order to minimize annoyances and assure a comfortable life. I don't mean what we force the rest of the world to sacrifice. That is something I've been pondering for years. What the cocky roosters have started me thinking is that we're missing something soul-full up north. This isn't my first encounter with Guatemalan roosters. I've been visiting this village in the rain forests where my husband grew up for the last fifteen years. But, we're here now at his folks for an extended stay, and it makes a difference how I react to the differences. Funny how it is, when you've visited a place numerous times and you think you know it; then you stay for a stint that's longer than just a visit and suddenly the pieces of the place that were interesting and "cultural" become challenges to your own way of thought.

You realize that the place is "waking" you up to a deeper understanding.

I am not one to idealize a place or a culture. There are reasons we have chosen to make the USA our more permanent home. But there are a couple things in the

I wonder what we are cheating our youth of when we shower them with material wealth before they even have a job. There is no reward in unearned luxury.

life here that I wish we could have there. Awareness and appreciation. Folks here are still in touch with what matters. Life and death intermingle in a way that another day of life is still seen as a gift.

I'm not claiming that people don't have their petty arguments or that prejudices and misunderstandings don't interfere with family life and peaceful neighborhoods. But, you don't see people getting upset over a broken dish or a piece of burnt toast. Life is accepted as it comes, and not usually with a whole lot of grumbling. People work to better their lives, and families certainly help each other out, but no one takes the easy road. There are no credit card shortcuts to fine furniture or

a box spring mattress. Comforts are the rewards of long years of working hard, not expectations. When you are aware of what it takes to earn something, of course you are going to appreciate it. That is a natural path. I wonder what we are cheating our youth of when we shower them with material wealth before they even have a job. There is no reward in unearned luxury. We try to spare our children from the harsh realities of life, pull them in from leaning out of second story windows, instead of letting them lean out and take in the wonder-full view. We do this because we know that along with the wonder there is danger, pain and struggle and we want to protect them from the dangers, from having to work too hard or suffer too much or even to be aware of the suffering of others. This, I believe is a valid adult instinct to a certain extent. But can we have the wonder without the rest? Somehow there must be a balance.

There is a cost to all we receive. Something is sacrificed. We may know this intellectually in the U.S., but here they are aware of the costs in their hearts.

Maybe the price is a good night's sleep. But, when you know that the life cycle that supplies your fresh eggs and chicken soup requires an obnoxious rooster to keep it going, why would you complain about his early morning song?

I'm learning there are more important things to think about.

I'm working on a new theory. I'm beginning to wonder if the secret to the way folks accept and appreciate the life they have here has something to do with the roosters. Even though they claim to be sleeping through the crowing, somehow the message is reaching their dreams. "Cock-a-doodle-doo. Ah-our-life-is-good." I shared this idea with my seven year old. She agreed, it's worth wondering.

Amy Haslett-Marroquin is a mother of three and a teacher at Prairie Creek and ArTech. When not at school or transporting children she can be found feeding chickens or playing in the greenhouse or garden.

The Haslett-Marroquin farm, Finca Mirasol (fincamirasol.com), sells chickens and fresh eggs and is open 9-11 a.m. on Saturdays.

FROM THE DESK OF THE GM



New Beginning

By **Melanie Reid**
Co-op Owner and General Manager

As I write this column, the sun is streaming in the front windows of the store reminding us all that Spring is right around

the corner. Hopefully, by the time you are reading this the grass is greening and the trees are showing signs of budding. Each season brings a new beginning- I think this is what keeps me in Minnesota!

The economic situation that we are facing has provided this incredible opportunity to re-examine our priorities and to be reminded of what is truly important in our lives; offering us a new beginning, if you will. Like so many of you, the Co-op (as an organization) faces new realities due to the uncharted waters that we are now operating in. We are choosing to focus on the positives and make the most of this new beginning; taking the time to reflect on our values and to bring into focus that which we truly believe matters the most.

I hope that you are feeling our renewed energy around Eating Local at the Co-op lately. We believe so strongly in the importance of building relationships between producers and consumers and see ourselves as the bridge that brings the two together. Our local Sustainable Farming Association (SFA) Chapter hosted the MN SFA conference this year and brought hundreds of family farmers to our community for a day of workshops and fellowship. The Co-op was honored to be invited and those who attended on our behalf

were humbled by the experience. Knowing that we are an integral part of a grassroots effort to feed ourselves in a more just and sustainable way makes me so proud of the work we do here at the Co-op. Interacting with this incredible group of farmers filled me with hope, renewed my spirit, and left me feeling optimistic about the future of Just Food.

Speaking of the future, we have just closed our third fiscal quarter and are in the planning stages for the coming fiscal year. I sense that 2010 could be our best year ever. We are poised for greatness in so many ways! We are strong operationally with an incredible staff, solid systems and steady sales. We are lead by an incredibly dedicated and talented Board of Directors, we are focused on our vision of a justly nourished community and the priorities that brought us into being five years ago and we are ready to forge ahead as the best co-op we can be!

I thank you for your continued patronage, your continued investment in your Co-op and your ongoing support of all of us who work for you every day! Enjoy the sunshine that only a Minnesota spring can offer, take time to reflect on that which matters most, eat lots of local food, maybe consider planting a garden, and I think you'll find yourself with a renewed spirit! And if you need a little fun in your day, check out all the reasons that folks think that their Co-op rocks at the My Co-op Rocks video contest website! It's sure to brighten your day!

Happy Spring,

Melanie

Join the Just Good Books Club!

By **Ann Iijima**
Co-op Owner

The Just Good Books Club will be starting up in April or May. We'll be meeting approximately once each month to discuss books that deal with sustainability, in a very broad sense. Topics may include growing/preserving/buying/cooking/eating healthy foods, simplifying lifestyles, mindfulness, and ecological/environmental issues. Although most of the books will be non-fiction, appropriate works of fiction may be included. Once we have a list of interested persons, we will determine the most convenient meeting time. If you're interested in joining the group, please contact Ann Iijima by email at aiijima@carleton.edu or by calling 651-707-3545.

JGBC's first selection will be "**Buffalo for the Broken Heart: Restoring Life to a Black Hills Ranch**" by Dan O'Brien. This is a great read: Mid-way through the first chapter, I said out loud: "Darn! This rancher can write!" When I was finished, I started in again at the beginning. This is an inspiring, educational, moving book, exploring both ecological and personal transformations brought about by restoring bison to their former habitat. Dan will be visiting Carleton College this spring as the Headley Distinguished Visitor-In-Residence in Environmental and Technology Studies. JGBC members may have an opportunity to hear him speak about his experiences.

This book is available for purchase at Monkey See Monkey Read. It is also available at the Northfield Public Library.

BOARD UPDATE

Financial Results: Continued Profitability!

By **Lee Runzheimer**
Co-op Owner and Board Treasurer



Good news on the financial front! We are all concerned with the economic impacts hitting our local retail businesses, so we are especially happy to report that JFC was profitable in the fourth quarter of calendar year 2008, and also in January and February 2009.

We thank all our members and customers for your continued patronage. Sales recently are running 2.8% above prior year. Let's keep that growth rate going, or even increase it, by spending a greater share of our food dollar at JFC! The Co-op would especially benefit from increased purchases by those members who currently buy less than \$100 per month from the Co-op.

We also continued to grow our membership, by adding 15 new members in January, and 13 in February, to a total of 1,769 current members. Keep promoting your Co-op to friends and neighbors—our prospective new members. That is our mission in 2009!

The staff at your Co-op is making every effort to keep prices competitive. But as a cost-conscious finance person, I am willing to spend a few cents more for healthier food, as I know the dollar payback is in a healthier, longer life. And as an "old farm boy", I know that our local suppliers will really need our financial support in 2009.

Operating expenses are under good control. Fortunately a detailed review and reductions in staffing and expenses were implemented back in September, and we are now seeing the benefits in improved profitability, while still maintaining GREAT customer service.

More good news: We are getting a favorable response to the continuation of the Roots to Grow capital campaign, check out the thermometer in the store for a progress report when you shop.

In conclusion:

- Thanks for your continued & expanded patronage at your Co-op.
- Thanks for promoting your Co-op to your friends & neighbors.
- Thanks for your past and future support of Roots to Grow.
- Thanks to our GREAT STAFF, for making it happen every day!

Chat with your Board members at Coffee with the Board, April 4 and May 2 from 9-11 at the tables at the front of the store.

WE RECOMMEND THIS
Midwest CONNECTIONS PICK

Book Reading
Tue., May 5, 7:30 p.m.
Northfield Arts Guild

*Come and listen to Wisconsin native Mike Perry read from his new book, **Coop: A Year of Poultry, Pigs and Parenting***

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We care for your family's health.

