

willy street co-op

READER

A PUBLICATION OF WILLY STREET CO-OP, MADISON, WI

VOLUME 52 • ISSUE 2 • FEBRUARY 2026



Staying the Course: 5 Years of DEI at Willy Street Co-op

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on pg. 28

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The Willy Street Co-op *Reader* is the monthly communications link among the Co-op Board, staff, and Owners. It provides information about the Co-op's services and business as well as about cooking, nutrition, health, sustainable agriculture, and more. Views and opinions expressed in the *Reader* do not necessarily represent those of the Co-op's Directors, staff, or Ownership. Willy Street Co-op has not evaluated the claims made by advertisers. Acceptance of advertising does not indicate endorsement of the product or service offered. Articles are presented for informational purposes only. Before taking action, you should always consult a professional for advice. Articles may be reprinted with permission from the editor.

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The Board meets 8–10 times a year, meetings are held at the Central Office, 6:30–8:30pm. Owners are invited to attend during the open session of the BoD meeting. See www.willystreet.coop/events and select the Board category for details.

March 25, 2026
April 22, 2026

June 24, 2026
Sept. 23, 2026

EMAIL: BOARD@WILLYSTREET.COOP
ALL-BOARD@WILLYSTREET.COOP
(includes the GM, Executive Assistant, and Board Administrator)

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THE WILLY STREET GROCERY CO-OP

MISSION STATEMENT

Cultivate and empower community, customers, employees, and suppliers through cooperative principles and practices.

EIGHT COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

VOLUNTARY OPEN MEMBERSHIP

DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

MEMBER ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

CONCERN for the COMMUNITY

EDUCATION TRAINING AND INFORMATION



KALONA HALF AND HALF

After a long absence over the summer, Kalona Half and Half finally made a reappearance in the store(Willy West) a few weeks ago. I was in the store earlier today hoping that there had been a new shipment of the half and half because the expiration date (11/22/25) of the existing product a few days earlier was too close and would be expired before I would finish it. But here is what I found -- all 8 bottles in the cooler were all 11/22/25 expiration date and today is 11/24/25. This happens frequently. I think the problem is that when you brought this product back after the summer hiatus, you put it on an upper shelf and it is almost totally behind the frame of the refrigerator door. This creates two problems - First previous customers who bought this product are probably unaware that it is back on the shelf because they can't see it unless they open the door to the refrigerator which leads to the second problem which is that sales are way down and therefore you end up with a lot of expired product. Please reorganize that shelf and put wider/larger products in that area where the door frame obscures the view. Or put a product that has 2 columns of product in that area. The Kalona half and half is a thin bottle and there are not two columns of it so you can't see it. I love this product because it is the only organic half and half that is NOT ultra pasteurized and I don't want to see it discontinued from lack of sales due to the obscured view.

Thank you for taking the time to bring this to our attention and for providing your feedback. I apologize for the problem you experienced with this product's expiration date. Since this item was reintroduced, the inventory we have received has consistently had very short dating—often expiring within a week or already past the expiration date. Our buyers also placed a large order to meet demand, which unfortunately worsened the issue given the product's limited shelf life. We are actively working with our distributors and buyers to prevent future deliveries of products with short or outdated expiration dates. The good news is that sales for this item appear to be consistent with what they were before it was moved to its new location in the cooler. Please be assured that we plan to continue carrying this item long term and have no plans of discontinuing it due to these logistical issues. -Dave Andrews, Willy West Grocery Manager

FRAGRANCE-FREE LAUNDRY SOAP

If there's anyway to separate fragrance free (free and clear) laundry soap and fabric softener from the ones with fragrance on the shelf that would be so appreciated. They tend to take on the smell. Thank you.

Thank you for your email, we appreciate when customers comment so we can try our best to help. With our limited shelf space, sometimes products do not receive the best placements. Knowing that the laundry set is super tight with many products, this may be tough to shift products around. We will look into it and see what we can do. -Garet Bauer, Willy East Assistant Grocery Manager

HOT WATER FOR TEA

Could you add hot water and tea bags to the coffee station? Not all of us drink coffee. Thanks

Thanks for asking about adding a tea option to the self-serve coffee station at Willy North. Unfortunately, we don't have the space or the labor to add more services to our coffee station at this time. However there is hot water available in the commons from the dispenser, and you can purchase tea bags and make a cup of tea for yourself. -Luke Vannest, Willy North Deli Manager

12 PACKS OF TOILET PAPER

I'm wondering what has happened to either the Field Day or the Wild Harvest 12-packs of toilet paper that you used to carry. This was definitely the most affordable and comfortable toilet paper available at the co-op, but now neither one appears to be available. First the Field Day disappeared, but then the Wild Harvest showed up and seemed to be basically identical. But now the Wild Harvest has also vanished! I was able to buy a couple packages of it from Willy North a few weeks ago, but when I checked again today, it was gone from there too! Have they stopped making it?

Thank you for your email, and I am happy to provide some insight. Wild Harvest has discontinued their toilet paper line from production. They will only provide napkins and paper towels going forward. Field Day has also discontinued their 12 pack. There are rumors that it is because of a package change, but we cannot confirm at this time. We apologize for the lack of more information, but you now know all that we know. -Garet Bauer, Willy East Assistant Grocery Manager

COMPOST

I am wondering if the co-op composts their old/waste produce? Or works with a vendor or program that does? If not, have they ever tried to?

Thanks for reaching out to ask about our composting practices. I'm happy to say we do have a composting program at Willy Street Co-op. All three retail locations have a compost bucket in the commons for customers and staff. This compost goes to Earth Stew Compost Services. For compostable waste created in our Produce and Deli departments, as well as our production kitchen, we use Green Box Compost. -Jenny Skowronek, Willy North Store Director

Please note: compost buckets at Willy Street Co-op are for Co-op shoppers after they have enjoyed their meal.

LOOFAHS

This supposedly "biodegradable" "nontoxic" "eco-friendly" scrubber smelled like paint thinner or lacquer when I used it on vegetables under running water. The (red) dye also came off. Could you find out how these are processed (what the smell is from) and/or get some un-dyed loofahs? Or possibly get some bamboo or other nonplastic brushes or scrubbers for use on produce? Thank you.

Thanks for reaching out to us with your customer comment regarding the Loofah Rubbits. I reached out to the brand Loofah-Art, who make the 'Rabbit Scrubbers', several times, hoping they could provide more information about how the loofah scrubbers are processed, dyed, and what would cause that smell. Unfortunately, they are not responding to me. They have some information about how their products are made on their 'About Us' page, but it doesn't answer your specific questions.

I'm sorry! I wish I could provide answers for you. I can, however, look through the product selection from our vendors to see if there are other natural loo-

fah products available to us. Thanks for the suggestion! If Loofah-Art ever responds to me, I will make sure to pass the information along to you! -Sara Berg, General Merchandise Category Manager

ONLINE ORDERING

I was looking forward to trying the "order online" functionality but I see that the only option for ordering online was the North store (for pickup; delivery is not available at my address). The web page design gives you the option of "looking up" which store is closest but even when I put in the zip code of the West store it still returns the North store as the only option for online ordering. I am disappointed and just wanted to make sure that this is intentional and not the result of a web page glitch. Can you confirm the North store is the only one offering online ordering?

