Summer 2020

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New hours starting June 1: 9am-8pm!

Fertilizer for the mind
About the ComPost

Fertilizer for the Mind

Editor: Stephanie Aman

The ComPost is a quarterly/seasonal publication of Just Food 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 Owners.

For information about submissions, contact Stephanie Aman at outreach@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 Co-op is a proud member of the Twin Cities chapter of the National Cooperative Grocers (NCG).

As we work as a community to help feed individuals and families that are food insecure, we have asked you to round up at the register or to add it to your Co-op Curbside order. You answered that call to action!

Thank you for all you have donated and that you continue to donate to the Northfield Food Shelf.

In March, Just Food customers rounded up: 
$2727.57

In April, Just Food customers rounded up: 
$3675.97

In May, Just Food customers rounded up: 
$4596.00

Thank you Just Food customers, for helping to feed your neighbors and community!
Thank you Just Food Staff!
by Michael Pursell, Board of Directors President

Dear Owners,

We at the Just Food Co-op Board want to take a moment to recognize the extraordinary efforts by the Co-op’s staff and management to navigate the coronavirus crisis. These remarkable folks, who didn’t sign up to be on the front lines of a pandemic, have put in some very long, very stressful hours in the past few weeks, and they have done wonders. In a matter of days they effectively reinvented how the Co-op does business, exposing themselves to heightened personal risk because they saw the need to keep the Co-op up and running. We hope you’ll join us in expressing your gratitude to the staff (from a safe distance, of course) and reward their efforts with patience, understanding, and by continuing to patronize the store during these uncertain times.

I think that Just Food hasn’t become more important during the past few weeks, or its staff more dedicated; rather, this crisis has revealed how critical a role the Co-op has always played in reliably bringing safe, delicious food to the Northfield community. In times of plenty and of crisis, we count on Just Food.

I also want to offer a few brief updates on the Board’s work. The first of these is that we remain committed, as always, to allowing public access to our meetings, which will be held via videoconference until further notice. If you’d like to attend, please notify the GM in advance and we will make sure to get you connected. Our monthly “Coffee With the Board” sessions are also suspended, so if you need to get in touch with the Board directly you can contact us through our webpage. You might also run into Board members helping with Curbside pickup now and then!

Last but not least, we want to offer a quick note on the Co-op’s expansion. When the coronavirus struck, we were waiting for final confirmation of our loan from the USDA and all systems were go. But, like everything else in the world, that’s been put on hold until we know more about the scope and duration of this crisis. It appears that the bank loan is on a 30 day pause while banks figure out their new normal and how to assist businesses like ours. That means that for now we are taking this 30 days at a time, and we’ll have to wait and see how long a pause this will be. Expansion is still very much the plan, and we remain grateful for your investment in and enthusiasm for the project. We’ll keep you posted on the ‘when’.

In the meantime, on behalf of the Board, many thanks to all the staff for their hard work and dedication. Thanks, too, to the owners who keep us going and do so much to support each other and their community.
We have so many regulations to keep up with – and they can change daily. We have to keep up with food safety regulations, Covid best practices, new HR policies, federal program changes…and then there are the sourcing problems for chicken, pork, packaged goods (toilet paper and yeast alone are a full time job!), sanitizing wipes, hand sanitizer… continuing failure of our equipment and infrastructure that require service calls to vendors during a pandemic…things change daily. Not just little things either. Fundamental ways we do business change about once a week. That takes a toll on us.
We feel a bit guilty about still having jobs when so many people are out of work.

Be patient with us. Many of us have learned new departments. All of us have learned new systems and sometimes things change daily. We are working through it.

We are NOT bored from quarantine! Things have not “slowed down”. It is still very busy, and we have come to work every day since this began. We have no idea what all the jokes and memes about quarantine mean because we have continued to come to work and face hundreds of customers a day.

TEAMWORK

We are worried about our own families and friends in addition to our concern about all of our customers, farmers and vendors.

There are no patterns to the shopping anymore. We cannot predict when people will shop – neither the day of the week, nor the time of day. It is impossible to know when to schedule our teams.

