

WHOLE FOODS CO-OP

garbanzo gazette

SPRING 2026





Sarah Hannigan
General Manager

Seeding Wonder, Hope, and Connection

A few years ago, I opened a box of wonder at our Denfeld store; inside an everyday cardboard box were hundreds of packets of seeds, assuring me that the late winter snow would soon be behind us, the potential of spring was upon us, and the bounty of the harvest lay ahead. It reminded me of the hard work, patience, and dedication that goes into the making of food, the making of place, and the making of connection. The box of seeds, ready to be stocked for the Co-op's shoppers, showed me that even in the chaos and confusion of the day, there was collective hope. I have looked back on this memory often, always finding solace.

In this spring edition of the Garbanzo Gazette, we invite you explore the wonder, hope, and connection you can find at your Co-op through food, agriculture, and community.

We strongly believe that food is something to be shared and celebrated. In

this season of holiday brunches, we welcome you to try a new spin on a traditional favorite, and find ways to bring ingredients from local farmers and food producers to the table.

We're excited to announce this year's Grow Local Food Fund recipients. Farmers and food producers from across the region are receiving grants totaling \$58,000 this month, just in time for this year's growing season.

The grants are the result of round-up donations from our shoppers, tying generosity in our stores to projects that build capacity in our local food system and expand our local food economy.

Community and connection are foundational for our cooperative. We're honored to be part of the network of independent cooperative grocers through our membership in the National Co-op Grocers and are excited to share how we're stronger through cooperation. And locally, we're always proud to share all the community partners that offer discounts and benefits to Whole Foods Co-op Owners through Community Perks – check out the deals to be had around the Twin Ports!

There are many ways to root in with the Co-op this season: consider running for the Board of Directors, join us for a Coffee at the Co-op event, or simply stop by and grab some seeds! 🌱

With gratitude,

Sarah Hannigan, General Manager
gm@wholefoods.coop





Molly Bradfish
Board Member

Community Impact Through Board Service

I originally became an Owner for the simple reason that I love to shop at co-ops. I love the smells and textures, the variety, and the incomparable produce. I love the stories that accompany the products that share the makers' aspirations and pride in their work. I look for the towns where farms are located to see which are closest to my house.

When my family visits the Co-op, I like to look out the windows at Lake Superior with my children as we enjoy a meal from the Deli together. The vibes are wonderful. All of the above is wonderful. But what if you want to do more?

This year is shaping up to be quite a year for Minnesota. We've seen upheaval and division in our state. Social media feeds us, and at the same time, alienates us. And sometimes it all leaves me wondering how to best help my neighbor, my environment, and my community.

Whole Foods Co-op believes that when our co-op does better, our community does better. As a business, we buy local and help local. More than half of our local vendors come from the Arrowhead region of Minnesota. We donate about \$500/day worth of food to local food shelves. The Co-op's Fran Skinner Memorial Matching Fund assists people with cost of Ownership, and the Co-op's Access Discount helps Owners who need a little extra support afford nutritious local food. If you are interested in being a part of this community work, I highly recommend joining the board. As a new board member, I feel like I've just scratched the surface, but have joined a group of people who are passionate about a connected and just community.

Applications to join the Board are open, and I invite you to join us at a board meeting to learn more about the process, board service, and the Co-op. I hope you'll consider joining us in the important work the Co-op is doing, both for our food system and for our community. 🥕



Whole Foods Co-op 2026 Board of Directors (Left to right): Amber Schlater, Robin Pestalozzi Susan Darley-Hill, Scott Van Daele, Molly Bradfish, Chris Lee, Tristen Eberling, Brittany Lind Libby. Not pictured: Maria Isley.



**Apply to Join the
Whole Foods Co-op
Board of Directors!**

Applications due **July 31, 2026**

Learn more and apply: wholefoods.coop/board

2026 Grant Recipients

Over the last year, shopper donations to the Grow Local Food Fund (GLFF) totaled over \$58,000. THANK YOU to everyone who rounded up!

The GLFF provides grants to emerging and established farmers and food producers who are working to strengthen our regional food economy. The GLFF Selection Committee, comprised of Owners, Board Members, and professionals in the farming community, have reviewed this year's applications and selected the following businesses to receive a GLFF grant.