JUST FOOD CALENDAR

Simply cut this page out of your newsletter, post on your refrigerator or bulletin board and never miss another Co-op event! You can also find our calendar on our website at www.justfood.coop. **Everyone is welcome.**

Just Food Co-op encourages exploration of a variety of approaches to healthy choices, responsible consumption, and sustainable living. The viewpoints expressed in our classes do not necessarily represent endorsement by Just Food Co-op.

APRIL

Super Sampling Schedule for April:

Wellness Wednesday! Eco-friendly Feminine Hygiene Products: April 8, 4-6

Kids Day: April 11, 9-11

Sushi!: April 16, 4-6

Mushrooms: April 18, 11-2

Coffee with the Board

Bring your cup of coffee to this informal chat with some of your Board Members

April 4, 9-11 a.m. at the front of the store (Every 1st Saturday)

Class: (Limited class size- Please preregister at the store)

Ukrainian Egg Decorating

Learn how to create beautiful eggs using the traditional hot wax and dye method of Ukrainian Egg Decoration. Participants will take home at least three finished eggs! Easy to learn, and lots of fun to do. Taught by Laura Heiman. More info can be found on the back of the newsletter.

Adult Class (ages 14+): Sunday, April 5, 12-3 in the Event Space

Kids Class (ages 7-13): Monday, April 6, 9-12 in the Event Space

Cost: \$18 (\$20 non-owners): Limited class size. Preregistration req'd.

JUST FOOD WILL BE CLOSED APRIL 12 (Easter)

Free Arbor Day Tree Giveaway

Free saplings at Just Food- see page 8 for details.

April 24, 3-6 p.m. & April 25, 9:30-2 (or until they run out) at Just Food

Ecological Yard Care Workshop

Ever considered the environmental impact of your yard? The choices you make in your yard are far more than aesthetic: they affect the air you breathe, the water you drink, and the health of your family and our ecosystem. This information-packed workshop will cover ecologically-sound lawn care, native plants, trees, and fruit and vegetable gardening. We'll end with an informal seed swap (bring any labeled extras you'd like to give away) and time for you to talk to Carleton student farmers interested in helping you get started on your yard projects! Presented by the Northfield Environmental Quality Commission in cooperation with Just Food.

When: Saturday, April 25 from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Location: In the Just Food Event Space, 516 Water St. S.

Cost: No charge! Preregistration is encouraged at the store.

MAY

Super Sampling Schedule for May:

Gluten Free Sample Day: May 2, 10-2

Deli Desserts: May 9, 11-2

Wellness Wednesday! Allergy Remedies: May 13, 4-6

Asparagus & Ramps: May 16, 11-2

Coffee with the Board

Bring your cup of coffee to this informal chat with some of your Board members

May 2, 9-11 a.m. at the front of the store (Every 1st Saturday)

Healthy Kids Day

Visit the Just Food Booth at this fun, free family event!

May 2, 10-1 at the Northfield High School

Mother's Day Plant Sale

Get your garden seeds and starts! Local farmers will be on hand for part of the weekend to answer questions. See page 5 for details.

May 9 & 10 in front of Just Food Co-op

World Fair Trade Day

Join us for World Fair Trade Day and sample Alaffia fairly-traded body care products, Peace Coffee, and Deli Desserts!

May 9, 11-2 in the aisles of Just Food Co-op

New Owner Orientation and Tour

Hey New Owners! Welcome to your store! Please join us for an orientation including the history of co-ops and how to get the most out of your investment. Plus get a tour where you'll learn about our signage, product buying policy, and how to get the best deals when shopping the Co-op. Preregistration is required- ask a cashier for details.

When: Wednesday, May 13 from 6-7 p.m.

Cost: No charge.

Location: Meet at the front of the store.

JUST FOOD WILL BE CLOSED MAY 25 (Memorial Day)

Rethinking your Landscape

By Susannah Schmurak

Co-op Owner & Member of the Northfield Environmental Quality Commission

Our yards are far more than backdrops for our houses or recreation spaces for our families – they are part of larger ecosystems, and how we treat them has impacts that stretch well beyond their borders.

Many of us have been conditioned to think that a neatly-trimmed, weed-free lawn is the apex of good citizenship. But in fact the chemicals, water, and mowing required to maintain

a perfect expanse of green comes at a great cost. Lawn mowers account for 5% of U.S. air pollution. On average, 30% of annual household water use goes to landscaping, and grass is particularly thirsty. Nearly ten times more chemicals are used on lawns than on farms nationwide, and they eventually make their way into our rivers, streams and drinking water.

What can you do instead? Evaluate your impact and take proactive steps to limit it. Ask yourself how much of your yard really needs to be lawn, and convert the rest to something more environmentally friendly. For the lawn you keep, try using one of the new low-growing grass varieties that require less water and mowing. Landscape with drought-tolerant plants suited to our often dry summers.

Their deep roots allow them to survive with little water and help manage storm water runoff; native species also provide much-needed wildlife habitat. Skip the chemicals: diverse plantings help eliminate the need for them, as biodiversity makes plant communities more resilient. Trees similarly have significant environmental benefits such as absorbing water and providing shade (which lessens your home's cooling demands), and even providing some of your household's food.

Many of our yards sit where highly productive farm land used to be. One of the most ecologically-sound (and economical) things you can do with your yard is use it to grow some of your own food. You can measure the distance your food travels in feet rather than miles –

how's that for eating local?

Though environmental problems can often seem enormous and our own actions comparatively insignificant, this is one straightforward way you can make a real difference. Whether you provide critical habitat for wildlife or reduce water and air pollution, efforts to make the environmental impact of your yard a positive one will contribute to a healthier ecosystem for all of us.

Not sure how to get started? Want to know more? **Come to our workshop on Arbor Day after you pick up your free tree seedlings!** We'll have some free seeds to get you started and lots of useful information and resources. See the Events listing above for more details.

Native Plant Landscaping at the Northfield Library

Learn about Landscaping with Native Plants from author Lynn Steiner at the Friends of the Northfield Public Library annual meeting to be held Tuesday, April 7, at 7 p.m. at the library. Steiner is the author of "Landscaping with Native Plants of Minnesota" and two other books on native plants, and is one of the Upper Midwest's best-known garden writers and speakers on gardening and environmental topics. She will discuss how home gardeners can incorporate native plants into beautiful

and environmentally appropriate landscapes.

A native of northern Wisconsin, Steiner has degrees in natural resources and horticulture. For 15 years, she edited Northern Gardener magazine, the only publication devoted exclusively to cold-climate gardening. Steiner now writes a column on native plants for Northern Gardener.

The Friends' annual meeting will include a brief business meeting at 7, followed by Steiner's illustrated talk. After the talk, she will sell and

sign books. Refreshments will be served.

To celebrate this talk, the Friends are doing a seed-sale fundraiser with Botanical Interests Seeds, a company that sells organic, heirloom, and non-GMO seeds. Botanical Interests will donate 25 percent of the proceeds from any seeds bought in the Friends' name. To see the seed offerings and participate in the fundraiser, go to www.botanicalinterests.com/nonprofits.php and select Friends of the Northfield Public Library from the list.



MEMBER-OWNER PROFILE



By **Bob Ciernia**
Co-op Owner and President

Diane Taggart poses with the map she used last fall to show kids where their food was coming from.

Growing up in White Bear Lake, both sets of Diane's grandparents were farmers, one in North Dakota and one just north of White Bear in Hugo, Minnesota. Both pairs of grandmas and grandpas enjoyed gardening and Diane has many fond childhood memories of summers spent on their farms, working alongside them in their vegetable and flower gardens... something she continues to enjoy in her own garden. But not all her remembrances consist of idyllic or bucolic scenes. A lasting memory is that of an uncle who commented that "if one dose will do it, two will even be better." She loved her grandparents' farm and the comment about the use of herbicides just struck her as WRONG. Even at a young age, Diane noticed the use of chemicals on the farm and was bothered by the dusting of crops with pesticides.

Years later, as a young wife and mother who'd moved to Northfield, Diane made a monthly shopping trip to North Country Co-op in Minneapolis to buy the bulk foods she couldn't find elsewhere. During the period in Northfield when the Prairie Foods Co-op was open, 1983-1986, Diane was an active volunteer and shopper. Why was she willing to drive an hour (each way) to go grocery shopping, or give up an evening or two every week to package grains, produce, and other items? "To have good food! But it's not just the food for me. It's knowing that the people who are growing it are taking care of the earth. That's important to me. There's an ethical, a moral component to shopping and eating that I just can't ignore."

For Diane, packaging is a big thing. When shopping, she'll choose products based on their packaging... bulk items are clearly preferable because she can bring her own (reused and reusable) containers, eliminating the packaging entirely. "Packaging is just so important to me. If it's packaging I just can't live with, I don't buy that product." Diane's aversion to wasteful packaging means she needs to plan ahead. "As soon as I unload my groceries, I throw the plastic bags and other containers back in the car so I have them the next time I go shopping. It takes a little organizing but it's worth it in the long run."