Just Food is taking care of Staff. Here are some of the ways that staff are being supported during this time:

For Staff Working in the store:
- $2/hour in additional pay for hourly staff beginning on March 8
- $150/week additional pay for salaried staff beginning on March 8
- Weekly catered lunches from area businesses

All Staff Received:
- $100 Co-op gift card

If we are out of something, it is not our fault. We can only order so much, and we try our best. Some items are impossible to get right now, so may be out of stock on a long term basis. We did not create that situation, nor can we control it. We are sorry for the inconvenience.
The last two months at the Co-op have been… interesting. We had to transition from your friendly neighborhood grocery store, where you stopped to chat in the aisles with your friends and neighbors, to a place where we hang plastic between the cashier and the customer and encourage people to take their conversations outside into the fresh air. Instead of inviting you in, we invited you to place a curbside pickup order, and even invited you to “stay the fig home.” Behind the scenes, we spent (and continue to spend) so much additional time sourcing good food. We are working around vendors who struggle to keep up with the demand for their product, distributors who are seeing unprecedented order volume and continuing surprises from customers who are demanding items we never would have guessed would be popular (what are you folks baking?) An order process that typically takes our team 1-2 hours can now take 4-6 hours or more, easily. And then there is the stocking process. We have learned that the best way to accommodate the later Friday delivery is to close the store for an hour while we stock the floor. This is a major stress reliever for staff who were being jostled by customers as they tried to process the deliveries. In one case, staff was accidentally bumped by a customer and had valuable store equipment knocked out of their hand and onto the ground where it smashed into pieces. So now we close the store for an hour to restock on Fridays and we hate having to shut you out for that hour. But it is what we need to do.
Your Co-op team has done truly heroic work over the last two months - under incredibly stressful conditions. As we hear all the jokes about being “quarantine bored”, I will admit, we do not understand what you speak of! There is nothing some of us want more than a week or two at home, without anywhere to go, or any people to see. Maybe even get a chance to find out what exactly it is that you are doing with all that yeast and flour? Instead, we are working on the front lines of a global pandemic and we never expected to have to shift gears so quickly. We are working with a different team than what we are used to. Some of us are working from home, some of us have taken personal leave until we are comfortable returning to work, and some of us have transferred departments in order to support those who need additional hands. We are working with different products, as our favorites are sometimes not available, and we have to source new items to replace them. We are working with new rules – face masks, sanitizing common touch points, 10 people in the store at a time, stay 6 feet apart from customers, no reusable bags…and we are experiencing different interactions with our shoppers.

During the months of March, April and May, we have been supporting the CAC and the food shelf through your generous round ups. Our grocery team is partnering with the food shelf to help them source vegan protein alternatives for their clients. Our produce team donates the culled produce unfit for sale to the food shelf to support their efforts. We do not accept tips for curbside orders, but we can donate it to the food shelf. We hope you will join us in continuing to support the incredible work our partners at the CAC do to keep our community fed. During this time of economic uncertainty, it is more important than ever to work towards our shared mission of eliminating food insecurity in Northfield. Please round up what you can, as often as you can. We are stronger together.

As I look back over the last few months, I am overwhelmed by the amount and volume of work that we have done. We rolled out a curbside pickup system in a matter of days (before many of the other, larger coops with more staff!) We enacted new sanitizing protocols to keep staff and customers safe.

Thank you for your continued support of Just Food. The staff are tired, but are energized from our shared purpose of working every day to do our best for our community. We will be here for you – today and tomorrow – no matter what tomorrow brings.

In cooperation,

Sherri Meyers
General Manager
In a Bag or on a Stick? Summer Treats!