Agate Acres Farm & Events

Established Grower

📍 Two Harbors, MN

Wash/pack shed construction to house cooler and expand vegetable sales.



Elsewhere Farm

Established Grower & Producer

📍 Herbster, WI

Re-skin main hoop house with SolaWrap for additional sturdiness and harvests.



Farm Sol

Established Grower & Producer

📍 Saginaw, MN

Construct farm stand building and merchandise cooler.



Four Beans Farm

Emerging Grower

📍 Superior, WI

Build tunnel addition to increase production and improve organic rotation practices.



Northern Harvest Farm

Established Grower

📍 Wrenshall, MN

Upgrade potato harvester.



Polish Farmer LLC

Emerging Grower

📍 Moose Lake, MN

Purchase a cultivating tractor for mechanical weed control.



Promised Land Farm

Established Producer

📍 Carlton, MN

Design and build a mobile poultry processing trailer.



Stanek Family Farm

Emerging Grower

📍 Wrenshall, MN

Complete a high-density apple orchard trellis.



ThroughDirt Farm LLC

Emerging Grower

📍 Washburn, WI

Construct a heated high tunnel for use as a greenhouse and season extension.

Stronger Together

WITH NATIONAL CO+OP GROCERS

Over the past 30 years, the grocery industry has become competitive with large corporate chains expanding into the natural foods market, a space once occupied primarily by food co-ops.

For smaller, community-owned grocery stores, the challenge has been staying local and independent while keeping up with national giants. This competition has led many food co-ops to look for new strategies to serve their communities.

One of these strategies led to the formation of the National Co+op Grocers, or NCG. In 1999, Whole Foods Co-op was part of a regional cooperative association that joined with others to create a cooperative whose sole focus was to provide support – and a competitive edge – to food cooperatives around the country.



“What co-ops wanted to do was help each other navigate an increasingly complex grocery landscape, while staying true to their local communities,” said Sarah Hannigan, Whole Foods Co-op General Manager and NCG Board Member. “NCG supports its member co-ops through providing some efficiencies of large grocery competitors while allowing the individual co-ops to remain independent. It’s the best of both worlds!”

NCG is a business services cooperative currently representing 165-member food co-ops with over 240 stores across 39 states. With combined annual sales between its participating co-ops exceeding \$2.5 billion, NCG is able to leverage the buying power of that collective and then pass these savings on to its member co-ops – and their shoppers.

“Because we’re part of NCG, we can offer better prices and better deals than we could on our own,” Hannigan says.

One way many shoppers can see these savings at work is through the Co+op Deals program. NCG negotiates these savings with suppliers and manages the logistics behind the scenes. For many co-ops, this work would be difficult or impossible to do independently.

“NCG exists to maximize members’ success, inclusivity, and impact, and to grow the cooperative grocery sector in size and scope in an environmentally regenerative manner.”

– NCG’s Ends Statement

The benefits of NCG extend beyond sales. By providing resources for complex administrative and business services, NCG frees local co-ops to focus on what makes them unique.

For Whole Foods Co-op, that means investing more time in working with local businesses and into local partnerships.

“If we invested our staff’s time into duplicating the services NCG provides,” Hannigan explains, “we wouldn’t have the capacity to do the community connection work we’re known for.”

Beyond shared services, NCG also fosters a national peer network. “Co-ops share resources and learn from each other,” said Hannigan.

Marketing, operations, finance, and store management staff regularly exchange ideas and share best practices with co-ops across the country. This allows shoppers to benefit from programs that other co-ops have pioneered, which Whole Foods Co-op can decide to replicate. The Grow Local Food Fund and the Owners Extras programs were both born out of ideas from other co-ops. Similarly, Whole Foods Co-op’s GIVE! register round-up program has inspired several round-up programs across the country.

Astute traveling co-op shoppers will note that many food co-ops have similar Co+op Deals flyers and signage. This isn’t the sign of a chain, instead it’s a sign of cooperation at work. Through combining resources, food co-ops across the country are investing in themselves and one another all to, ultimately, strengthen our communities and their food systems. In cooperation, we are truly stronger together. 🌱



NCG CEO Tandy Harvey (center) with Whole Foods Co-op Staff.