At this time North is the only store you can order from, so what you are seeing is not a mistake. I am really sorry this results in you being unable to place an order on our website. When we launched our ecommerce program we chose to run the program from just one site. We did not have the physical space to dedicate at all three retail locations for the equipment and storage space needed to run the program. Our North location was the site with the most available space and offers the largest number of products. Unfortunately, our delivery partner only delivers 10 miles from the store, so no matter which store we chose we knew some of our Owners would be outside the delivery area. As the program continues to grow and we improve our process we hope to be able to expand the number of store options to reach more of our Owners, but we have no timeline for that at this time. -Jenny Skowronek, Willy North Store Director

CO-OP PIES

I bought 2 pies this week to serve at Thanksgiving dinner. Apple was delicious, nicely baked. Pecan was really runny, hard to serve as only the very bottom, scant layer near crust, was set up. The rest just basically liquid. Not bad flavor, we scooped it out with a spoon and put it over ice cream. But it wasn't the pie I expected. I'm letting you know for future quality control. I have photos if you are interested in seeing what I mean.

Thank you so much for taking the time to write to us about your experience with your Willy Street Co-op pies this year. We're so glad to hear that you enjoyed your Apple Pie! However, it sounds like, while a delicious dessert, your Pecan Pie wasn't quite what you expected. We appreciate the feedback, and are continuously working to make these recipes the best they can be. I'm working with my team to make sure that the runny issue with the Pecan Pie filling that you experienced will not happen in the future. -Renee Strobel, Kitchen Director

DANE BUY LOCAL GIFT CARDS

I saw Dane Buy Local has a promotion going on where for every \$100 in gift cards you purchase, you receive a \$25 bonus. I see Willy Street Co-op listed as a redemption location for the gift cards. I'm wondering though, is there an expiration date on these cards or is Willy St. going to end their participation in this program at any time in the foreseeable future? Since it's such a good promotion, I was thinking of purchasing a couple hundred dollars in gift cards. If someone could just confirm that I'll be all set to use these cards for the next few months, then all should be great.

Thanks for reaching out. We anticipate continuing to participate in this program for the foreseeable future! You should feel comfortable being able to use these at the Co-op in the next few years. -Brendon Smith, Marketing & Communications Director

Have a comment or request you would like to share?

We would love to hear from you!



www.willystreet.coop/contact-us

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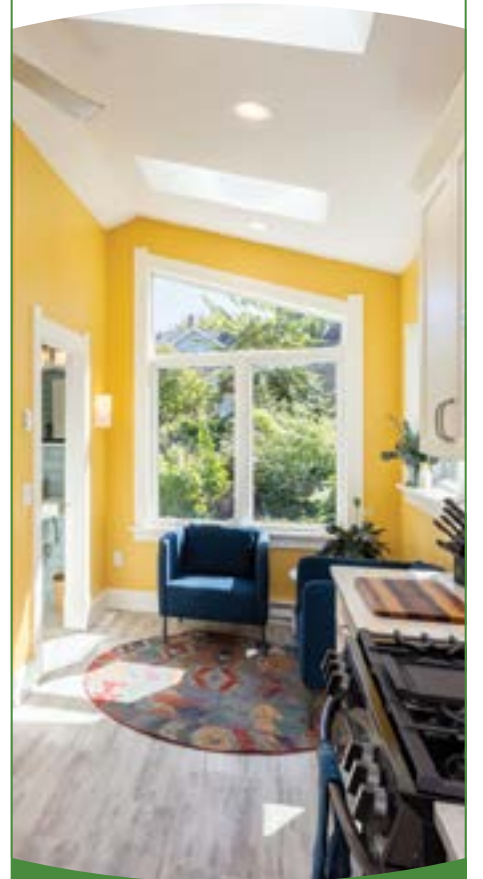


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JUST ENOUGH!

Feel free to purchase just one stalk of celery or broccoli, one bunch of grapes, or one banana.

Produce Staff can cut a cabbage or cauliflower in half for you.

Some restrictions apply.
Feel free to inquire if you have a question!

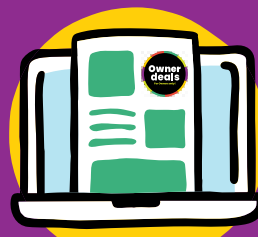
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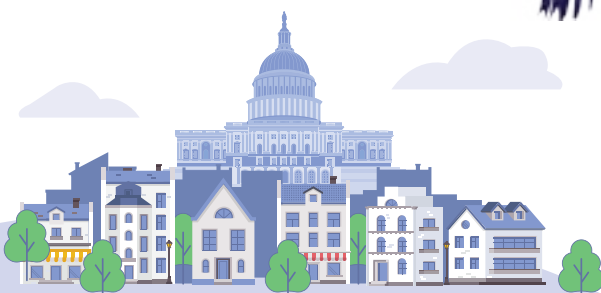
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**By: Anya Firszt,
General Manager**

Hello and welcome, dear Owners, to February 2026; the shortest month of the year, and for some, the sweetest.

February is a busy month at the Co-op as we prepare for the Super Bowl, Mardi Gras, and Valentine’s Day. Whether you celebrate one or all of these occasions, we offer a wide selection of treats, including cheeses, fresh flower bouquets, handmade chocolates, chips, salsa, guacamole, and beverages. Each celebration is a great chance to enjoy good food and friends together.

Another date to think about in February is Wellness Wednesday, February 4, your next opportunity to stock up and save 10% on your wellness products, plus lotions, oils, and body scrubs for giving to that special someone or simply for enjoying yourself.

And finally, in the second half of the month, we plan to showcase our Inclusive Trade vendors, with samples and select items on sale. Reminder: our Inclusive Trade program highlights products from companies owned and operated by individuals from underrepresented groups. Learn more at willystreet.coop/inclusive-trade.

OLD CO-OP GIFT CARDS

Are you saving one of our old Co-op gift cards for a rainy day? Please find them and use them today, or exchange them for a new one. You can’t use the old ones (pictured here) at the registers, and starting this spring, it will take us much longer to determine any remaining balance on these cards. So get your new gift card today!



IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY IN OUR STORES

We have partnered with the company Aira on their Explorer app, which provides an audio interpretation of a person’s surroundings as viewed through a smart phone camera. For example, if a person slowly sweeps their phone in front of them side to side, the app can tell them that there is a sign for restrooms to their right, approximately 20 feet away. The app allows for free AI interpretation or live human interpretation, which is typically for a per-minute

fee, but the Co-op is paying for the human interpretation option inside our stores. For more information, see aira.io.

FY25 PATRONAGE

Again, I am sharing an update about patronage.

Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) was a profitable year. We had net income of \$579,723 before provision for income taxes. This surplus allowed us to continue operating on a sound financial basis and to return a portion of the profit to Owners.

Per bylaw 6.5, your Board of Directors voted to allocate part of the surplus, or profit, as a patronage refund, with a portion distributed as a store credit.

Owners who are receiving a store credit should have already received notification with details about their refund (either by email or USPS mail). Starting on January 12, you can use your store credit towards a purchase, request cash back, or donate it to the Double Dollars program. To ensure that only the primary (or secondary, for household accounts) Owner uses credits, you need to sign for the refund. If you request your store credit as cash, you must provide a photo ID. Owners must claim their patronage store credits by June 28, 2026.

DOES THE CO-OP HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS?

We love nothing more than to keep you informed about what’s going on at the Co-op. If email is your preferred way to receive notifications from us, please make sure we have your current email address. You can update it at Customer Service or by sending an email to ora@willystreet.coop.

In closing, however you choose to celebrate this month, do so with heart and soul.
-Anya

P.S. PBS WISCONSIN GARDEN & GREEN LIVING EXPO

The Co-op is sponsoring and exhibiting at the PBS Wisconsin Garden & Green Living Expo, February 13-15, at the Alliant Energy Center. Stop by our booth and demos and say howdy! Join Chef Mike for some culinary inspiration to help you put those first-of-the-season local veggies to good use on February 13 at 2:30 p.m. and February 14 at 11:30 a.m. at Demo Stage A. We’re also selling tickets to this event through February 11! Learn more about the event at wiggardenexpo.com.