And what is the 'long run' she's talking about? "When I'm not here anymore. I know I need to do my part today so that people in the future have a future as well. When it comes to shopping – or your life – it's a lot like when you go backpacking: leave no trace. That's my philosophy. I want to live in a way that has the least [negative] impact on the earth while I'm here."

With three sons now in their 20s, Diane has been modeling these values for many years. One of the reasons she owns her own pre-school day care center, Little Sprout Child Care, is that she believes that modeling those values is one of the best ways to teach children values that will help them and the Earth be healthy in the future. The child

psychologists tell us that our earliest years are ones that shape everything that follows... and, with that in mind, the children in her care are learning to better care for themselves, their environment, and people they may never meet.

Diane thinks about the farmworkers exposed to pesticides and how that exposure is not only damaging the earth, but damaging the health of the farmers who work on it. Migrant and non-migrant workers are not 'those people,' people who are somehow responsible for their poor working conditions

"Shopping at the Co-op has made me more aware of the details of why it's important to buy organic. I don't have the time to keep up with all the various products, what's in them, and what's not in them. What's great about the Co-op is that they do so much of that for me. They have products on the shelf that I trust. I don't have to research each and every little thing that I buy. They do a lot of the legwork for me."

or poor standard of living. She recognizes that it is consumers who make price the sole determining factor in selecting a product who are unwittingly causing the poverty of farm workers, their poor living conditions, and many of their medical conditions. Buying organic may not necessarily mean the laborer gets a better wage, but it does deliver the message that they deserve the same respect as other human beings; fieldhands in an organic environment are not exposed to the chemicals that will threaten their health and longevity.

"Shopping at the Co-op has made me more aware of the details of why it's important to buy organic. I don't have the time to keep up with all the various products, what's in them, and what's not in them. What's great about the Co-op is that they do so much of that for me. They have products on the shelf that I trust. I don't have to research each and every little thing that I buy. They do a lot of the legwork for me."

Meet Diane Taggart

Like many other Co-op members, Diane is appreciative of the staff and their willingness to respond to her needs and concerns. "I've asked why they don't carry certain things and they've been willing to investigate and come back and tell me why." Diane likes the fact that the staff is eager to engage in dialogue and share the knowledge they've acquired.

When it comes to being a member of Just Food, Diane doesn't think of the discounts or the other things you get for being a member. "I believe in the store 100%. But being a member doesn't just support the store, it supports all the people the store supports." A conversation with Diane makes it clear she's thinking about the Big Picture, and how what she (and the store) does ripples out to the world outside Northfield and Minnesota. During last summer's Eat Local Challenge, Diane took a map of the United States and put a Smiley Face sticker on the location where each food item the kids were eating that week came from. The geographical facts may not stick with the kids for long, but the seed of thinking about where their food comes from has been planted.

It's obvious that these Little Sprouts

Co-op is getting to know other members. As an example, Diane talks about the soap made by Co-op member-owner Kathy Zeman. "I look at other soaps but I think, no, I've got to buy Kathy's. She's working hard to make that soap. It's part of her income. It's sustainable. I like it. I'm sold on it. And it's as local as you can get! Part of being a Co-op member is the people you meet, the support you get, the ideas on gardening or whatever, all of that are what make this a neat place to go to; there's a lot of community here!"

The importance of community is evident in much of what Diane talks about. It matters to her that the people who work at Just Food and shop at Just Food are concerned about the things she's concerned about. For the same reason, she likes to take classes and attend events at the Co-op. "There are other people out there thinking and trying to make an impact. I learn about things that can make a difference, even if I can't do them right now or can't do them by myself... things like small wind turbines or solar water heaters. You don't feel so alone or feel like you're the only one thinking about these kinds of issues. There's a feeling of supportive power when we come together."

What are her favorite products in the store? Bulk items, of course! Long-grain brown rice, popcorn, beans, granola, cereal, nuts, chocolate chips, sugar, and flours are all items Diane buys in the bulk section... at a price she thinks very favorable to what other groceries sell their non-organic, non-local products for, especially when you factor in the cost of packaging to the environment. Other favorites are dairy products from Cedar-Summit (New Prague, MN) and anything from Whole Grain Milling (Welcome, MN), but especially the flours.

"I haven't been in a regular grocery store for so long, I don't even know what their prices are. I don't look at the ads. I could probably save quite a bit by buying the cheapest food that I could get. But I don't want to eat that way and the philosophy in my child care center includes having a healthy lifestyle. For me to be credible, to myself and to others, the food I serve has to be good food." This commitment to 'practicing what you preach' and "not just thinking of myself" helps explain why the turnover at her center is very low... adults trust her and therefore entrust their kids to her as well.

Thank you, Diane, for your support of Just Food. Our community's strength is our members.

When asked for a recipe that reflects her taste and values (food focused on local producers), the following was offered as a family favorite:

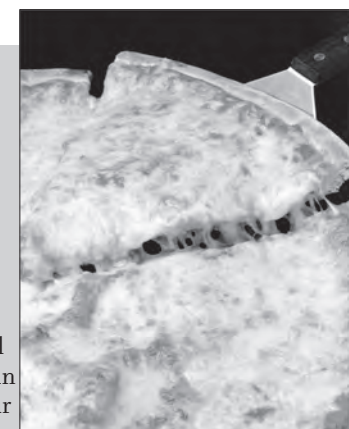
Pizza with Homemade Crust

Pizza Dough

2 1/4 tsp. or 1 pkg yeast (I use the bulk yeast because it is awesome!)
sprinkle a little sugar on top
2 cups of water that has been heated enough to activate the yeast - a little hot to the touch but not burning - pour into the yeast/sugar mixture.

Let sit for 5 to 10 minutes then stir to dissolve. Stir in 1 Tbsp. salt and 4 Tbsp. of oil (canola). Stir until dissolved. Stir in enough flour to make a stiff dough (I use 1/2 whole wheat flour from the Whole Grain Milling and 1/2 white flour). Knead on lightly floured board until smooth on the top and no more flour is needed to keep it from sticking on the board. Butter the bottom of a bowl and roll the top of the dough around on it then turn it over. Cover and let rise up to an hour or double in size - or, you can put it in the fridge overnight and use it the next day or whenever - the longer it sits the better it is! Spread on buttered pans - makes two cookie sheets (depends on how thick you like your crust. Bake at 425 degrees with your favorite sauce, toppings and cheese for about 10 minutes on the bottom rack and 5 to 10 minutes on the middle rack.

P.S. All the ingredients for my pizza dough come from the bulk section at Just Food Co-op!



IN PRODUCE

Mushrooms: A Quick Guide

By **Matt Stiehm**
Co-op Owner and Produce Buyer

Here in the Just Food produce department, one of our favorite foods is the mushroom. It's considered a staple in our department, and there's a wide variety available year round. During the cool, wet seasons we're lucky enough to get in some fresh wild mushrooms (even though the seasons are short and the pickers like to keep most for themselves.) For additional variety and use, we've also got dried mushrooms year-round. Not sure which you want? Use this quick guide to help you purchase the proper mushroom for the job, and never hesitate to ask the produce staff if you have questions!

Nutritional Value

Mushrooms are great for you because they contain all essential amino acids, making them a source of complete protein. They're also loaded with vitamins and minerals including vitamins A, K, E, D, and some complex B vitamins. The minerals range from iron, copper, and selenium to potassium and phosphorus.

Fresh Mushrooms

White Button mushrooms are the most commonly used mushroom in America and have a wide variety of uses. The flesh is bright white when cut and the skin is the same. They are the mildest mushroom and are great for eating fresh or lightly cooked. They can be cooked in a soup or stew, but they tend to lose flavor when cooked for a while.

The Crimini is our most popular fresh mushroom and has many uses as well. The skin color is light to dark brown with a whitish stem. The flesh is tinted brown when cut and the gills are very dark brown. This mushroom also shows scaling from time to time but is still perfectly fine to eat. The Crimini has a wonderfully potent mushroom flavor and is the department's favorite. It is great in a soup or stew and any dish where the mushroom flavor is integral.

The Portabella is a Crimini that's all grown up. Yes, it's the same mushroom but bigger! It looks darker than the Crimini with even darker brown gills. These mushrooms are used for their meat-like consistency and large size, great for cooking like a burger or steak. These mushrooms were served as burgers at our DJJD tent and were a big hit.

Last of the fresh mushrooms is the **Shitake**. This mushroom is mostly used in Asian cooking but by no means does that limit its potential. This is my personal favorite because of its mild yet savory taste. It is tan colored with white gills and a flaky tan stem. The shitake is the only mushroom where I would recommend tossing away the stem. It's far too tough to be anything other than a bother to chew.