Breadmaking in a Bag

- 1 gallon sized resealable plastic bag
- 3 cups flour
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 packet yeast (rapid rise or regular)
- 1 cup warm water
- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon salt (this can be to taste)

Directions:
1. Combine 1 cup flour, sugar, and yeast packet in a bowl. Pour into a resealable (Ziplock style) bag.
2. Add warm water. Seal bag, pressing out air.
3. Begin shaking and mixing the bag by hand
4. Set bag to rest for 10 minutes (proofing)
5. In a bowl, combine 1 cup of flour with salt. Pour into bag along with melted butter.
6. Seal bag again, pressing out air. Shake and mix again.
7. Open bag and add in last cup of flour.
8. Seal bag, and mix for final time.
9. Pull out dough and place on a floured surface.
10. With floured hands, knead dough for 5-10 minutes
11. Place dough in a greased loaf pan.
12. Lay towel over the loaf pan and set it in a warm spot in your house. Allow the dough 30-45 minutes to rise
13. Bake at 375 for 25 minutes
**Ice cream in a Bag**

https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/258841/easy-ice-cream-in-a-bag/

- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/4 cup half-and-half
- 1 tablespoon white sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup ice cubes, or as needed
- 3 tablespoons ice cream rock salt

Directions:

1. Combine milk, half-and-half, sugar, and vanilla extract in a pint-size resealable plastic bag; seal tightly.
2. Put a scoop of ice, 3 tablespoons ice cream rock salt, and the bag containing the milk-cream mixture into a gallon-size resealable plastic bag; seal tightly.
3. Rock the bag back and forth (do not shake) until contents thicken into ice cream, about 10 minutes.
4. Wipe salt from the top of the pint-size bag before opening to prevent salt from getting into the ice cream.

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**Pizza on a Stick**

https://therecipecritic.com/pizza-on-a-stick/

- 1 package mini pepperoni slices
- 1 tube 13.8 oz. refrigerated pizza crust
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter melted
- 3/4 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
- 1 cup shredded Mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup Pizza sauce

Directions:

1. Soak 10 bamboo skewers in warm water at least 30 minutes or use metal skewers.
2. Preheat oven to 400°F and cover a baking sheet with aluminum foil. Spray the foil with cooking spray.
4. Cut dough, lengthwise, into 1-inch wide strips.
5. Thread 5-7 mini pepperoni slices on each skewer. Be sure to leave enough space between each slice for the pizza dough.
6. Starting at one end of a dough strip, pierce the dough with the pointed end of the skewer. Spiral-wrap the dough strip around the pepperoni on the skewer, allowing the meat to peak through. Wrap the end of the dough strip around the bottom of the skewer to fasten. Press the dough together on each end to be sure it sticks on the skewer.
7. Place skewers on the prepared baking sheet and brush the tops with more of the garlic basil butter. Bake 10-12 minutes or until pizza dough is light golden brown.
8. Remove from oven and sprinkle with mozzarella cheese. Allow the cheese to melt (place back in the hot oven, if necessary and serve with pizza sauce.

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**Wedge Salad on a Stick**


- 4 strips bacon, cooked
- 8 (1-inch) wedges iceberg lettuce, wedges
- 8 Grape tomatoes
- 8 teaspoon blue cheese salad dressing
- 8 teaspoon blue cheese
- 8 bamboo toothpicks

Directions:

1. Thread each lettuce wedge, bacon piece, and grape tomato onto each toothpick, respectively.
2. Arrange toothpicks on a serving platter.
3. Drizzle 1 teaspoon blue cheese dressing over each
4. Sprinkle with blue cheese.
Bread

Mmmmmm!

Irish Soda Bread

Servings: 12 slices (1 loaf). Prep time: 1 hour; 20 minutes active.

1 1⁄2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1⁄2 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon caraway seeds
6 tablespoons cold butter
3⁄4 cup buttermilk, plus 2 tablespoons for brushing the top
1⁄4 cup honey
1⁄2 cup raisins or currants

1. Heat oven to 375°F. Mix flour, baking soda, salt and caraway seeds in large bowl. Use the large holes of a grater to grate the cold butter into the dry mixture, then toss until it resembles coarse crumbs.

2. Add 3⁄4 cup buttermilk and honey to flour mixture; stir to make soft dough. Press the dough together; it will be dense like biscuit dough. If some of the mixture is too dry to incorporate into the dough, sprinkle in an extra tablespoon or so of buttermilk just to moisten loose flour. Stir in raisins.