LET’S FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WILLY STREET BOARD COMMITTEES

By: Deb Shapiro, Board Member

Serving on a Board committee is a great way for Owners to get more involved with the Co-op. These committees are established by the Board to delve more deeply into specific areas of the Co-op’s work than the Board as a whole is able to do, as well as supply additional expertise and feedback from Owners. There are three Board committees currently: Board Development, Finance, and Policy Governance.

All of these committees have seats for Co-op Owners, who serve alongside Board members to research and make decisions that can lead to improving processes at the Co-op. You’ll find more description and lists of the committees’ duties on this page (www.willystreet.coop/Ownership/committees/) on the Willy Street Co-op website. As a Board member who just finished a term on the Board Development Committee and is currently serving on Finance, I can tell you a little bit about those two committees’ recent activities.

Prior to the 2025 Board election in October, the Board Development Committee (BDC) worked on improving and

clarifying the application process for those Owners who wished to run for the Board. This included editing the wording of the application packet and discussing the requirements for candidates. Ultimately seven candidates decided to run for the Board in 2025, which is a mark of the success of BDC’s efforts. Nonetheless, after the election BDC spent several meetings analyzing how the election process had gone to try to improve the process even more for next year.

In November, among other things, the Finance Committee looked at quarterly financials, discussed information security, and heard a brief report from the General Manager on updates to the Co-op’s strategic plan that had been approved by the Board at a planning retreat in September. The Committee also reappointed one Owner member and elected a chair.

Owners may also express interest in operational committees, such as the Community Reinvestment Fund (CRF) Committee. This committee evaluates applications from local qualified nonprofit organizations and other co-ops who apply for grant funding.

For most committees, the time commitment is attending one one-hour meeting per month. The CRF committee meets on a much more compressed timeframe in February and March to review grant applications. Owner Committee members receive a 15% discount on their grocery purchases at the Co-op in recognition of their contributions.

If this has gotten you interested in serving on a committee, please visit the committee page on the Willy Street Co-op website (www.willystreet.coop/Ownership/committees/), where you’ll find the committee interest form that you can fill out. Also, watch the Reader for calls for committee members when a committee is actively recruiting.



THE BIG SHARE® IS MARCH 3

By: Community Shares of Wisconsin

The Big Share® is an online day of giving that supports the 82 member nonprofits of Community Shares of Wisconsin. These local nonprofits are working on the causes you care about most including civil liberties, sustainability, LGBTQ+ rights, voting rights, healthy food and farms, criminal justice reform, affordable housing, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

You can support these nonprofits with a donation at thebigshare.org now through March 3.

At a time when our values and democracy are under attack, your support is urgently needed and greatly appreciated. Donations during The Big Share are

an investment in local nonprofits that are challenging systems, holding decision-makers accountable, and keeping democracy alive.

With a minimum donation of only \$5, it is easy to get involved in The Big Share. Visit thebigshare.org to search for nonprofits by name or by cause. A gift to Community Shares supports all member nonprofits.

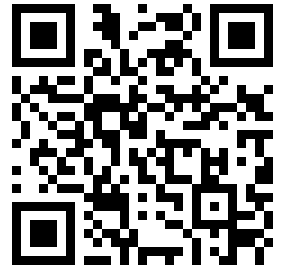
In addition to donating, individuals can become fundraisers for their favorite Community Shares member nonprofit. Fundraisers spread the word about The Big Share by engaging family members, friends, and coworkers. Learn more at communityshares.com/fundraise. The Big Share kicks off at 6pm on March 2 and continues all day on March 3. Tune in to The Big Share Live, a day-long telethon that supports The Big Share, on March 3. The program will be streamed live on thebigshare.org, and will feature local entertainment, prize announcements, engaging discussions about social and environmental justice, and more.

Visit thebigshare.org to learn more and donate.



To register for classes and check out our refund policy, scan the QR code or go to:

www.wilzystreet.coop/events



CULTURE AND CUISINE OF LOUISIANA: BEEF

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Tuesday, February 3, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 13+; adult supervision required
Instructor: Steffry Langham
Fee: \$30 for Owners; \$40 for non-owners
Capacity: 10
Join Steffry to discuss the traditions and history that make Louisiana what it is today. On the menu: Dirty Rice, Grits and Grillades, Original and Po' Boys. Everyone will make a Rustic Rub seasoning packet to take home as well! Recipes contain: eggs and wheat. Demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities.

CREEKSTONE FARMS PORK BELLY

Location: Willy West Community Room
Thursday, February 12, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 12+; adult supervision required
Your Co-op's Own: Mike Tomaloff
Fee: \$30 for Owners; \$40 for non-owners
Capacity: 10
Our friends at the meat counter are eager to share this new product and Chef Mike is excited to share some ideas for preparing it. How about slow roasted and crispy, braised smoky and sweet in a bao bun, and grilled for tacos? We'll try all three, so come hungry! Recipes contain: milk, wheat, soy, eggs. Demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities.

COOKING WITH CHEF PAUL: PLANT-BASED MEALS

Location: Lakeview Library
Thursday, February 12, 6:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 12+; adult supervision required
Your Co-op's Own: Paul Tseng
Fee: Free; registration required
Capacity: 12
Join Chef Paul to learn helpful tips to get started eating more plant-based foods—from setting up your pantry to cooking techniques to replacing animal proteins with plant-based ones to adding more fiber into your daily meals. The options are limitless! Recipes contain: soy and tree nuts. Register at www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/spaces/events/calendar. Registration will open two weeks prior to the program date.

GONE FISHIN': SABLEFISH AND ARCTIC

CHAR

Location: Willy West Community Room
Monday, February 23, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 12+; adult supervision required
Your Co-op's Own: Mike Tomaloff
Fee: \$30 for Owners; \$40 for non-owners
Capacity: 10
Sablefish, also known as black cod or butterfish, has white flesh that is soft in texture and mild in flavor, making it both approachable and versatile. We will serve it with seared mushrooms and a sauce that will complement the richness of the sablefish. Arctic Char is a relative of both salmon and trout, has a flavor that is similar to both, and is medium-firm of flesh that is anywhere between light pink and deep red, and will be delicious with wild rice fritters and seared greens. Recipes contain: milk, eggs, wheat, fish. Demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities.

GONE FISHIN': RAINBOW TROUT AND SKATEWING

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Tuesday, February 24, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 12+; adult supervision required
Your Co-op's Own: Mike Tomaloff
Fee: \$30 for Owners; \$40 for non-owners
Capacity: 10
Rainbow trout is tender and has a mild, nutty flavor that lends itself well to pan frying with a crust of hazelnuts. Skate, a relative of sharks and rays, has a mild, sweet, and buttery flavor, which is often compared to scallops or crab, which is exactly what they feed on in the wild. A light dusting of flour and a pan of hot oil is all you need to cook this delectable white-fleshed fish, which we will serve with little potatoes and an herb broth. Recipes contain: tree nuts, milk, eggs, wheat, and fish. Demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities.