You may recognize NCG's logo on our Co+op Deals flyers, deli cups, or reusable bags!

Brunch Made Local

MAKE A MEAL FEATURING LOCAL INGREDIENTS

Walk down any aisle at Whole Foods Co-op and you'll find local foods to fill your shopping cart. Whether you're looking for one all-star ingredient or to fill your table with local options, it's easy to support regional farmers and food producers when you shop the Co-op.

In our brunch recipe, you'll find many products grown or made here in Minnesota or Wisconsin. But don't stop there! Remember to round out your brunch with a locally roasted coffee and decorate your table with fresh local flowers.



Co-op Croissant Bake

★
LOCAL

Ingredients

- ▶ 6–8 **Duluth's Best Bread** croissants, preferably one day-old and cut into 4 pieces
- ▶ ½ cup salted **Westby** butter
- ▶ 1 cup thinly sliced leeks (white and light green parts)
- ▶ 1 cup finely chopped **Food Farm** shallots
- ▶ 1–2 garlic cloves, minced
- ▶ 3 large **Locally Laid** eggs
- ▶ 1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- ▶ 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- ▶ ¼ cups **Johnston's Riverview Farm** milk
- ▶ 1 Tbsp each chopped chives and thyme leaves
- ▶ ¾ cup **Y-ker Acres** ham, cut into bite-size pieces
- ▶ 1 cup grated **Deer Creek Vat 17** World Cheddar

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and grease a medium casserole dish.
2. Dry the croissant pieces overnight or lightly toast them until crisp on the edges.
3. Melt the butter in a skillet over medium heat, then cook the garlic, leeks, and onions for about 5 minutes, or until soft.
4. In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, Dijon mustard, cream, milk, and chives. Add half of the croissant pieces and let them soak for a minute.
5. Spread half of the leek–onion mixture in the casserole dish, then add the soaked croissants.
6. Scatter the ham evenly over the top and add half of the cheese.
7. Soak the remaining croissant pieces in the egg mixture, place them on top, sprinkle with the remaining cheese, and pour any leftover mixture over the top.
8. Cover with greased foil and bake for 30–35 minutes. Uncover and bake an additional 10–15 minutes until puffed and golden.
9. Rest for 10 minutes before serving.

Meet the Makers

DEER CREEK

Deer Creek

Created by master cheese maker Chris Gentine, Deer Creek has become known for its award-winning, artisanal cheeses.



Duluth's Best Bread

This family-owned bakery has been rolling in the yeast since 2015. In addition to supplying to the Co-op, they have three locations in the Twin Ports!



Locally Laid Egg Company

Locally Laid's hens are pasture-raised and have lots of outside space to exercise. By sourcing and selling locally, Locally Laid champions mid-sized farms and strengthening rural communities.



Food Farm

Food Farm has been part of the Co-op's story for decades. The Fisher-Merritt family, spanning multiple generations, grows organic vegetables that are available at the Co-op and through CSA shares.



Johnston's Riverview Farm

The farm is a family-run operation that still delivers milk in reusable glass bottles and focuses on sustainable principles like reusable packaging, pasture-based and regenerative grazing, and more.



Westby Creamery

Farmer-owned since 1903, Westby Cooperative Creamery represents about 100 farm families working together to support healthy animals, a healthy planet, and delicious dairy.



Y-ker Acres

The Stamper family raises truly happy pigs; the animals spend their days outdoors year-round, exploring and rooting, supported with non-GMO supplemental feed.

Supporting Local

Last fiscal year, 36% of Whole Foods Co-op's total purchases were from independent local vendors in Minnesota and Wisconsin. By carrying a large selection of products from 178 local vendors, we make it easier for folks to support local, simply by shopping at our stores.





ENJOY THE PERKS OF

Co-op Ownership

Over 45 local businesses are a part of our Community Perks program, offering discounts and deals to Whole Foods Co-op Owners. Simply present your Owner card at participating businesses to receive the listed benefit. Supporting our Community Perks community is a great way to support local and save!