3. Shape into rounded disk about 8 inches across and place on greased cookie sheet. Brush top with the reserved buttermilk. If desired, cut an "X" in the top with a sharp knife. Bake for 40 to 50 minutes, until golden brown and crusty. Keeps tightly wrapped at room temperature for three or four days.

Slow-Cooker Whole Wheat Bread

Servings: 10 slices (1 loaf). Prep time: 3 hours, 30 minutes; 20 minutes active.

1 1⁄2 cups lukewarm water
1⁄2 teaspoon instant dry yeast
1 tablespoon honey
2 cups whole wheat flour
2 cups unbleached flour
1 teaspoon salt

1. Place a piece of parchment paper in the cooker, covering the bottom and at least part way up the sides.

2. In a large bowl, stir the water, yeast and honey. Let the yeast bubble a bit; it should be foamy in about 5 minutes. Add the flours and salt and stir with a wooden spoon until the dough is stiff, then switch to kneading with your hand. In the bowl or on a lightly floured counter, knead the dough for about 5 minutes.

3. Form the dough into a round ball and place in the slow cooker on the parchment paper. Cover and let stand for 1 hour to rise.

4. Turn the cooker on high and cook for 2 hours. Use an instant-read thermometer to test the temperature of the middle of the loaf; it is baked through at 180-200°F. If the loaf has not reached that temperature, cover and cook for another 15 minutes, until it reaches 180°F.

5. Use the parchment to lift the finished loaf out of the cooker, and cool on a rack.
Slow-Cooker Whole Wheat Bread
Servings: 10 slices (1 loaf). Prep time: 3 hours, 30 minutes; 20 minutes active.

1 ½ cups lukewarm water
½ teaspoon instant dry yeast
1 tablespoon honey
2 cups whole wheat flour
2 cups unbleached flour
1 teaspoon salt

1. Place a piece of parchment paper in the cooker, covering the bottom and at least part way up the sides.
2. In a large bowl, stir the water, yeast and honey. Let the yeast bubble a bit; it should be foamy in about 5 minutes. Add the flours and salt and stir with a wooden spoon until the dough is stiff, then switch to kneading with your hand. In the bowl or on a lightly floured counter, knead the dough for about 5 minutes.
3. Form the dough into a round ball and place in the slow cooker on the parchment paper. Cover and let stand for 1 hour to rise.
4. Turn the cooker on high and cook for 2 hours. Use an instant-read thermometer to test the temperature of the middle of the loaf; it is baked through at 180-200°F. If the loaf has not reached that temperature, cover and cook for another 15 minutes, until it reaches 180°F.
5. Use the parchment to lift the finished loaf out of the cooker, and cool on a rack.

Irish Soda Bread
Servings: 12 slices (1 loaf). Prep time: 1 hour; 20 minutes active.

1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon caraway seeds
6 tablespoons cold butter
¼ cup buttermilk, plus 2 tablespoons for brushing the top
¼ cup honey
½ cup raisins or currants

1. Heat oven to 375°F. Mix flour, baking soda, salt and caraway seeds in large bowl. Use the large holes of a grater to grate the cold butter into the dry mixture, then toss until it resembles coarse crumbs.
2. Add ¼ cup buttermilk and honey to flour mixture; stir to make soft dough. Press the dough together; it will be dense like biscuit dough. If some of the mixture is too dry to incorporate into the dough, sprinkle in an extra tablespoon or so of buttermilk just to moisten loose flour. Stir in raisins.
3. Shape into rounded disk about 8 inches across and place on greased cookie sheet. Brush top with the reserved buttermilk. If desired, cut an “X” in the top with a sharp knife. Bake for 40 to 50 minutes, until golden brown and crusty. Keeps tightly wrapped at room temperature for three or four days.
Honey Whole Wheat Bread
Servings: 12 slices (1 loaf). Prep time: 2 hours; 20 minutes active.