Dried Mushrooms

The nutritional value of a mushroom is not affected at all when dried. Each dried mushroom variety has a unique flavor and texture, so try them out to see how you like them.

Our most popular dried mushroom is our **Shitake**, as many recipes call for dried Shitake specifically, but our selection also includes **Chanterelle, Morel, Porcini, Miatake, and Northwest Mix**. The Northwest mix is my favorite of the dried mushrooms because you get some great varieties. The package includes Porcini, Black Trumpet, Lobster, and Morel. I find it adds depth to anything I'm cooking, from sautéed veggies to a nice stew.

Our dried mushrooms are all from a small company called Mycological Natural Products. In addition to having spectacular mushrooms, they pledge 50% of their profits to forest conservation efforts in Oregon.

What Are All Those Greens?

By **Erin Johnson & Ben Doherty**
Co-op Owners and Farmers, Open Hands Farm

Iron, fiber and vitamins, Oh My! The greens are coming! With the help of the Produce Department, our various salad greens and lettuce will be available at the Co-op this spring, summer and fall.

Grown two miles outside of town and delivered to your Co-op twice a week, these leafy delights will be fresh and ready to nourish you from June until October. You may be familiar with them from the farmer's market, or from your neighbor's dinner table, or they may be entirely new to you—we encourage you to keep your eyes peeled for their arrival this spring, and try out the various flavors, colors and textures. After they've made the jump from field to Co-op, you'll be able to mix and match the different types to make the salad that is best suited for your household's (or guest's) preferences, or the other components of the meal.

Our leaf lettuce is a mixture of five to seven different varieties, which changes with the seasons to ensure a steady supply of sweet, tender leaves free of summer bitterness. The reds,

greens and freckles in this mix add loads of color to a salad, and for many folks they make a good base for the stronger flavors of the other greens. Arugula is a nutty, peppery green with a flavor all its own which people tend to get

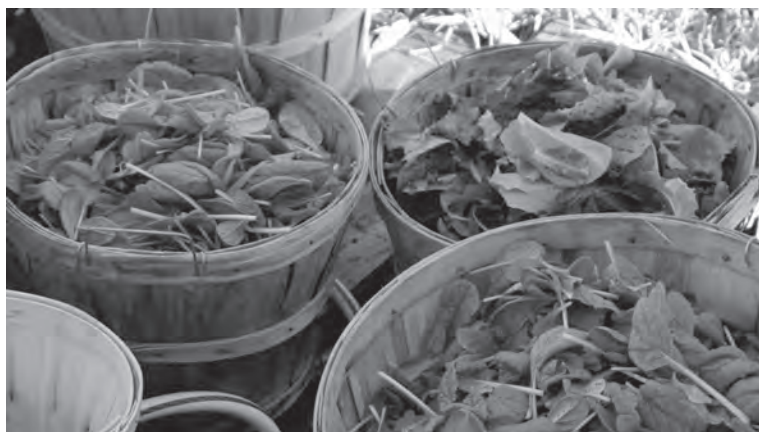
to different degrees and with their own unique twists. Tot soi is a dark leafy green which looks like spinach but tastes much different! It is probably the one we eat the most of, for its heartiness and flavor. Mizuna is often prized for its mildness, and its light frilly leaves adding loft and texture. Komatsuna is somewhere in between. Then there's the spicy mustard greens—red, green, and “ruby streaks,” which send unsuspecting tasters looking for water or a piece of lettuce to cool off their mouths!

Everybody's taste buds are different, so we are glad to be able to offer you these delicious choices to mix and match

as you please.

We use no pesticides or petroleum fertilizers, and feed the soil with compost, cover crops, and all the love we can muster. After all, it feeds us so generously, we try to give back as much as we can!

Let us and your friendly produce department know what you think of the greens and lettuce, and we look forward to eating fresh with you this growing season.



Greens from Open Hands Farm. Photo by Tania Legvold.

addicted to or completely avoid. It can make a good accent in a mixed salad, or light up your taste buds with a plate of it, or cook very lightly with pasta. The rest are greens of Asian origin, which historically were mainly grown as cooking greens, and harvested with large leaves. When harvested at a younger age they make great raw salads. Being related to cabbage, broccoli and the like, they carry some of that Brassica flavor,

Don't Miss the Mother's Day Plant Sale

By **Strider Hammer**
Co-op Owner and Produce Manager

Organic seeds
are available
NOW at Just
Food Co-op!

This year, your humble Produce Posse at Just Food is fixing to throw the best Mother's



Day Plant sale yet. Mother's Day weekend, May 9th and May 10th, should be boldly marked on your calendar.

Starter plants from Glacial Ridge Growers, formerly Green Fingers, are a regional standard. Gene and Muriel have been providing vegetable and flower starter plants for local co-ops for over 25 years and will be seeing to our needs this year. Big Woods Farm will have tomato and cherry tomato plants for us. Sundries will include Cowsmos organic compost from Wisconsin, Sustane natural fertilizer from Cannon Falls, worm castings from L&R Produce, corn gluten from Dundas, locally-

grown straw bales, Atlas gardening gloves, and Seeds of Change seeds.

We are fortunate to have local growers from **Big Woods Farm, Open Hands, L & R Produce and Poultry, and Simple Harvest from 10 till 2 both Saturday and Sunday** to offer advice or lend a sympathetic ear. These folks are extremely familiar with local growing conditions and weather patterns, and are volunteering to help you put together a sustainable and fruitful family garden this year.

The most important member of this agronomic rodeo is, of course, You. We've assembled an exceptional Mother's Day Plant sale for May 9th and 10th, during normal business hours, and we're counting on your participation. After all this is your Co-op, and you're the star of the show.

We'll see you around the Co-op. Peace.

Sweet Cheeks Baby Food

Locally-Made from Locally-Grown Produce



Healthy habits start early, and what better time to get kids in the habit of eating locally-grown, whole foods than at the beginning?

Lori Karis is the owner of Sweet Cheeks Baby Food. Sweet Cheeks is only a year old, but the concept has been in the making for the past twenty years, when Lori made her own baby and toddler foods as a professional nanny. After both parents and toddlers alike fell in love with Lori's wholesome and tasty Baby 'Role, Sweet Cheeks was introduced last summer at the St. Paul Farmer's Market.

Different Foods for Different Stages

Sweet Cheeks has three different lines of products, each created for a different eating stage.

"Newbies" are simple purees for first foods for infants. Just Food offers Newbies in Sweet Potatoes or Butternut Squash. Newbies are packaged so they each contain two cubes. This allows you to use just one as you're first introducing solids... and grow to using both.

"Combos" are the next level of food and contain a grain. The grain is pureed into the food, but it introduces some texture. Just Food carries Sweet Potatoes mixed with apples and millet as well as Beets mixed with carrots and brown rice. Millet is one of the healthiest grains in the world and is often used in baby food in other cultures. It's easily digested, a non-allergen, and packed with nutrients! It's also a grain that Lori is able to source locally from Whole Grain Milling in Welcome, Minnesota.

For older babies and toddlers, Lori created the "Baby 'Role"—a baby casserole! Just Food carries the Steel Cut Oat and Apple baby 'role. Sweet Cheeks can be found in the frozen section.

Local All-Around

Lori produces her deliciously healthy foods for babies and toddlers out of a commercial kitchen in West St. Paul. Her products are made weekly in small batches. Even better, she uses ingredients that are organically grown from Old Orchard Farms in Northfield, Whole Grain Milling Company in Welcome, and Hoch Orchards in La Crescent. She currently relies on her local co-op, Mississippi Market, for vegetables and fruits when they aren't in season, but hopes that her farmer will be able to store these items in a root cellar for next winter's use.

When asked why she sources most of her ingredients from local growers, Lori said, "I am so fortunate to live in this part of the country. We have the rich agriculture and family farms that provide us with beautiful, organic food. I feel so good to be able to help support small family farms and I feel their product is the best. So, it's a win-win. Not to mention that local food is better simply because it's fresher than something that's travelled around the country—or world—to get to us."

Building Healthy Food Habits

"I'm passionate about providing healthy food for children! I'm driven by the statistic that this generation of children is the first predicted to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents (New England Journal Of Medicine, 2007). My hope is that introducing fresh, organic food will influence babies and children to choose those foods... wouldn't that be great?," says Lori. "I personally believe organic produce simply tastes better, and that food doesn't have to be complicated to be tasty and healthy."

More to Come

Lori's mission doesn't end with providing good baby foods to co-op shoppers. "In the future, I would love to work with state/federal agencies in providing higher risk families with Sweet Cheeks Baby Food. I feel like my product is a necessary one and that income shouldn't dictate a baby's health," she said. "I've met with Children's Hospital and would love to be able to provide Sweet Cheeks Baby Food for the babies and children in the hospital. I'm also working on day care centers, and have tons of request for feeding older populations too! So, maybe nursing homes are on the horizon."