COOKING WITH CHEF PAUL: TAIWANESE STREET FOOD—WATER-FRIED BUNS

Location: Willy West Community Room
Thursday, February 26, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 12+; adult supervision required
Your Co-op's Own: Paul Tseng
Fee: \$30 for Owners; \$40 for non-owners
Capacity: 10
Delicious buns water-fried in a pan?! This unique technique showcases how to enjoy tasty buns even without a steamer. Join Chef Paul in this cooking class for a demonstration on how to make this Taiwanese street food from scratch. Recipes contain: seafood and wheat. Demonstration only.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES OF GUMBO: SPANISH

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Tuesday, March 3, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 13+; adult supervision required

Instructor: Steffry Langham

Fee: \$30 for Owners; \$40 for non-owners

Capacity: 10

We will explore the history, culture, and foods that made Louisiana a true melting pot. We will explore by ingredients and/or culture, sampling foods that contributed to the main dish of the state, Gumbo. Join Steffry to discuss the traditions and history that make Louisiana what it is today. On the menu: Cajun Paella, Pistolettes, and Creole Empanadas. Everyone will make a Spanish seasoning packet to take home as well! Recipes contain: shellfish and wheat. Demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities.

TAPAS MADE EASY

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Thursday, March 12, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 12+; adult supervision required
Your Co-op's Own: Mike Tomaloff
Fee: \$30 for Owners; \$40 for non-owners
Capacity: 10
Tapas, meze, antipasti, dim sum, whatever you call it, small plate dining is a great way to entertain a group with an abundance of variety. In this cooking class, we will make several foods for entertaining that not only complement one another, but also vary in prep time and complexity to keep your kitchen humming along without wearing you out before the party! On the menu: Gambas al Ajillo (shrimp in garlic sauce), Matrimonio Montadito (open-faced little sandwiches), and Papas Bravas (roasted fingerling potatoes with aioli). Recipes contain: fish, milk, eggs, and wheat. Demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities.

COOKING WITH CHEF PAUL: COOKING WITHOUT GLUTEN

Location: Lakeview Library
Thursday, March 12, 6:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 12+; adult supervision required
Your Co-op's Own: Paul Tseng
Fee: Free; registration required
Capacity: 12
Removing gluten from our cooking is a challenge, but it is doable. Join Chef Paul to learn to make classic dishes—all without gluten. There is always a solution in the kitchen! Recipes include: eggs. Register at www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/events. Registration will open two weeks prior to the program date.

COOKING WITH CHEF PAUL: TAIWANESE STREET FOOD—BRAISED DUCK WITH RICE NOODLES

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Thursday, March 19, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 12+; adult supervision required
Your Co-op's Own: Paul Tseng
Fee: \$30 for Owners; \$40 for non-owners

Capacity: 10

A tender braised duck with its broth, shredded vegetables, and rice noodles is a staple street food in Taiwan. Join Chef Paul in this cooking class to explore the process of making this delicious dish from scratch and presented right in front of our classroom table. Recipes contain: wheat. Demonstration only.

CHALLENGING CHEESES

Location: Willy West Community Room
Monday, March 23, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 12+; adult supervision required
Your Co-op's Own: Mike Tomaloff
Fee: \$30 for Owners; \$40 for non-owners
Capacity: 10
Cheddar, Swiss, Colby, all easy and approachable, almost any cheesehead wouldn't say no to one of these, but what about cheese that's a little more challenging? Salty and rich Bleu d'Auvergne, redolent with the aroma of an old trunk from grandma's attic. Foxglove from Tulip Tree Creamery is a favorite from our cheese man, Dan, described as creamy, salty, and earthy, bearing an "orange-colored rind, which is sticky and develops from a mixture of yeast, salt, and beer." Finally, it wouldn't be a stanky cheese hangout if we didn't invite the king: buttery rich and potentially off-puttingly pungent Limburger. We'll try all of these stinkers and more, straight up and some paired with a recipe like Foxglove in a warm spinach salad with toasted walnuts, a bleu cheese sauce perfect with garlic toasts or over beef. Join Chef Mike and fearlessly face some funky fromage. Recipes contain: milk, tree nuts, wheat. Demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities.

SOUPS AND STEWS: BISQUES

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Tuesday, March 24, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 12+; adult supervision required
Your Co-op's Own: Mike Tomaloff
Fee: \$30 for Owners; \$40 for non-owners
Capacity: 10
Traditionally, a classic bisque described a shellfish-based soup, thickened with a puree of crustacean shells and rice. Today, the term generally applies to soups thickened by being fully or partially pureed. In this cooking class, we will go old school and make a traditional French bisque of crab and shrimp, garnished with herbs and croutons. Then we'll jump ahead to more modern times and prepare a bisque of mushrooms and tomato. Finally, an improvised soup based on seasonal vegetables that Chef Mike will prepare from scratch and without a recipe. Recipes contain: fish, milk, wheat, and shellfish. Demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities.



BALANCING BLOOD PRESSURE

Location: Zoom
Wednesday, February 18, 12:00pm–1:00pm
Instructor: Katy Wallace, ND
Fee: Free; registration required
Capacity: 50
To succeed in lowering blood pressure naturally, it helps to combine proper dietary changes with natural supplements and activities. Join Katy Wallace, Naturopathic Doctor, of Human Nature, LLC, in a presentation of multiple strategies to lower blood pressure.

FOOD-BASED CLEANSING

Location: Zoom
Wednesday, March 11, 12:00pm–1:00pm
Instructor: Katy Wallace, ND
Fee: Free; registration required
Capacity: 50
With spring just around the corner, learn new ways to get healthy by assisting the body’s major elimination and toxin-removing organs (liver, kidneys, and digestive tract) with food and herbs that allow for internal cleansing. Think of cleansing for internal organs as the counterpart to washing your hair or brushing your teeth; these activities keep you healthy and vibrant.



SPROUTS: I DIP, YOU DIP, WE DIP

Location: Willy West Community Room
Tuesday, February 10, 4:00pm–5:00pm
Ages: 5-12; adult supervision not required
Your Co-op’s Own: Mike Tomaloff
Fee: \$15 for first child of Owner (\$12.50 for each additional child); \$25 for each child of non-owner
Capacity: 10
Roll up those sleeves ‘cuz this might get a little messy. The Sprouts are getting together again to roll some truffles and make some bon bons to dip and enrobe in some delicious Fair Trade chocolate from the Co-op. We’ll make traditional chocolate ganache truffles, salted caramel chocolates, and some creamy coconut balls! We’ll eat a few, and you can take some home for your Valentine, too! Recipes contain: milk. Hands-on.

SPROUTS: TANGHULU

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Thursday, February 26, 4:00pm–5:00pm
Ages: 5-12; adult supervision not required
Your Co-op’s Own: Mike Tomaloff
Fee: \$15 for first child of Owner (\$12.50 for each additional child); \$25 for each child of non-owner
Capacity: 10
Tanghulu, fresh fruit coated in a hard

sugar shell, has been a big hit online lately and has been a popular treat in China since the Song Dynasty, 1000 years ago! It’s easy and fun to make, looks really cool, and is of course very tasty. Mr. T. will guide the Sprouts to carefully prepare the sugar, skewer our fruits, dip them in the sugar and quickly plunge them into icy water. Recipes contain no allergens. Hands-on.

SPROUTS: BOBA? YOU BETCHAI!

Location: Willy West Community Room
Tuesday, March 10, 4:00pm–5:00pm
Ages: 5-12; adult supervision not required
You’re gonna need a big straw to get all those squishy boba pearls from the bottom of your cup! Fortunately, Mr. T has a stash of them and all the fixings to make our own brown sugar boba teas at home! Recipes contain: milk (non-dairy milk option available). Hands-on.

SPROUTS: POP DON'T STOP

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St
Thursday, March 26, 4:00pm–5:00pm
Ages: 5-12; adult supervision not required
Your Co-op’s Own: Mike Tomaloff
Fee: \$15 for first child of Owner (\$12.50 for each additional child); \$25 for each child of non-owner
Capacity: 10
Join Mr. T. and the Sprouts to make popcorn the old-fashioned way, in a big pot—no microwave required! We’ll pop some up and turn some into popcorn balls to take home, some we’ll drizzle with chocolate, and then we’ll snack on some classic buttery, salty popcorn with a sweet beverage. Recipes contain: milk and tree nuts. Hands-on.