1/4 cup lukewarm water
2 teaspoons active dry yeast
3/4 cup low-fat (2%) milk or other milk
3 tablespoons honey
1 egg, lightly beaten
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 cup unbleached flour, divided
2 cups whole wheat flour (not pastry flour), plus up to 1/4 cup more if needed
1 teaspoon salt

1. In a large bowl or a stand mixer, stir the lukewarm water and yeast to dissolve. In a small saucepan over low heat, heat the milk and honey just to dissolve and bring the milk to lukewarm temperature; if it’s too hot it will kill the yeast. Add the milk mixture to the yeast mixture and stir. Let stand for 10 minutes; the mixture should be bubbly.

2. Stir in egg and olive oil and blend well. Mix in the flour and salt to make soft dough that begins to come away from sides of bowl and can be handled. Knead by hand or with the dough hook until smooth and elastic, about 5 to 8 minutes. Lightly oil a large bowl and put the dough in the bowl, turn the ball of dough to coat with oil. Cover and let rise in a warm spot or near the oven until dough doubles in size, about 45 minutes to an hour. Heat the oven to 350°F.

3. On a lightly floured counter, pat the dough to a 12 × 8-inch rectangle. Roll up from short side. Pinch seam and ends to seal. Place seam side down in greased 9 × 5-inch loaf pan. Cover; let rise in warm, draft-free place until doubled in size, about 45 to 60 minutes. It should rise to the top of the pan. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until golden brown, and it sounds hollow when tapped. Remove from pan to wire rack to cool.
Whole-Grain Bagel Rolls
Servings: 8 bagels. Prep time: 2 hours; 15 minutes active.

1 cup water
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
¼ teaspoon rice vinegar
1½ cups whole wheat bread flour
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon sugar
2 teaspoons quick-rise yeast
1 teaspoon salt
1 large egg
Optional toppings: 2 tablespoons poppy seeds, sesame seeds or everything spice

1. Heat water in a small pot over high heat until it starts to bubble. Measure the temperature with an instant-read thermometer, adding cool water until the temperature drops to 130°F. Pour 1 cup of the water into a measuring cup and add the vegetable oil and vinegar.

2. In a large bowl, mix the whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, sugar, yeast and salt. Stir in the warm water mixture until it becomes a shaggy mass (lumpy yet well-mixed), then switch to kneading with your hands. Knead until it forms a soft dough.

3. Oil a large mixing bowl and scrape the dough into the bowl. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place for at least 45 minutes or until dough has doubled in size.

4. Line two sheet pans with parchment paper. Heat the oven to 375°F. Divide the dough into 8 even portions.

5. To form bagels, roll each portion under your palm on the counter to make a 6-inch long rope. Coil the rope around two of your fingers and press the ends together to seal, then roll between your fingers to make a smooth circle where the joint is sealed. Place each on the prepared sheet pan, leaving 2 inches between the bagels. Cover lightly with a damp kitchen towel and let rise in a warm spot for at least 30 minutes or until the dough has again doubled in size.

6. Just before baking, whisk the egg with 1 teaspoon of water and brush the bagels with egg, then sprinkle the bagels with any desired toppings. Bake for 15 minutes at 375°F. Slide the bagels off the pan onto a rack to cool.
This is hard. This pandemic.

Let’s make sure we are taking care of ourselves this summer. Some folks read. Some go for walks. Some take naps. Some need a spa day.

Let’s look at some things you can do at home, as well as some products we have in the store that might help you with your self care summer.

In the store you will find:
- Essential Oils
- Rejuvenating Facemasks
- Bath Bombs
- Fingernail Polish
- Blue Glass Containers
- Silky Smooth Oil Options
- Epsom Salts and CBD Infused Epsom Salts
- Whipped Body Scrubs
- Grooming Items
...and much more!
**Make your own Bath Bomb**

Bath Bomb Recipe Ingredients and Materials

**Ingredients:**
1 cup baking soda  
1/2 cup citric acid  
1/2 cup Epsom salt  
1/2 cup cornstarch  
3/4 tsp. water  
2 tsp essential oil (lavender, eucalyptus, rose are all popular for the bath)  
2 tsp oil (jojoba, sweet almond, coconut, olive)  
A few drops of natural food coloring.  
A mold of your choice, such as regular or mini-muffin tins, candy pans, or round plastic molds specifically for bath bombs

**Bath Bomb Instructions**

Step 1: With the exception of the citric acid, mix the dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl.