Celebr



Amy Haslett-Marroquin with sons Lars & Michael and daughter Nicktae

Meals are simple at our house. Our staple is beans and rice with Papa's tortillas and Lar's special egg "recipes." (Lately, chicken on the side too!)

Beans "Papa's Way"

Ingredients

4 cups of dry beans (cleaned)
4 garlic cloves
1/2 cup sweet pepper chopped
1/2 cup onion chopped
1 cup of tomatoes chopped or tomato sauce
3 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon baking powder (optional)
10 cups water

Directions

Pour all of the ingredients into a crock pot, cook on high for 5-6 hours.



The Northfield Earth Day Contra Dance

Friday, April 24, 7:00-10:30 pm

A community contra dance
featuring the music of **Contratopia**
and led by dance "caller" Robin Nelson

Sayles-Hill Campus Center, Carleton College
(enter campus at College and First streets)

Free admission!
(A \$5 voluntary donation will be requested)

Contra dance instruction at 7 pm (recommended for all participants)

No prior dance experience required; no dance partner needed.
Comfortable shoes recommended; festive (swing-ready) dance attire encouraged!

Sponsored by the Carleton College Student Association, SOPE Students for the Protection of the Environment,
and The Northfield Contra Dance Association.

Rating Co-op Moms

In celebration of Mother's Day on May 10, we asked a few Co-op Moms to share a favorite family recipe with us.



Amy Goerwitz with her daughter Jariya

Our family dines together every night and most meals on the weekends. Jariya will help us cook. We rarely eat out as the food we can make is so much better for us than the food at the restaurants we can afford. Every night at dinner each family member will say two things we are grateful for that day. One of Jariya's items is always something that we are eating. When choosing our food, we try to avoid overly processed items and as a rule we don't purchase anything that includes an ingredient that can't be bought in a grocery store, which means we read a lot of labels. With the ingredients we can find at Just Food, the food we eat is healthy, delicious, and minimally impacts the environment. (Note from Amy to Jariya--I really like the dark chocolate bars at Just Food. One would make the perfect dessert for my Mother's Day dinner.)

Vegetable Frittata

A frittata is a quiche without a crust. You can put pretty much any vegetable into it and meat too, if you like. We will often use rainbow chard, summer squash or even cabbage. Here's a basic recipe to get you started but if you feel free to improvise then every time you make it, it will always turn out new and different:

Ingredients

1 smallish onion chopped fine
2 cups broccoli chopped
1/4 cup carrots (we like to use baby carrots cut into coins)
2 Tablespoons olive oil
8 eggs (we like to remove two of the yolks to cut back on our fat intake)
1/4 pound grated cheese (our favorites are either cheddar or feta)
1/4 cup sliced Olives a la Provencale
1 medium tomato cut into circles
a pinch of salt

Directions

Heat olive oil over medium heat in a 10" skillet (cast iron if you have it). Don't heat too high or the oil will burn. Add onions and stir fry for a minute. Add broccoli and carrots, stir fry for a minute. Then add one tablespoon of water, cover the skillet, and finish cooking vegetables (the water will help steam the vegetables slightly). This takes just a few minutes. Stir.

Put eggs into a bowl with 1/4 cup water. Beat until slightly frothy. Add cheese and a pinch of salt. Pour mixture into skillet over cooked vegetables.

Add olives. Arrange tomatoes in nice design on top.

Cover the skillet. Cook on stove top for about 10 minutes.

Move skillet to top rack of oven. Broil for 5-10 minutes until egg is set and top of frittata is lightly browned.

Remove from oven and cut into 6-8 wedges. Serves 4-6 people.

With this frittata, we like to serve Holy Land Lavash Bread (cover and heat in oven for 10 minutes, serve with butter or olive oil and salt) and Artichokes (boil in salty water, 20 minutes for small artichokes and 40 minutes for large artichokes. If you have never eaten an artichoke before, be sure to view a video on YouTube.com to see how it is done.)



Mabelle Kendrick with her daughter Jasmine

My 17 year-old-daughter has begun the painful process of separating from her old Mom (painful for me--liberating for her), so our food connection is growing dim. Over the years we have connected through baking cookies for Christmas, taking lefse classes together and comforting ourselves with family favorites: grilled cheese & tomato soup and Hungry Jack casserole. These busy days when we do sit down for a meal, she is cooking for me. I am always surprised with what she comes up with, both with food (homemade spaghetti sauce using just what we had in the cupboards) and insights (Mom, I think my purpose in life is to work with kids) seemingly drawn out by our meal time together.

My daughter's journey away from Mom begins shortly, and as this journey relates to her food choices, I am at peace (as long as she finds her local food co-op.) It's the other life choices she will be making that have me holding on to her for dear life.

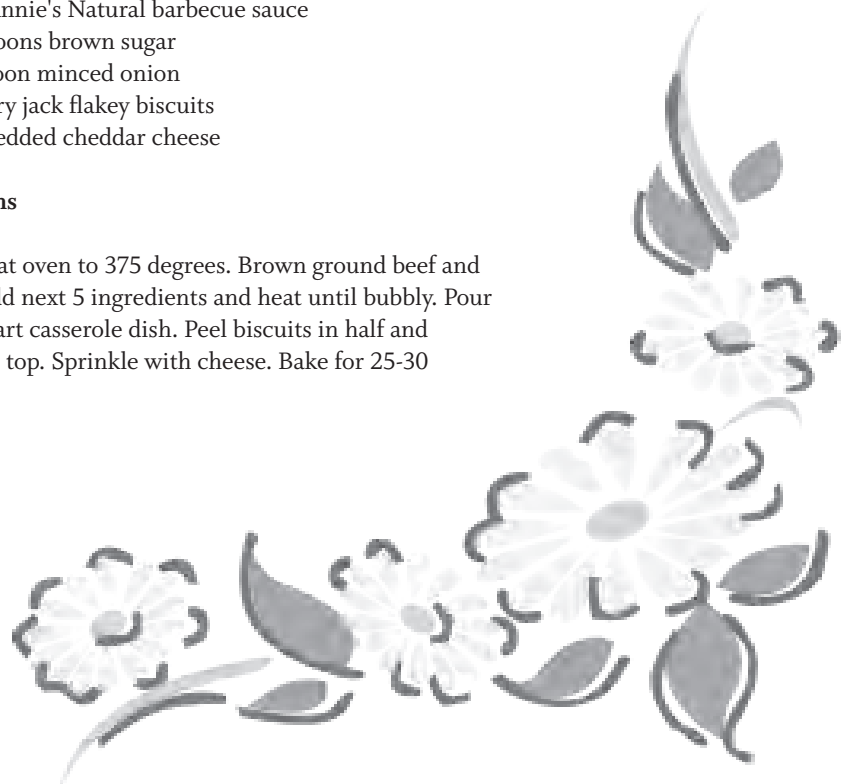
Hungry Jack Casserole (Mabelle and Jasmine's favorite)

Ingredients

1 lb Thousand Hills ground beef
1 teaspoon sea salt
16 ounces pork & beans
3/4 cup Annie's Natural barbecue sauce
2 tablespoons brown sugar
1 tablespoon minced onion
6-9 hungry jack flakey biscuits
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Brown ground beef and strain. Add next 5 ingredients and heat until bubbly. Pour into 2 quart casserole dish. Peel biscuits in half and lay across top. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake for 25-30 minutes.



THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

1. VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP.

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2. DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL.

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

3. MEMBER ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION.

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. They usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4. AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE.

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

5. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION.

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public — particularly young people and opinion leaders — about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

6. COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES.

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7. CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY.

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

Keeping it Real:

Locals Attend the Real Food Challenge Summit

By **Katie Blanchard**

Co-op Owner, Carleton Student & Local Food Activist

During the first weekend in March, 125 students (including 3 from Carleton) gathered at Maharishi University in Fairfield, Iowa for the Midwest Real Food Challenge Summit. We built coalitions and strengthened our voice as students working for bold changes to our food system, most specifically within our college and university dining services. When asked whether our campuses were at most 10 miles from an industrial agribusiness cornfield, if not within one, almost every student raised a hand. From a wide array of specific interests and backgrounds, we came together around a common goal: real food.

Real food is fair, humane, local, and ecologically sound. It is what students are demanding from Sodexo at DePauw and growing in the Burning Kumquat Student Farm at Washington University. At Illinois State and the University of Minnesota, students are working in solidarity with farmworkers rallying for fair labor practices. At Macalester, they are creating an edible campus landscape. At Carleton, we are doing all sorts of things to promote and increase real food on campus and in the Northfield community: our student farm is popular and productive, Bon Appetit is making great strides to supply us with local, sustainable food as much

as possible, and Food Truth (a student organization) hosts all sorts of events about food justice, fair trade, the ethics of what we eat, etc.