FOOD & DRINK

Bent Paddle Brewing Co.

Owner Benefit: One taproom beer size upgrade per visit during regular taproom hours.

Camp Creemee at Wild State Cider

Owner Benefit: Buy one, get one free on any size Creemee. Limit one free cone per day.

Superior Waffles

Owner Benefit: 10% off your food purchase. Not to exceed \$10. In store only. Not valid on catering.

Wild State Cider

Owner Benefit: \$1 off any glass of cider. Limit one use per day.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Destination Fitness

Owner Benefit: 50% off your first month's membership or 10% off your first personal training package purchase. Valid for new customers only.

Dr. Lara Hill Chiropractic

Owner Benefit: \$100 Whole Foods Co-op gift card with any New Patient Exam and doctor's report. Cannot be combined with other offers.

Energy Works Myofascial Release

Owner Benefit: \$25 off an Initial MFR Consultation. \$10 off a 30-minute Amethyst BioMat healing session.

Heaven on Earth Wellness Spa

Owner Benefit: 15% off any service(s) at Heaven on Earth Wellness Spa plus a complimentary 15-minute Oxygen Bar session during your first visit. Sale and discounted spa packages excluded.

Holistic Health and Healing

Owner Benefit: \$10 off a 90-minute Energy Therapy session with wellness consultation for new clients.

Infinity Massage & Wellness

Owner Benefit: 5% off any service including massage, facials, waxing, hydrfacial, infrared sauna, and lamprobe. Not valid with other offers, packages or discounts.

Owner Benefit: Complimentary 30-minute Infrared Sauna Session with any purchase of a regular-priced 60-minute or longer massage or float session. Unlimited uses.

Inner Bliss Soul Spa

Owner Benefit: Complimentary 30-minute Infrared Sauna Session with any purchase of a regular-priced 60-minute or longer massage or float session. Unlimited uses.

Lucas Wellness

Owner Benefit: Free shipping, lifetime preferred membership, and 15% off your first online order of \$150 or more and 15% off all future orders.

Paula Williams · Certified Life Coach

Owner Benefit: 4th Coaching Session is free. For new and returning clients. See website for more information.

Rooted in Wellness

Owner Benefit: Get your first class free. Use code COOP at checkout. Buy a 10-class pass and receive one extra class for free. Present your Owner card in class.

Yoga North ISYI

Owner Benefit: 20% Off one private session of Ayurvedic or Yoga Therapy of 60 or 90-minutes. One-time use.

RETAIL

A Place for Fido

Owner Benefit: 5% off purchase. Excludes food, special orders, and custom work. Cannot be combined with any other offers or discounts.

Amazing Alonzo Bookstore

Owner Benefit: 10% off your book purchase price.

Art in the Alley

Owner Benefit: Free earrings (\$12.95 value) with any \$25 purchase.

Chequamegon Book & Coffee Company

Owner Benefit: 20% off any purchase. Order online, call, email, or stop by to see countless books in all fields.

Continental Ski & Bike

Owner Benefit: 10% off regular-priced merchandise. Excludes bicycles. Not valid with any other offer, coupon, or promotion.

Daugherty Appliance Sales & Service

Owner Benefit: Free local delivery and hook-up of non built-in appliances \$399 or more. \$5 off any appliance service call.

Fitger's Wine Cellar

Owner Benefit: 10% off organic wine.

Frost River Trading Co.

Owner Benefit: One free pound of Duluth Coffee Company coffee with purchase of \$100 or more.

Lenora Organics

Owner Benefit: 20% off your next online order. Use code (WholeFoods) at check-out.

Northwest Outlet

Owner Benefit: 10% off regular-priced Carhartt, Columbia, and The North Face clothing, footwear and accessories. 10% off regular-priced camping equipment.

Playing with Yarn

Owner Benefit: All purchases can be applied to your Playing With Yarn card anytime, all year.

Rabbit, Bird & Bear: Fine Art & Gifts

Owner Benefit: 5% discount on purchases over \$25. Must show proof of membership.