Step 2: Pour all of the liquid ingredients in a jar with a top. Close the jar and shake it vigorously.

Step 3: Pour the liquid mixture into the bowl of dry ingredients, and use your hands to combine and meld together. At this point, add the citric acid. You'll probably notice a slight fizzing reaction because of the citric acid. No need to panic, as this is totally normal. The mixture should be a bit crumbly (similar to the consistency of wet beach sand). **Whatever you do, don't add water at this stage, or the bath bomb will fizz prematurely and be ruined.**

Step 4: Mash the mixture into your chosen molds very tightly. You may slightly overfill the molds and use a spoon or glass to press the mixture in as tightly as possible. Immediately loosen the bombs from their molds onto wax paper and let them dry overnight.

Give the bath bombs a day or two to completely dry before using them or wrapping them up as gifts. Pop one in the bathtub, enjoy the burst of colors and fizz, and inhale the released aromas. Turn on some of your favorite music or podcast to accompany you while you soak, or simply slide into the bath and enjoy all of your hard work.

credit to: [https://www.byrdie.com/basic-bath-bomb-recipe-346761](https://www.byrdie.com/basic-bath-bomb-recipe-346761)

**Make your own Sea Salt Hand Scrub**

Hand Scrub Recipe Ingredients and Materials

**Ingredients:**
1 cup coarse sea salt  
1/2 cup liquid coconut oil  
5 to 7 drops grapefruit essential oil

**Equipment**

Dry measuring cups  
10-ounce glass container (Canning jar works great!)  
Fork

**Hand Scrub Instructions**

Gather your supplies: You'll need 1 cup coarse sea salt, 1/2 cup liquid coconut oil, 5 to 7 drops of grapefruit essential oil, and a 10-ounce glass container.

Add the salt: Pour 1 cup of salt into the empty glass container.

Add the oil: Pour 1/2 cup of coconut oil over the salt.

Add essential oil: Add 5 to 7 drops of grapefruit essential oil to mixture.

Stir the mixture: Stir all the ingredients until they're well combined.

Close the jar: Seal the jar and affix a label or gift tag to the top if you're giving it away.

As we head into a very strange summer, the world is saturated with a sense of uncertainty and our Co-op is no exception. In a short time, the pandemic has totally changed the way we work and shop at the Co-op; we’re on the verge of an expansion that’s been planned for years and talked about since the store’s founding; and local food is suddenly in the spotlight as the global food supply is tested. Good leadership has maybe never been more important for Just Food than at this critical moment.

That’s why I hope you’ll help us to recruit candidates to join Just Food’s Board of Directors in our upcoming elections this fall, whether that’s you or someone you know. We’re seeking folks with all kinds of expertise to contribute, and the Board is always looking for ways to broaden our perspective and better represent the community we serve. But most of all, we’re looking for engaged, enthusiastic Just Food members who know and care about the Co-op, have some time and energy to contribute, and are willing to learn.

I can say from my perspective that serving on the Board is a rewarding experience and a great way to contribute to the well-being of a business that’s close to my and my family’s hearts. The Just
Food Board of Directors isn’t the best place to go with particular ideas about how the store should be run or products it should carry—we have comment cards and owner forums for that. But it is a place for long term, big-picture thinking about how Just Food is doing, where it’s headed, and how it can better serve its Owners. It’s a place to collaborate, study and practice good governance, and build community. And it’s a place to participate in democracy at the ground level at a time when it’s easy to feel alienated and disempowered.