The Real Food Challenge is an entirely student-run, student-directed,




student-organized movement. It is about all of these activities, projects, and events. It is also about recognizing the enormity of college and university food systems (about a \$4 billion industry) and challenging the system to supply 20% real food by 2020. The Midwest Summit was the 4th of 5 youth summits gathering across the country. At the Midwest Summit, we participated in workshops about organizing, group building, seed saving, fair trade, food policy, co-ops, art and activism, and more. We heard from activist Erik Esse about the important place of this food movement in a long history of activism for fair, local food.

Organic pioneer Denise O'Brien called on the students to consider farming in considering their future and the future of our food. In open space discussion, students formed focus groups to share and learn about green roofs, urban gardens, campus community gardens, co-ops and how to hold dining services accountable.

Spread across the vast heartland of the country, Midwest students do not have quite so many opportunities to network, share, dream, and plan. The Summit was a unique and powerful opportunity to gather, connect, and share, and commitments were made for further communication and action. In one workshop, we were asked to draw a farm, and almost every drawing included a red barn and huge grain silos. In discussion, we came to the conclusion that such an image did not represent the goals of a diverse, dynamic, healthy, fair, bountiful, beautiful food system. That is the challenge—working on our campuses, connecting with our communities, and communicating in our coalitions to bring our dream-seed to the full fruit reality of real food NOW.

(A special thanks to Just Food for donating some real food for the summit!)

For more information about Food Truth, please contact Katie at blanchak@carleton.edu.

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Honor Arbor Day

by planting free native tree saplings

To encourage the planting of native hardwood trees in Northfield and to celebrate Arbor Day on Friday April 24, the Northfield Environmental Quality Commission in collaboration with the Rice County Forestry Committee, the Rice County Master Gardeners and the DNR will provide native tree saplings free to Northfield residents who agree to plant and care for the trees on private properties in Northfield.

The free tree saplings will be distributed on a first come first served basis at **Just Food Co-op (516 Water Street South) on Friday, April 24, 3–6 p.m. and Saturday, April 25, 9:30 a.m.–2 p.m. (or until they are gone).**

Local Master Gardeners will be on hand to provide instruction on tree selection, planting, and ongoing care.

The 8-12" saplings are bare-root stock, native tree species, cultivated from Minnesota seeds in the nursery

of the Minnesota DNR. Burr Oak, Red Oak, Norway Pine, and White Pine seedlings will be available (limit four per household).

Join in helping Northfield grow a healthy native tree canopy as a gift to future generations! Family participation is encouraged!

For more information, contact Suzie Nakasian of the Northfield Environmental Quality Commission 507-645-5652.

RECALL

Too Complex? Recalls and our Food System

By **Alex Beeby**
Co-owner and Operations Manager

In early December, 2008, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) contacted the Food and Drug Administration to notify them of reports of illnesses caused by Salmonella Typhimurium. Throughout this next month, as more reports came in, the two organizations continued to coordinate until the Minnesota Department of Health suggested on January 7 a connection to peanut butter. Within days, they confirmed the source as Peanut Corporation of America (PCA) and began a nationwide recall of their wholesale peanut butter and peanut paste. As of this writing, the peanut recall has expanded to become one of the largest in history. The recall now includes 2,100 products and 677 confirmed infections (the CDC estimates Salmonella 38 infections for every confirmed case). The confirmed infections include 23 percent

who required hospitalization and 9 deaths. PCA announced on February 7 that it filed for bankruptcy. Company officials, including the CEO who pleaded the Fifth in congressional hearings, are under criminal investigation.

This peanut recall comes right on the heels of several other major recalls. In 2006, an E. coli outbreak from contaminated spinach included 199 confirmed cases and 3 deaths. In 2007, we saw the Peter Pan peanut butter Salmonella and pet food melamine recalls. Then last year brought the tomato/pepper Salmonella recall. But these represent only a small portion of the hundreds of recalls every year. In the New England Journal of Medicine, Dennis Maki, M.D. suggests that “we must ask ourselves how foodborne disease can develop in 76 million residents of one of the world’s most

technically advanced countries each year, causing 350,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths and adding \$7 billion to our health care costs, despite intensive regulation of food production and distribution.” It seems we may be seeing the law of diminishing returns at work in the complexity of our food system, just as we have seen it recently realized in the credit market.

Indeed, the latest recall appears to have spurred efforts to improve food safety and regulation. President Barack Obama has proposed a \$1 billion allocation to this end. A bipartisan FDA Food Safety Modernization Act was introduced to the Senate with Senator Durbin saying, “These are not isolated incidents and are the result of an outdated, underfunded and overwhelmed food-safety system.”

Senator DeLauro, with support from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, has submitted an alternate proposal to create a stand-alone food safety agency within the Department of Health and Human Services. These proposals hope to address numerous issues, including severe understaffing. According to an Associated Press article by Greg Bluestein, in Georgia and Texas, where PCA’s now closed factories are, there are 45 and 34 inspectors for 16,000 and 21,000 sites respectively.

While this understaffing illustrates an obvious need for inspection improvement, a further look at past recalls suggests other issues: namely with the complexity of our system that undermines transparency and accountability. According to reports, it appears that PCA may have released product that had already tested positive for Salmonella; however, when routine internal tests came back positive for Salmonella in Malt-o-Meal’s Puffed Rice last April, Malt-o-Meal immediately stopped production and recalled all suspect product. Whereas PCA only sells through an extremely complex network of commercial entities, Malt-o-Meal sells retail product with their name on it, allowing the company to be much more connected and accountable to its community of customers.

In another illustrative comparison, the true source of an estimated 1,400

Salmonella Saintpaul infections eluded health officials for weeks during a nationwide recall of tomatoes last summer until finally traced to jalapeños, yet of the numerous recalls of Listeria-contaminated raw milk over the past couple of years, each remained localized and easier to track. A distribution diagram of raw milk that, due to perhaps excessive regulation, might include a mere handful of total points (involved parties), would pale

in comparison to a diagram of the Salmonella Saintpaul traceback with dozens of points, not to mention the distribution of PCA products whose (simplified) 50-point chart resembles a complex computer-circuit diagram. Dennis Maki, M.D., notes in his article, “With centralized production and transcontinental distribution of commercially produced foods, unusually heavy contamination of a basic foodstuff or a failure to remove contaminants in a single production step can result in the shipment of contaminated food to millions of consumers, as these two recent

salmonella outbreaks have illustrated.”

Recognizing the obvious implications against the industrial food complex, Maki continues by suggesting a non-industrial system would require far too many workers, cost too much, and still couldn’t possibly feed the country or world. He bluntly states that, “Efficient, industrialized production of huge quantities of food is an inescapable necessity to avoid food shortages and global famine.” His suggestions for improvement include reducing use of antibiotics, eliminating the use of growth hormones, and better tracking and declaration of product origins. He also fervently calls for “a major effort to gain public acceptance of irradiation of high-risk foods.”

Maki raises ideas of “industrial production [as] an inescapable necessity” and the (importance) of safety in irradiation – unsubstantiated ideas which warrant further investigation. We have, however, seen that simplified distribution networks and connection and accountability of food providers to consumers can be linked to a reduction in risk and exposure to food contamination. Instead of supporting and adding to a system whose complexity is, certainly, diminishing its healthful returns, we should be supporting the systems proven to increase these returns through transparency and accountability.

We need a food system accountable not to stock markets but to customers. We need a system where producers are not remote and obscure but local and familiar. In Northfield our local producers have joined with local eaters to create such a system that goes by the name of Just Food Co-op.

Just Food Co-op cares passionately about the health and wellbeing of our customers and community. We track recalls via the FDA, our distributors, and through major media outlets. While we pull recalled product from our shelves, we also pull products that we suspect to be related to the recall out of “an abundance of caution.” These may include other lot numbers or similar products by the same manufacturer. Of these, only specifically cleared products are returned to the shelves for sale.

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A neutral third party facilitates communication between parties to reach settlement.

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More information can be found at:
• Maki’s Article: <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/360/10/949>
• FDA’s website: <http://www.fda.gov>

WORKING AT JUST FOOD



Staff Spotlight: David Pennock

By **Melanie Reid**
Co-op Owner and General Manager

David Pennock is our frozen foods and bread buyer. He spends much of his day handling very cold items and going in and out of a walk-in freezer—braving the icy temps to bring you your favorite ice creams and frozen blueberries! David enjoys the challenge of finding the right products to meet customer needs. Multi-tasking is the norm for him, so he tries to give his full attention to the task at hand.

When asked what he loves about working at the Co-op, David will say it's the people. "My co-workers and our customers are interesting and enjoyable to talk with. This place is filled with inspired people."