Ren Market

Owner Benefit: 10% off any refill. Limit two uses per month. Must present Owner Card at time of purchase. Cannot be combined with any other coupons, discounts or sales.

Rustic Inn Café & Gifts

Owner Benefit: 10% off total purchase. Excludes sale and clearance items.

Salt & Light Heritage Farm

Owner Benefit: \$100 credit on a future purchase with your first farm order of \$100.00. Good for one year. Must include Owner number in the comments section when placing your initial order.

The Bookstore at Fitger's

Owner Benefit: 10% off regular-priced items. Excludes candy and magazines.

Tortoise & Hare Footwear

Owner Benefit: \$10 off any purchase of \$100 or more. Must present Owner card at time of purchase.

Trailfitters

Owner Benefit: 10% off all regular priced, in stock clothing or footwear.

White Spruce Market

Owner Benefit: 20% off your next online gift order. Use code WHOLEFOODS.

Yarn Harbor

Owner Benefit: Annual one-time 15% discount on yarn purchase. Not available with any other store sales.

Zenith Bookstore

Owner Benefit: Get 10% off your new book purchase.



SERVICES

All Energy Solar

Owner Benefit: \$500 off a solar array.

GlitterMoss Healing Arts

Owner Benefit: 10% off all bodywork and herbalism services. Cannot be applied to other discounts or sales.

Lizzard's Art Gallery & Framing

Owner Benefit: 15% framing orders.

Master Framing Gallery on London Road

Owner Benefit: 10% off any custom framing. Not to be combined with any other discount or offer. Must present Owner card.

Nick's Natives

Owner Benefit: 10% off landscape design services.

Northwoods Naturals Clean Sweep

Owner Benefit: 15% off basic cleaning and organizing. Excludes deep cleaning and move in and/or move out. Limit one use per Owner household.

Saffron & Grey Couture Floral Design

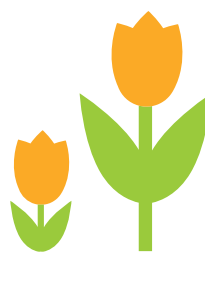
Owner Benefit: \$5 off a floral/plant purchase or delivery of \$75 or more. Must present Owner card.

The Solar Mower

Owner Benefit: 25% off your first mowing and/or trimming of the year. Limit to no more than two acres.

Warrior Printress Letterpress & Design

Owner Benefit: 10% off custom letterpress orders.



EXPERIENCES

Lake Superior YMCA

Owner Benefit: Joining fee waived for new members. Good at both the downtown Duluth and Hermantown locations.

Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory

Owner Benefit: 20% off one Hawk Ridge Observatory membership at any level.

Zinema 2

Owner Benefit: One free small popcorn with movie ticket purchase.



Scan to view full details and learn more about our Community Perks Cooperators.



wholefoods.coop/communityperks

SPRING CO-OP CLASSES + EVENTS

APRIL



Coffee at the Co-op

April 17, May 15, June 19 • 7:30 am
 📍 Hillside Brewery Creek Overlook

Start your morning with a warm drink and a friendly chat at our relaxed monthly meet-up. Drop in for free coffee or tea and connect with community. No registration needed. Stay five minutes or the whole hour.

Recycling 101 with Resource Renew

Emily Pardini of Resource Renew
 Tuesday, April 14 • 5:30–6:30 pm
 📍 Denfeld Classroom • FREE

Sustainability Specialist Emily Pardini will share guidance on recycling and waste reduction. Attendees will learn what belongs in their bin, how recycling is processed, and can bring questions for an open Q&A. One attendee will win an Earth Day Prize Pack!

Compost Tour at Resource Renew

Resource Renew
 Tuesday, April 21 • 2–3 pm
 📍 2626 Courtland St., Duluth • FREE

Take a behind-the-scenes look at Resource Renew on a one-hour tour of their composting operation. See how food and yard waste transform into nutrient-rich compost and learn why keeping scraps out of landfills matters for our local environment.



MAY

Co-op Crafts: DIY Mother's Day Bouquets

Saturday, May 9 • 9–11 am
 📍 Hillside Brewery Creek Overlook

Kids of all ages are welcome to stop by to make a free small bouquet for a special someone in their lives. Parental supervision required. While supplies last.