If you’re curious what our monthly meetings are like, you’re always welcome to drop in on one of our (now virtual) meetings to observe—just email ahead so we can loop you in. You can also read more about Just Food’s Board of Directors and what serving entails on our website at http://justfood.coop/about/board-of-directors/.

Hoping to see your name on the ballot this year,

Michael Pursell, Board President
First it was “no salad bar, hot bar or soups.” Then it was “no bulk bins.” Then your Co-op could not get toilet paper or flour or rice. Then our deliveries were shorted (we literally got only crackers one day - that was it!) because the warehouse workers just simply could not keep up with demand. For over a year, we have asked you to bring your own bags, and then we told you to leave them in the car. Then we said, “only 10 people in the store at a time” and kept a Co-op Bouncer outside to monitor the crowd. Then we closed for a couple of days to regroup. And then we put social distancing rulers on our floors and begged you to not touch our staff and to keep your distance. We also created an entirely new way for you to shop online and receive your order curbside. And we are now preparing to give you a new, more robust tool to use to order. There’s been so much change, and it doesn’t feel very co-opy - believe us, we know!

We hear the positive praise and accolades, of course. Thank you for uplifting our staff! We also hear complaints about where we are falling short - either not doing enough or that we are doing too much. We feel like it’s time to address some of those things and to be transparent with you about how decisions are made. The very first thing we want you to know is that our staff and their safety will be the first priority in all of our decisions.

We serve a diverse crowd of people, we’ve always known this and it is exactly why we love what we do! Our community granted us a lot of grace as we tried new things to get you food and ensure that your family was well fed - we thank you for that!

Eight weeks ago, we saw three times the number of customers we would normally serve in a week. Now, because we limit the number
of people in the store and because of the convenience of our curbside pickup, we see half as many customers face to face. Nothing about those early days of the pandemic felt good and there are still days that do not feel good. We do not say ANY of this to pat ourselves on the back. We say this now to hopefully provide you with a different viewpoint - of the ground zero of retail grocery stores.

The question of to mask or not to mask has come into play. The beginning of May we fell on the side of allowing you to decide if you will wear your mask in the store, and allowed our staff the option to decide that for themselves as well. We have since transitioned to all staff on the sales floor being covered, and we ask that you do the same when you shop.

We know some of you agree with us, while some of you do not. Some of you have told us you will not shop with us until we require it, and some of you have told us that you will not shop with us if we do require it. Pleasing all owners and customers during this time is actually an impossible task, and if you know anything about our staff, impossible is not in their vocabulary.

Every day these incredible people show up, look through out of stock lists that are pages and pages long, and strategize the best way to order for that day. Not for the week or month - that DAY. We are not able to plan like we used to, it’s literally a day by day decision on what we will order to maximize our pallet space to best serve the majority of our customers.

Can you believe all of this has transpired since the beginning of March? Neither can we.

We are doing things now that we have said never, ever, ever do. I never thought I’d see the day when it was perfectly ‘normal’ to hang a clear plastic shower curtain to protect our cashiers, that we would limit the number of shoppers in our store, that we would have someone stand at our door and ask people to not touch staff, to buy what they touch, that we would debate whether we should close the store to get a much needed break or forge ahead and take our lumps, that we would need to remind our customers to please stay 6 feet away from staff, and to please, please, please not touch them.

I also never thought I’d see the day that I’d write a piece like this.

This is our new normal and the one thing we will always do is keep our staff safe. Without them, we can not provide for our community. Without our staff there is no co-op. Without our owners there is no co-op. Without all of us helping each other through this, together, there is no co-op.

Overnight, your Co-op had to change the way we do business, and we did it with a smile, a very weary smile, but a smile. We are still YOUR Co-op. Thank you for being here with us and for us! We appreciate the support we have been given throughout this pandemic and we will continue to do our very best, even if we sometimes fall short, to serve you in the best way we possibly can. We will always keep trying. Always.
natural foods market & deli

516 Water Street S
Northfield, MN 55057
507-650-0106
justfood.coop

Open Daily 9am - 8pm

NEW HOURS!

As of June 1, Just Food will be open until 8pm!