David is a strong believer in the importance of local economies. He says, "Organic food grown locally with great respect for the land and water is what grows our community's roots. Just like a forest

sustaining itself, with some help from the sun, of course."

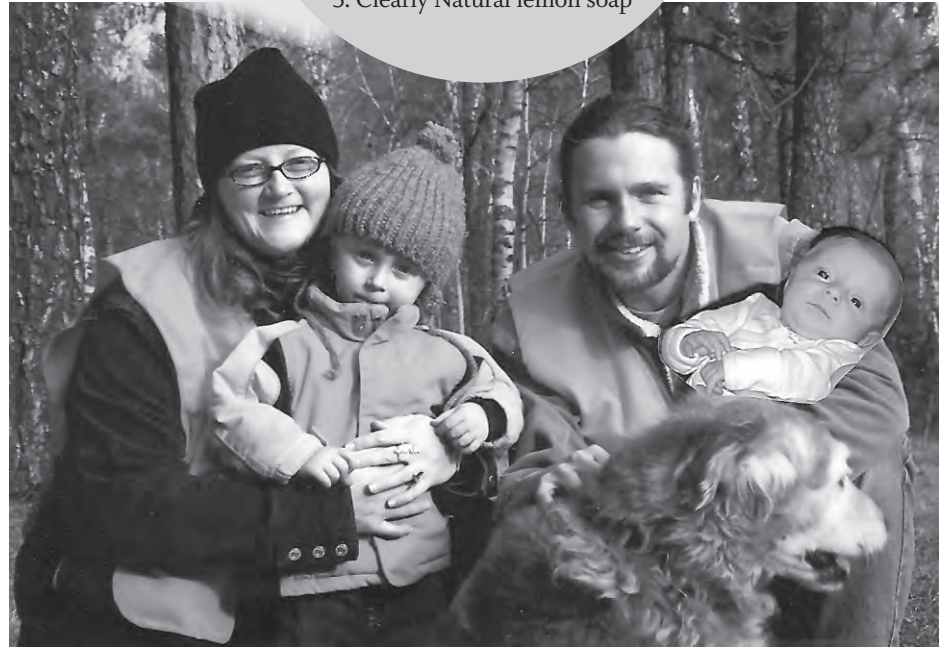
When he's not at the Co-op, David and his partner Amy enjoy exploring the wonders of nature with their two children. A day like this starts with pancakes, berries and coffee—the kids usually skip the coffee. Then it's off to the forest; or they search for treasures at Northfield garage sales.

David's positive attitude and thoughtful manner have gained him the respect and admiration of his co-workers. We know we can count on him to keep our bread shelves stocked, to keep the frozen aisle looking great, and he usually makes us laugh as we pass by the walk-in freezer to boot!

Say hello to David next time you are shopping for a frozen pizza or a baguette; he's likely to share an amusing anecdote and a friendly smile.

David's Five Faves

1. The local produce
2. Brick Oven Minnesota Rice Bread
3. Cannon Valley Honey from A.A. Ernst Honey Farms
4. Vicolo corn meal pizza crusts
5. Clearly Natural lemon soap



Fund Established to Honor Ron Griffith

By **Elizabeth O. Hutchins**

Co-op Owner

One of the best aspects of Northfield is its sense of community and at the heart of this community are the many wonderful people who are deeply committed to our city. I believe no one personified this spirit more than Ron Griffith in whose name the new Ron Griffith Young Leaders Fund has been established. Who was this extraordinary man in our midst and what is this fund?

Ron Griffith was a spirit-filled humanitarian who whose life exemplified

a favorite quote of one of his friends, "Life is indescribably full, unflinchingly real, and unfailingly good." In reflecting on his and his wife, Beret's, move to Northfield in 2001, Ron told me, "I discovered a reawakening of affection for local community which has brought meaning to my life." Having been inspired by Ron, I know that he was a man who was deeply committed to social change and left ripples, if not waves, wherever he went. He was a man who made a difference.

He was one who cherished relationships, passionately responded to opportunities for community engagement, and was a cheerleader of young adults whom he invited to dream. Many of us who worked with him have felt him standing at our side saying, "Go for it!"

Ron gave much to Northfield. He served on the Planning Commission for 4 1/2 years and worked tirelessly on revising the Comprehensive Plan. As Tracy Davis said, "His fingerprints truly are all over Northfield's blueprints." Towards the end of this period, Ron "felt another call and responded to the Northfield Energy Task Force to help organize the Wind Turbine Working Group (WTWG)." And, one of his most long-lasting contributions was the indispensable role he played in founding Just Food Co-op and serving as the Co-op's President when it opened in 2004. In fact, had it not been for Ron's energy, passion, talents, and vision the Co-op might well not exist. For Ron and Beret, "It has been a joy to see Just Food thrive."

It is this energy, passion, and vision which have inspired the establishment of the Ron Griffith Young Leaders Fund. The Fund, developed in a partnership between the Northfield Area Family YMCA and Just Food: Northfield Community Co-op, honors and celebrates Ron's service on the Co-op's Board of Directors and his leadership contributions to the Northfield community.

The Fund's vision is to provide support for ongoing leadership development of

Northfield's young adults 35 years or younger. As Virginia Kaczmarek, Executive Director of the YMCA, says, "Enhancing the leadership of this age group will enhance our entire community." The Fund's mission

is to develop the talents and motivation of those young adults who are already actively providing leadership in areas contributing to Northfield's long-term sustainability with a specific focus on local environmental initiatives, healthy food and nutrition, sustainable agriculture, and community building.

As Ron Griffith has so often served as a rallying point for others, so we hope the Fund will continue to inspire our young leaders through awarding them grants to cover costs associated with training, leadership development, and unique educational and networking opportunities in the areas of their passion. Information for contributing funds and applying for grants may be found on www.northfieldymca.org.

One of Ron Griffith's favorite quotes was from Sandor P. Schuman who said, "Meaning is all we want. Choices are all we make. Relationships are all we have." With Ron's life as an example, it is the hope of the Fund's founders that Northfield's young adult leaders will take this opportunity to find meaning, make good choices, honor relationships, and provide Northfield with a strong future generation of leaders.

Ron Griffith, who died peacefully on March 12, 2009, will be sorely missed by his friends at Just Food Co-op and the wider Northfield Community.

Kate Wall Awarded a Young Leaders Grant

Kate Wall, Grocery Manager at Just Food Co-op, has received the first grant to be awarded by the Ron Griffith Young Leaders Fund. The grant will enable Kate to attend the three-day Rising Stars Seminar, an interactive management training opportunity in natural foods retails. In anticipating this workshop, Kate says she looks forward "to gaining skills focused on enhancing my management responsibilities, strengthening the department and the store, becoming a better leader in my work place and community, and deepening my understanding of the importance of how we choose to be leaders."

Assuming a leadership role is not new to Kate. She worked as a community organizer in Guatemala for three years assisting indigenous women to establish daycare centers and create programs with their communities for self empowerment. Kate says, "More important than the actual proof of what I did, I acted as

a role-model and mentor for several young women who will become leaders in their communities." In Minnesota, Kate has served for five years as a Board member of the local Sustainable Farmers Association (SFA).

The Ron Griffith Young Leaders Fund (<http://northfieldymca.org/ron-griffith>), formed through a partnership between the YMCA and Just Food Co-op, welcomes grant applications from young adult leaders actively involved in local environmental initiatives, health food and nutrition, sustainable agriculture, and community building.



Gift Baskets!

Gift baskets from Just Food Co-op make great surprises for anyone, from Mom to your roommates during finals week!



Local Basket \$50

Local eaters will love this gift! Includes bean soup mix, flax seed crackers, tortilla chips, hot cocoa mix, berry syrup, honey, an pancake mix—all produced locally! This basket also includes a handy Chico reusable shopping bag.



Fair Trade Basket \$40

Perfect for anyone, from students and teachers to your favorite labor rights activist, the Fair Trade Basket is one you can feel good about giving. Includes fairly-traded tea, body lotion, coffee, and chocolate!

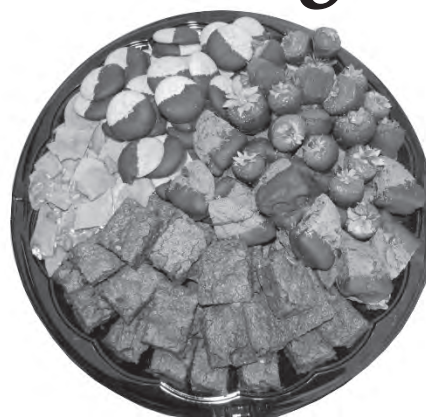


Spa Basket \$30

Give your loved one everything they need for ultimate relaxation! Includes tea, chocolate bar, candle, bar of local shampoo & body soap, and a mineral bath packet.