45-MINUTE INDIVIDUAL NUTRITION CONSULTATIONS

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Wednesday, February 4, 1:30pm–4:45pm
Wednesday, March 18, 1:30pm–4:45pm
Location: Willy West Community Room
Tuesday, March 3, 1:30pm–4:45pm
Virtual:
Wednesday, March 4, 1:30pm–4:45pm
Fee: \$55 for Owners; \$90 for non-owners
An individual nutrition consultation is your opportunity to learn how the correct food choices for your body can enhance your well-being. A one-on-one session with Katy Wallace of Human Nature includes a 45-minute consultation regarding your health goals, as well as lifestyle and food choice suggestions geared toward addressing health goals and developing sustainable change. Appointments are confirmed upon payment. Payment is due at the time of scheduling; otherwise, the appointment will be released to other interested parties. Payment is non-refundable and non-transferable unless notice of cancellation or rescheduling is provided seven (7) or more days prior. To register for the next available opening, email info@humannaturellc.com or call 608-301-9961.

Classes provided by Willy Street Co-op are not designed to and do not provide medical advice, professional diagnosis, opinion, treatment, or services. Classes are for informational and educational purposes only and are not meant to replace medical consultation with your physician.



SUCRE BON: SWEET TREATS OF LOUISIANA

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Tuesday, February 10, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 13+, adult supervision required
Instructor: Steffry Langham
Fee: \$30 for Owners; \$40 for non-owners
Capacity: 10
We will explore the wonderful staple sweets of Louisiana. We’ll discuss the history of these famous sweets and the cultural influence or origin. Steffry will discuss traditions and history that make Louisiana what it is today. Prepare your sweet tooth and get ready for the Fais Do Do. Recipes contain: milk, eggs, tree nuts, peanuts, and wheat. Demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities.

BAKING WITH CHEF PAUL: KASUTERA (CASTELLA CAKE)
Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Thursday, February 19, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 12+; adult supervision required
Your Co-op’s Own: Paul Tseng
Fee: \$30 for Owners; \$40 for non-owners
Capacity: 10
This is a Portuguese-originated cake developed in Japan during the 16th century. We will make it tasty as it is and was. We will also serve it with green tea, whipped cream, red bean paste, fruits and chocolate ganache. Come and join us for a wonderful treat. Recipes contain: egg, wheat. Demonstration.

USING SOURDOUGH IN EVERYDAY RECIPES

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Saturday, March 21, 9:00am–11:00am
Location: Willy West Community Room
Monday, March 30, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 12+; adult supervision required
Instructor: Wendy Porterfield
Fee: \$40 for Owners; \$50 for non-owners
Capacity: 12
Maybe you have a sourdough starter and know how to make bread, but what about the other things you can do with both active starter and “discard?” Come learn to use sourdough in everyday cooking and baking. Taste test and get experience making some classics—sour-dough pizza dough, tortillas, pancakes, and muffins. All materials are provided, and everyone will take home pizza and tortilla dough. Recipes contain: milk, eggs, and wheat. Hands-on.

Are you enrolled in the Access Program?



It's that time of year to renew your Access participation!

Willy Street Co-op will be sending out renewal notifications to all current Access Owners at their email address on file or their last known mailing address.

To avoid a lapse in your enrollment, please stop by one of our Customer Service desks by March 31st, 2026 to fill out your renewal form.

Have a question?

Please contact our Owner Records Administrator at 608-284-7794 or ora@willystreet.coop.

General information about the Access Program can be found at the Customer Service desk and at www.willystreet.coop/access



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willy street co-op



COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT FUND PROGRESS REPORTS

By: Liz Hawley, Education and Outreach Coordinator

With the New Year comes the new cycle of Community Reinvestment Fund (CRF) grant applications, decisions, and awards—an exciting time of year! Before we dive into the 2026 grant cycle, I'd like to share a report on the progress made by recipient organizations last year with the funds awarded to them through the Co-op's grant program.

Grants provide for local endeavors that are innovative, hands-on, and educational, impact a large group of people, reach out to underserved populations, create jobs or develop skills, foster social engagement, and offer opportunities for diversifying partnerships, collaboration, and entrepreneurialism.

All organizations that receive awards provide progress reports to the Co-op about their funded projects. Here are the stories we received this past year.

BIKES FOR KIDS WISCONSIN

Bikes for Kids Wisconsin's Bike to Work program addresses a critical barrier to employment and food access—transportation. Grant funding provided 50 individuals with reliable bicycles, safety gear, maintenance training, and one year of free service support. Here is one story their team shared from the field: "A participant referred through JustDane shared that before receiving a bike, he spent over an hour each way walking to work. With his new bike, he now saves that time to pick up groceries for his family and attend evening classes."

COURAGEOUS JOURNEYS BACKPACKING

This organization supports female veterans through nature-based therapy, and they embarked on their first guided backpacking trip this past summer. They reported that the trip fulfilled all of its intended outcomes—building community, providing supportive environments, and creating space for reflection through this shared experience. One participant noted that the backpacking trip "was one of the most powerful and grounding experiences of my life. [The organizers] created a space that felt both adventurous and healing—a rare and beautiful experience."

THE CREATOR'S COTTAGE

The Creator's Cottage is a maker space in Madison serving the educational and career development needs of women artists. Their mission is to "transform the lives of women, children, and families of color through social action theatre, literary, and creative arts." CRF grant funding helped them launch a monthly newsletter, which in turn has had a positive impact on their participation numbers and increased their community involvement.

DANENET, INC.

DANenet's "Calming Computer Jitters" class provides professional digital skills instruction to a group of Black elders at Mt. Zion Baptist Church (MTZ). On average, 38 elders attend each class, learning skills such as password safety, accessing online resources (e.g., MyChart and Madison Public Library), and using FaceTime and Zoom. DANenet staff said, "As we continue to address issues of inequality created by the digital divide, we hope to cultivate and create more partnerships with organizations like MTZ to create strong community-centered learning spaces."

EASTMORLAND COMMUNITY CENTER

Eastmorland Community Center serves approximately 40 families per month, and with grant funding, they purchased additional produce from Lansing Street Veggies and Los Jalapeños CSA. Jennica Skoug of Lansing Street Veggies said, "The program has been very helpful and meaningful for me as a farmer, because I am able to utilize more of the produce that I grow. I would likely donate some of the extras anyway, but it is amazing, in a low-margin business (especially for me as a very tiny farm) to make some income from this produce. It helps a lot, and I'm glad it helps the community too."

ELVER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

The neighborhood center staff successfully met their goal to serve a daily hot, nutritious meal to the 78 kids participating in the summer camp program. The staff noted, "We're proud to have delivered healthy, hot meals every day. The meals nourished more than just kids; they helped feed relationships, trust, and community."

EYES OF HOPE, STOUGHTON

The Hope Grows initiative engaged youth in hands-on gardening, harvesting, and salsa-making at the Lowell Park Community Garden in Stoughton. The Eyes of Hope staff said, "The season was full of spontaneous opportunities to connect with friends who were visiting the park."

FRIENDS OF SCHUMACHER FARM

Grant funding allowed the Friends of Schumacher Farm to increase their heirloom garden from 254 square feet to 4,354 square feet, which in turn translated to a great increase in the amount of food they provided to the food pantry. And while their goal was to involve 1,000 school children in garden-related programming, they ended up involving more than 2,500 children! They stated, "The gardens are managed

entirely by volunteers. We welcome either individual volunteers interested in helping on a regular basis with a team of other garden volunteers, or a group of volunteers interested in a one-time project."