Lotion Lab with Mix Cosmetics

Lanae Rhoads of Mix Cosmetics
 Wednesday, May 13 • 5:30–6:30 pm
 📍 Denfeld Classroom • \$20

In this hands-on workshop, attendees will learn the basics of natural skincare ingredients and how they support healthy, happy skin. Then they'll create a custom 3 oz. lotion, blending textures and scents to make something truly unique. Materials will be provided.

More than a Milkweed: Attracting Pollinators

Jen Stenersen of Shoreview Natives
 Wednesday, May 20 • 5:30–7 pm
 📍 Denfeld Classroom • FREE

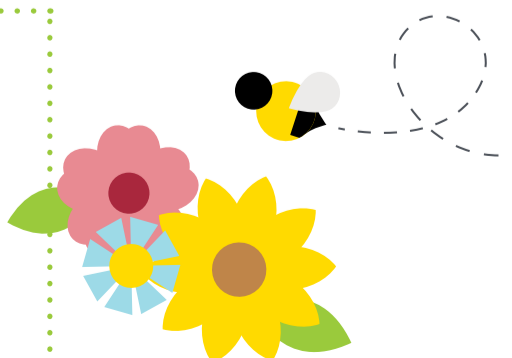
Learn about the wide variety of native plants that support butterflies and other pollinators. We'll look at flowers, grasses, trees, and shrubs that provide food and habitat for insects, plus practical ideas for healthier home landscapes and ecosystems.



More Information and Registration

Visit our online calendar for detailed descriptions and to register:
[wholefoods.coop/classes](https://www.wholefoods.coop/classes)

If you are interested in being a Co-op instructor or have class ideas, we'd love to hear from you. Email us at marketing@wholefoods.coop

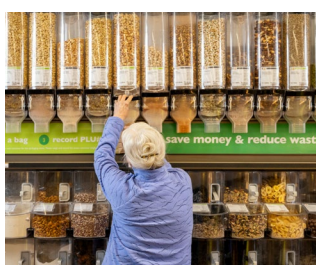


Buy a Pinch or a Pound

THE BENEFITS OF BUYING BULK

When you shop at the Co-op, you've probably noticed the bulk bins towering together, ready to dispense grains, coffee, nuts or candy. Some people feel shy about trying bulk – but we're here to say that you should give it a go! And if you have any questions, our staff will be happy to help.

What is 'Bulk'?



Whole Foods Co-op buys foods and other products in large (bulk) quantities, which typically arrive in very large packages. We then put these products into our bulk bins, where shoppers are able to select and purchase the amount of product that's right for them.

How to Shop Bulk



1

Pick a product and a container. If you brought a container from home, be sure to first record the empty (tare) weight and write it on a provided sticker.



2

Fill a bag or jar. Buy as little or as much as you want! Fill your container using the provided scoops, funnels and/or gloves.



3

Record the PLU. Write the 3-digit number on your container, sticker, or twist tie.

Why Shop in Bulk?

1

Save money! Bulk items are typically less expensive than pre-packaged items. Plus, keep your eye out for Co+op Deals on bulk products for extra savings!

2

Save the environment! By using reusable containers, you're keeping a bit more packaging out of the landfill. Bring your own from home or purchase one in our store.

3

Save pantry space! Whether you need a pinch or a pound, you can buy only what you need from our bulk bins.

GIVE! COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Round up at the registers this spring to support these three Community Support Program recipients.

In April and May, GIVE! donations will be split 50/50 between the nonprofit and the Grow Local Food Fund.



APRIL

DULUTH COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT

Funds will be used to improve garden plots by upgrading rainwater catchment systems, repair tanks, and enrich soil with compost.



MAY

JUSTICE NORTH

Funds will be used to increase capacity to provide free legal help to community members who can't afford an attorney.



JUNE

WHOLE FOODS CO-OP ACCESS DISCOUNT PROGRAM

Funds will help reduce cost barriers by giving Co-op Owners enrolled in food assistance programs a discount on purchases.