Party Platters

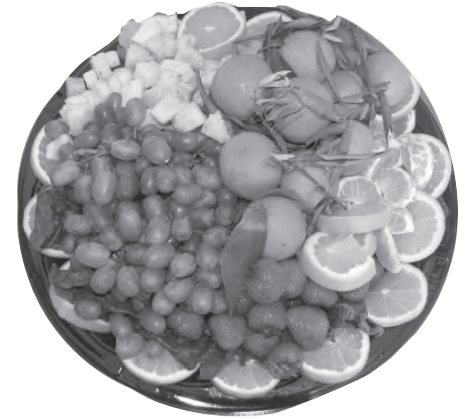
From graduations to family reunions, share the quality you find at Just Food with your guests with our delicious party platters.



Chocolate Lover's Platter
Small \$25, Large \$50



Domestic Cheeses & Meats
Small \$25, Large \$50



Fresh Fruit Platter
Small \$25, Large \$50

Also available from the Just Food Deli: Hummus & Pita Platter; Dried Fruits, Nuts & Olives Platter; Fresh Veggies Platter; Deli Meat Skewers or Pinwheels Platter; Artisan Cheeses Platter; Dessert Platter; Deviled Eggs Tray; Homemade Soups; Cold Salad; Boxed Lunches; and specialized orders upon request. Many of our Platters can be made with local ingredients- just ask. Place your party platter order with a cashier.

Local CSA Farms

Angelica's Garden CSA
ahollstadt@yahoo.com
(715) 639-2018

Big Woods Farm CSA
bigwoodsfarm@deskmedia.com
(507) 334-3335

Braucher's Sunshine Harvest Farm
sunshineharvestfarm@hotmail.com
(952) 652-1911

Clinton Falls Farm CSA
email@clintonfallsfarm.com

L & R Poultry & Produce, LLC
raerusnak@frontiernet.net
www.lrpoultryproduce.com
(507) 649-1405

Open Hands Farm, LLC CSA
openhandsfarm@gmail.com

O-Wata-Farm!, LLC
katiejack@owatafarm.com

Simple Harvest Farm Organics CSA
kzeman@kmwb.net
(507) 664-9446

Sogn Valley CSA, Leslie Mahle
(507) 263-7422

Thorn Crest Farm CSA
maureenandgary@localnet.com
(507) 645-4182

Valley Creek Community Farm CSA
Rose Ann Steenhoek, (507) 645-6414

Announcing: Northfield Local Food Action Network

Join the ongoing discussion of
Northfield's developing local
food system!

An email list has begun to connect Northfielders interested in local food issues. If you'd like to be part of the conversation, visit <http://groups.google.com/group/northfieldfoodaction?hl=en> and/or send an email to jsshmurak@gmail.com.



Poultry Workshop in Northfield

A workshop on poultry production will be held on Saturday, April 18 at the Community Resource Bank in Northfield, MN. The course will focus on the needs of farmers who are producing chickens in alternative settings, using portable structures on pasture, or a free range system, or in housing that allows amplified space for the birds, using little or no antibiotics, and marketing direct to consumers or supplying local co-ops, grocery stores, and restaurants.

The workshop will focus on broilers and layers, but will also cover turkeys, and to some extent, ducks and geese. Topics to be covered will include management of chicks, brooding,

Heritage Breeds, feed/nutrition, disease, marketing, and other issues related to these systems.

Pre-registration is important to help us plan food and materials! Cost is \$35, plus \$25 for a second family member or business partner. Make checks payable to the University of Minnesota. For more information, or to preregister, contact Wayne Martin at 612-625-6224, or at marti067@umn.edu.

This workshop is sponsored by the MN Extension Service, the Experiment in Rural Cooperation, MN Department of Agriculture, the Sustainable Farming Association, Farm Service Agency, and North Central SARE.

Visit www.eatlocaljustfood.wordpress.com
for insight on eating locally from our fabulous community bloggers!



Board of Directors 2009

board@justfood.coop

Bob Ciernia, President
 Aaron Wills, Vice President
 Lee Runzheimer, Treasurer
 Dirk Peterson, Secretary
 Joshua Bennett
 Doug Hiza
 Jay Johnson
 Kris MacPherson
 Philip Spensley

Board meetings are held at 6 p.m. in the Just Food Event Space, generally on the fourth Thursday of each month. The schedule is subject to change. All members are welcome. Call Melanie Reid at 507-650-0106 if you wish to attend a meeting.

Management Team

Melanie Reid
 General Manager
Bobbi Baker
 Financial Manager
Alex Beeby
 Operations Manager
Josh Bennett
 Front End Manager
Strider Hammer
 Produce Manager
Meg Jensen Witt
 Wellness Manager
Joey Robison
 Marketing and Member Services Manager
Miller Rogers
 Deli Manager
Kate Wall
 Grocery Manager

Owner Benefits

- Supporting a locally-owned, sustainable and socially responsible business
- Subscriptions to two Co-op newsletters: The ComPost and The Mix
- Profits returned to the community as patronage rebates—based on store profits and your yearly purchases
- Owner-only rates on Co-op classes
- Check writing for up to \$20 over the amount of purchase.
- Owner-only specials on selected items throughout the store
- 10% case discounts

The ComPost: Fertilizer for the Mind

Editor
 Joey Robison, Just Food Co-op
 Original Design
 Pat Thompson, Triangle Park Creative

The ComPost is a bimonthly publication of Just Food: Northfield Community Co-op and is published for the benefit of our membership and the community. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Just Food Co-op or its members.

For information about submitting articles, artwork or advertising, contact Joey Robison at 507-650-0106 or thecompost@justfood.coop. Letters to the editor are welcome and may be sent to the same email or 516 Water St. S., Northfield, MN 55057.

Just Food: Northfield Community Co-op is a proud member of the Twin Cities chapter of the National Cooperative Grocers' Association, <http://ncga.coop>.

Thanks for reading The ComPost!

Win a laptop! Vote for your favorites!

Why do you love Just Food? Is it that we now have fresh sushi delivered every weekday in the deli case? (Yep, you read that right, your Co-op has sushi!) Is it our helpful, friendly staff, or our commitment to local producers?

You can tell the world why you love Just Food, and have the chance to win a MacBook or a \$500 Co-op gift card. How, you ask? It's as easy as making a two-minute video of, say, the top 10 things you love about your co-op and submitting it to

mycooprocks.coop.

The mycooprocks.coop site gives you all the details, plus you can check out and rate the competition (and other Just Food videos- Make Just Food a winner!) You don't have to be a professional to submit a video. Just borrow your

neighbor's video camera (or see if your digital point & shoot—or your cell phone—does short videos) and start filming!

The deadline is April 17- so it's time to get creative!



Now offering

sushi

delivered fresh on weekdays
 at the Just Food Deli!



516 Water St. S.
 Northfield MN
 55057
 507-650-0106

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In the News...

Planet Patch

The Planet Patch donation for April and May will go to the **Northfield Community Gardeners**. The Northfield Community Gardeners is a group of citizen volunteers dedicated to the creation and management of community gardens in Northfield.

Just Change

The Just Change donations collected in April and May will go to the **Rice County Humane Society**. The Rice County Humane Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of animal welfare. Through community involvement, the Humane Society strives for public awareness and support of the basic rights of animals.

Roots to Grow Update

Our Capital Campaign is going strong, thanks to the investments of dedicated Co-op owners like you. As we go to press, we've received \$84,950 in new investments and have had \$59,250 of member loans converted to Class C Stock. The total goal is \$300,000 in new investments and \$126,000 in loan conversions. We truly appreciate your support! If you would like more information on investing in your store, or if you would like to contribute by volunteering on our calling team, please call Bobbi at 507-650-0106, or talk to a cashier the next time you're in the store.

Ukrainian Egg Class!

Learn how to create beautiful eggs using the traditional hot wax and dye method of Ukrainian Egg Decoration. Participants will take home at least three finished eggs! Easy to learn, and lots of fun to do. This year we are offering an **adult class (ages 14+)** from 12-3 on Sunday, April 5, and a **kids class (ages 7-13)** from 9-12 on Monday, April 6. Cost for either class is \$18 (\$20 for non-owners). Taught by Laura Heiman, who has been making beautiful Ukrainian eggs for more than 25 years, and enjoys sharing it with adults and children alike. Seating is limited, & preregistration is required—so call today!



In Memorium

On March 12, Just Food lost a family member - a man who was a father to us. This man embodied the notion of active citizenship: working passionately and tirelessly for the betterment of our community. We can vividly see the fruits of his labors in the success and even in the

very existence of the Co-op. His masterful blending of vision and action modeled leadership that inspires and challenges. And so, surrounded by your legacy and our remembrances, we find ourselves deeply grateful to have been truly blessed with your presence. Thank you Ron Griffith.