KENNEDY HEIGHTS COMMUNITY CENTER (KHCC)

KHCC's Food Equity Program was designed to help cover the ongoing costs of staple items, primarily milk and eggs, in their weekly food pantry, to sustain consistent access to more than 100 households, and to help offset funding cuts. The grant funding provided milk and eggs as a one-time emergency response when these staple items became difficult to secure.

LOV INC.

LOV Inc.'s Mind & Body Wellness for Adults with Disabilities project introduced wellness activities that are accessible, fun, and beneficial. These activities included adaptive fitness, bird watching, and art. The interest has been steady, and LOV Inc. plans to increase the variety of activities with yoga and dance classes.

LUSSIER COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER (LCEC)

LCEC launched a weekly senior meal program to address both food insecurity and social isolation. LCEC staff mentioned, "The seniors who attend regularly have become a support system for one another. What is especially meaningful about this is that they do not all speak the same language. We have older adults who speak Spanish, French, English, and Arabic—yet they all converse together." Community members who would like to volunteer to support the Senior Lunch can email Hannah at Hannah@lcecmadison.org.

MADWORC

Madison Workers' Cooperative received funding for language translation, allowing them to connect with and foster the growth of Spanish-speaking worker cooperatives in the Madison area, as well as help develop Spanish-language materials for their Peer Network.

MIDWEST LINEN REVIVAL

Midwest Linen Revival (MLR) was founded to provide access to locally and sustainably grown flax and processed linen. Their inaugural Field to Frock festival celebrated local fiber and slow fashion. The interest and response to the festival showed a strong interest in the local fibershed!

OPEN FOUNDATION

Grant funding supported the creation of interactive, affirming spaces at OPEN Foundation's LGBTQIA+ Career Summit. The event connected LGBTQIA+ individuals with inclusive job opportunities while creating a

space for healing, joy, and professional empowerment. They reported, "One participant told us they had never attended a career fair before because they feared judgment. At our event, they connected with an employer, tried on a suit from the gender-affirming clothing closet, and said they 'felt so much more confident in the room.'"

MADISON AREA FOOD PANTRY GARDENS (MAFPG)

MAFPG concluded its 25th season of growing and gleaning produce to support food pantries throughout Dane County. Grant funding enabled them to construct a greenhouse, which will extend their growing season. The greenhouse will be used for plant propagation nine months of the year, and in addition, it provides space to cure fall produce, as well as space to host volunteers in rainy or muddy conditions.

MADISON NORTHSIDE PLANNING COUNCIL

Madison Northside Planning Council operates FEED Kitchens, a shared-use commercial kitchen/food business incubator. Grant funding allowed them to purchase heavy-duty rack storage, storage rack security enclosures, Vulcan stock pot ranges, and utility carts. Staff noted, "None of these items are particularly glamorous, but they are essential nuts and bolts items that make for a well-functioning kitchen. With 90+ entrepreneurs and community groups calling FEED Kitchens home, equipment and resources that help maintain a smooth flow through the facility are worth their weight in gold to us."

ROOTED

Rooted reported that they are extremely pleased with the outcomes of their project to bring electricity to their greenhouse! The electricity helped not only the function of the greenhouse for the farmers they support, but also enhanced the success of their fundraising efforts. This infrastructure allowed them to host local bands, keep pizzas warm in the electrical warming stations for Pizza Nights, and provide opportunities for on-site cooking and lighting for evening events.

THANK YOU!

Each year, we look forward to reading about the innovative projects our local nonprofits propose, and hearing about the successes when projects come to fruition is even more inspiring! For us, another grant cycle has come to a close, but the work of these nonprofits never ends. Thank you to all these organizations for the impactful work you do for the communities you serve! Thanks, also, to the Owners who have left the Co-op and opted to donate their equity to charitable purposes—this funding is possible because of your generosity—thank you! In April we'll share the 2026 grant recipients.



Photo courtesy of Midwest Linen Revival

Recipes







VALENTINE'S DAY MENU

By: Nick Heitman,
Meat, Seafood, Beer, Wine
& Spirits Category Manager

First Course

CLASSIC CAESAR SALAD

ROMAINE, CAESAR DRESSING, CRISPY PARMESAN CROUTON

OR

SHRIMP COCKTAIL

CHILLED OLD BAY SEASONED GULF SHRIMP, COCKTAIL SAUCE, LEMON

PAIR WITH THREE BY WADE CHENIN BLANC
OR MOUNT FISHTAIL SAUVIGNON BLANC ZERO (NA)

Second Course

GRASS-FED BEEF FILET

TARRAGON COMPOUND BUTTER, CAULIFLOWER PUREE

OR

WILD-CAUGHT SABLEFISH

MISO, SOY, BABY BOK CHOY

PAIR WITH PRISMA PINOT NOIR
OR NEWBLOOD RED BLEND (NA)

Third Course

WILLY STREET CO-OP
ESPRESSO SWIRL BROWNIE

RICH, FUDGY, WITH AN ESPRESSO SWIRL. MADE WITHOUT GLUTEN.

OR

WILLY STREET CO-OP
PEANUT BUTTER PIE SLICE

SMOOTH, CREAMY PEANUT BUTTER FILLING WITH A RICH, CHOCOLATE CRUST

OR

CHOCOLATE-DIPPED STRAWBERRIES

PAIR WITH ANTECH EMOTION SPARKLING ROSE
OR LEITZ EINS ZWEI ZERO SPARKLING RIESLING (NA)

VALENTINE’S DAY FLOWERS

- HALF DOZEN ROSE BOUQUET \$15.99
- DOZEN ROSE BOUQUET \$29.99
- WILDFLOWERS BOUQUET \$9.99
- BEE GRATEFUL BOUQUET \$14.99
- BEE SWEET BOUQUET \$24.99
- VALENTINE’S DAY BOUQUETS \$14.99–\$26.99



Ingredients for Dressing:
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
Juice of 1 lemon
½ tsp kosher salt
½ tsp black pepper
2 tbsp Dijon mustard
1 large egg yolk
3 anchovy fillets
2 garlic cloves
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce



CLASSIC CAESAR SALAD

Serves 2

Dressing Preparation:

Combine all ingredients except olive oil in blender, and blend on low speed until all ingredients are incorporated. With blender running, slowly and steadily add olive oil until fully combined.

Parmesan Crouton Preparation:

Preheat oven to 400°F. On a silicone mat-lined baking sheet, scoop heaping tablespoons of grated Parmesan at 4-inch intervals, as many as you'd like! Bake for 3-5 minutes. Allow to cool before removing with a thin spatula and serving.

Salad Preparation:

Rinse 2 heads of romaine lettuce, and chop into 1 inch pieces. In a large mixing bowl, toss the lettuce with enough dressing to fully coat the greens. Serve the salad topped with Parmesan croutons and more freshly grated Parmesan.

Ingredients for Cocktail Sauce:
1 cup ketchup
2 tbsp prepared horseradish
Juice of ½ lemon
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce

Ingredients for Shrimp:
1 lb 16/20 shell-on gulf shrimp, peeled and deveined
½ lemon
4 tbsp Old Bay Seasoning

Ingredients for Compound Butter:
1 stick softened unsalted butter
1 tbsp finely minced fresh tarragon
1 tbsp finely minced shallot
1 tsp kosher salt
1 tsp black pepper

Ingredients for Cauliflower Puree:
½ head of cauliflower, cut into florets
1 large shallot, roughly chopped
2 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
1 ½ cups heavy cream or stock (or a combination of both)
2 sprigs fresh thyme



SHRIMP COCKTAIL

Serves 2

Cocktail Sauce Preparation:

Mix all ingredients until well incorporated.

Shrimp Preparation:

Bring 3 quarts of water to a rolling boil. Once boiling, stir in Old Bay Seasoning, and toss in the lemon. Add the shrimp and cook for 20-30 seconds, until the shrimp are opaque and lightly pink. Immediately remove the shrimp from the boiling water and place in an ice water bath until chilled. Serve ice cold with cocktail sauce and lemon wedges.

GRASS-FED BEEF FILET WITH CAULIFLOWER PUREE & TARRAGON COMPOUND BUTTER

Serves 2

Compound Butter Preparation:

Combine all ingredients and mix until incorporated. Using a rubber spatula, remove butter onto a sheet of parchment or plastic wrap. Form the butter into a log and tie at either end. Place in the freezer until hardened, then slice into coins for serving.

Cauliflower Puree Preparation:

In a large sauce pan, heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil over medium heat. Add cauliflower, stirring occasionally until well browned. Add shallot and garlic until fragrant. Reduce heat to low and add cream or stock and thyme sprigs, and simmer until cauliflower is fork-tender and liquid has slightly reduced. Remove from heat and discard thyme sprigs. Add cauliflower and cooking liquid to a blender or use an immersion blender, and puree until smooth.

Grass-Fed Beef Filet Preparation:

Season a 6-8oz filet liberally with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper. Preheat oven to 400°F. Add 2 tablespoons of oil to a cast iron or heavy stainless steel skillet until almost smoking. Sear filet for 1 minute on each side, and place the pan in the oven to finish, 5-7 minutes for medium rare. Remove from pan and allow to rest on cutting board for 5 minutes before slicing. Serve sliced steak over cauliflower puree and top with 1 or 2 slices of compound butter.

WILD-CAUGHT MISO MARINATED SABLEFISH WITH BOK CHOY

Serves 2

Miso Marinated Sablefish Preparation:

Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Marinate sablefish portions for 1-2 hours. Roast sablefish on a parchment lined sheet tray at 400°F for 10-12 minutes. Serve with steamed baby bok choy and cauliflower puree.

CHOCOLATE-DIPPED STRAWBERRIES

Serves 2

Preparation:

Melt 10-12 oz of your favorite semi-sweet chocolate (I like the Equal Exchange chips, available in the Bulk department!) over a double-boiler or microwave. Dip strawberries in the tempered chocolate and place on a parchment-lined sheet tray. Before the chocolate hardens, you sprinkle on extra ingredients, like chopped nuts or crumbled graham crackers, and allow the chocolate to harden before serving.

Ingredients:
12 oz of semi-sweet chocolate
1 lb strawberries





INCLUSIVE TRADE VENDORS

By: Melissa Reiss, Purchasing Assistant

Willy Street Co-op's Inclusive Trade program is dedicated to featuring products from businesses that are at least 51% owned, controlled, and operated by individuals from the following historically underrepresented groups: Women, Black, Indigenous, and/or Persons of Color, LGBTQIA+ people, Veterans, Persons with disabilities

By spotlighting these Inclusive Trade vendors, we aim to achieve several goals: to help customers easily find products that align with their values, to drive increased business to these diverse vendors, and to advance the co-op's overall diversity, equity, and inclusion objectives for our vendors and customers. Here are a few Inclusive Trade vendors you'll find at your Co-op.

MOCK & CO



- Inclusive Trade Recognition: BIPOC-Owned
- Business Location: Madison, WI
- Available at your Co-op since: 2025

In Wisconsin, we appreciate a good drink. Mock & Co crafts their non-alcoholic Old Fashioneds to keep that tradition alive, minus the hangover. These are full-bodied, complex mocktails—not watered-down substitutes. Made in small batches, their rich, balanced Old Fashioneds are a nostalgic nod to Wisconsin's cocktail culture, perfect for anyone cutting back, staying dry, or sober-curious. Enjoy the taste of tradition, without the buzz. For more information, see mockandco.com.



CEDAR TEETH



- Inclusive Trade Recognition: Woman-Owned
- Business Location: Milwaukee, WI
- Available at your Co-op since: 2017

Hannah Roland's journey to entrepreneurship began in North Dakota, where she was the family cook. After moving to Bay View, Wisconsin in 2007, she gained valuable business dedication and experience while working at a local restaurant. This led her to establish her own business, Cedar Teeth.

Hannah makes vegan and vegetarian sourdough pizzas, creating her own crusts from scratch, assembling and packaging everything by hand. She also developed a meat substitute, the Thunderbird, after experimenting with alternative recipes at home. Made from chickpeas and flavorings, the "alterna-meat" is known for its smoky flavor and pulled pork texture. Hannah achieves this texture through a long kneading process, pressure cooking, and finishing the product in a smoker for a BBQ essence.

Find her delicious pizzas and meat alternatives in the freezer aisle! For more information, see www.facebook.com/thecedarteeth.

MANGO MAN COOKS!



- Inclusive Trade Recognition: BIPOC-Owned
- Business Location: Madison, WI
- Available at your Co-op since: 2018

Chef Thony Clarke—aka, The Mango Man—established his first venture in Madison, Wisconsin with the Café Costa Rica food cart. Over the next ten years, his business flourished, expanding from the food cart to a small restaurant on Butler Street, and then to a larger location on Williamson Street.

Chef Thony has been working on perfecting his signature sauce—his Mango Man Salsa, a blend of tomato, habaneros, herbs and spices—for years. It perfectly balances sweet, tangy, and spicy. It's sunshine in a jar with just the right heat. Great with chips, grilled shrimp, or tacos—it adds a bold twist to anything.

He is frequently in the stores, doing demos for folks to try his creations. For more information, see elcafecostarica.com/mango-man-cooks.



TORTILLERIA ZEPEDA



- Inclusive Trade Recognition: Woman- and BIPOC-Owned
- Business Location: Lone Rock, WI
- Available at your Co-op since: 2020

Julian and Heidi Zepeda founded their tortilleria in Lone Rock, Wisconsin, to fill a serious lack of authentic Mexican corn tortillas. Julian, drawing on family tradition and apprenticeship with Mexico's top tortilleros, perfected the pre-Hispanic nixtamalization process of soaking and cooking dried corn. They prioritize local, organic Wisconsin corn, supporting the local food system.

Heidi, a Wisconsin native, met Julian, a marine biologist, in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Upon moving to Madison, Julian noticed the missing authenticity in local tacos was the tortilla. Observing the abundance of corn in Wisconsin, he asked Heidi why no one was making fresh corn tortillas. This question in 2018 sparked their venture.

Julian's passion for food developed from helping his mother and grandmother. Confident with his family's remote support, he aimed to recreate the authentic tortilla he grew up with, and master the pre-Hispanic nixtamalization for the most authentic Mexican tortilla. For more information, see tortilleriazepeda.com.



DRIFTLESS PROVISIONS



- Inclusive Trade Recognition: Veteran-Owned
- Business Location: Viroqua, WI
- Available at your Co-op since: 2016

Driftless Provisions celebrates the connection between land, animals, farmers, and people through old-world charcuterie crafted in southwestern Wisconsin's Driftless Region.

Owner, founder, and veteran Ryan honed his salami craft, initially in a root cellar. Inspired by the local landscape, he combined his love for the outdoors, land stewardship, and food to craft salami from local hogs and wild game, fostering connection through shared stories and food.

Today, the team creates premium products that honor the land, animals, and farmers. In 2022, they transitioned to entirely nitrate-free products for the cleanest, healthiest options.

Thoughtful sourcing is a top priority for Driftless Provisions. Products are handcrafted with real ingredients, free of artificial additives. They exclusively source humanely raised, heritage breed Berkshire hogs free of antibiotics and growth hormones, and use local grass-fed beef, honey, and maple syrup. Come find their sausage, brats, and other cured meats at the Co-op! For more information, see driftlessprovisions.com.

FOUR ELEMENTS ORGANIC HERBALS



- Inclusive Trade Recognition: Women-Owned
- Business Location: Milwaukee, WI
- Available at your Co-op since: 1990

Jane Hawley Stevens, a pioneer in organic farming and the natural product industry, founded Four Elements Organic Herbals in 1987. After earning her horticulture degree from UW-Madison in 1981, Jane initially specialized in designing herb gardens, which led to exploring their uses in cooking and home remedies.

That led to the Four Elements Organic Herbals product line, which is now sold throughout the country. The herbs are grown and harvested on her 130-acre farm in the Baraboo Bluff region of Wisconsin, and the products are handmade by a dedicated team of local women.

Find herbal teas, tinctures, soaps, salves, lip balms—all Certified Organic—at the Co-op! For more information, see fourelementsherbals.com. We'll be sharing our table at the PBS Wisconsin Garden & Green Living Expo, February 13-15, with Four Elements, so stop by if you're there—you might get to meet Jane herself!



To learn about more the Inclusive Trade program at your Co-op, go to www.willystreet.coop/inclusive-trade

= Inclusive Trade = Local



Aura Cacia
Mineral Bath
2.5 oz • Save \$3.79 on 2
Buy One, Get One
FREE

Badger
Lip Balm 
Select Varieties
.15 oz • Save \$3.49 on 2
Buy One, Get One
FREE



evanhealy
Rose Vetiver Moisturizer
1.4 fl oz • Save \$10.00
\$38.99



Endangered Species Chocolate
Chocolate Bar
3 oz • Save \$1.50
\$3.79



Tony's Chocolonely
Chocolate Bars
6.35 oz • Save \$1.80
\$5.49



Olipop
Prebiotic Soda
12 fl oz • Save 29¢
\$2.00

Hu Kitchen
Organic Chocolate Bars
2.1 oz • Save \$1.50
\$4.49



Chocolove
Chocolate Bars
2.9-3.2 oz • Save \$1.49
\$3.50



Honey Mama's
Cacao Nectar Bar
2.5 oz • Save \$1.10
\$4.39



talenti
Gelato
Select Varieties
16 fl oz • Save \$1.00
\$4.99



FEBRUARY 4–17



Chickapea Pasta 
Organic Chickpea Pasta
8 oz • Save \$4.79 on 2
Buy One, Get One FREE



Bitchin' Sauce
Almond Dip
8 oz • Save \$6.99 on 2
Buy One, Get One FREE



Bobo's
Oat Bars
2.5–3 oz • Save \$2.99 on 2
Buy One, Get One FREE



The Good Crisp Company
Potato Crisps
Select Varieties
5.6 oz • Save \$4.79 on 2
Buy One, Get One FREE



Against the Grain
Pepperoni Pizza
24 oz • Save \$13.99 on 2
Buy One, Get One FREE



Jeff's Naturals
Sliced Tamed Jalapeño Peppers
12 oz • Save \$3.49 on 2
Buy One, Get One FREE



Annie's Homegrown
Organic Macaroni & Cheese
6 oz • Save \$1.79
\$3.00

Frontera
Salsa
16 oz • Save \$1.00
\$3.99

Organic Valley
Organic Shredded Cheese
6 oz • Save 50¢
\$4.99 



Baba's
Hummus
10 oz • Save \$1.29
\$3.50

Kite Hill
Plant-Based Queso Dip
8 oz • Save \$1.00
\$3.79

Gaia Herbs
Turmeric Supreme Extra Strength
60 cap • Save \$11.00
\$21.99



Alaffia
EveryDay Shea Body Wash
32 fl oz • Save \$3.50
\$11.99 

Laoban
Dumplings
8 oz • Save \$2.00
\$4.99

Booda Organic
Organic Booda Butter Daily Moisturizer
2.3 oz • Save \$5.00
\$8.99 



Muir Glen
Organic Tomatoes
28 oz • Save \$3.49–\$3.99
\$3.00

Spry
Xylitol Gum
100 pc • Save \$1.00
\$7.99

HiBAR
Shampoo Bar
3.2 oz • Save \$4.00
\$8.99



The Honey Pot
Tampons
18 ct • Save \$1.50
\$6.99

***Sale + Coupon**
save \$2 more with a coupon!

Tom's of Maine
Whole Care Toothpaste
4 oz • Save \$2.00
\$5.99

Quorn
Meatless ChiQin Nuggets
10.6 oz • Save \$1.79
\$4.50



Cascadian Farm
Organic Fruit
8–10 oz • Save \$2.99
\$4.00

Jason
Body Wash
30 fl oz • Save \$3.00
\$10.49

Kettle Brand
Potato Chips
13 oz • Save \$1.80
\$4.99



Sales on this page valid February 4–February 17, 2026.
All sales and coupons subject to availability. Sales quantities limited.



Nordic Naturals
Ultimate Omega
60 ct • Save \$8.00

\$21.99



Siggi's
Plant-Based Yogurt
5.3 oz • Save 60¢

\$1.59

Pacific Foods
Organic Soup
16.1–16.5 oz • Save \$1.50–\$1.80

\$3.99



Jackson's
Avocado Oil Sweet Potato Chips
5 oz • Save 79¢

\$3.50 **L**



Udi's
Gluten-Free Millet Chia Bread
14.2 oz • Save \$1.80

\$5.49



Oatly
Oat Milk
64 fl oz • Save 50¢

\$4.49



Ripple Foods
Plant-Based Milk
48 fl oz • Save 50¢

\$4.79

Gardein
Plant-Based Meatballs
12.7 oz • Save \$1.99

\$4.50



Lucini Italia
Organic Pasta Sauce
24 oz • Save \$3.50

\$7.99

Primal Kitchen
Avocado Oil
16.9 fl oz • Save \$5.00

\$12.99



FEBRUARY 18–MARCH 3



RXBAR
Protein Bar
1.83–9 oz • Save \$1.58 on 2

2 for \$4



Good Health
Peanut Butter Filled Pretzels
5 oz • Save \$1.58 on 2

2 for \$5



Clif Bar
Builders Bars & Organic Nut Butter Filled Bars
1.76–2.4 oz • Save \$1.58 on 2

2 for \$4



Dr. Tung's
Smart Floss
1 ea • Save \$2.58 on 2

2 for \$8



Icelandic Provisions
Skyr
5.3 oz • Save 58¢ on 2

2 for \$4



Solely
Organic Fruit Jerky
.8 oz • Save 98¢ on 2

2 for \$3



Amy's
Organic Soup
14.65–14.7 oz • Save \$1.30

\$3.99

Stacy's
Pita Chips
7.33 oz • Save 79¢

\$3.50

ECOS
Dish Soap
25 fl oz • Save 80¢

\$3.99



Chomps
Beef Stick
1.15 oz • Save 50¢

\$1.99

Heritage Store
Rosewater Spray
8 fl oz • Save \$3.00

\$8.99

Evol
Burritos
6 oz • Save \$1.00

\$2.29



Ben & Jerry's
Ice Cream
16 oz • Save \$1.00

\$5.99

Andalou Naturals
Age Defying Resveratrol Q10 Night Repair Cream
1.7 fl oz • Save \$6.00

\$17.99

Natural Factors
Stress-Relax Tranquil Sleep Chewable
60 tab • Save \$14.00

\$18.99



Hyland's Naturals
Calms Forte Sleep Aid
100 tab • Save \$5.00

\$9.99

Nixie
Organic Zero Sugar Soda
12 fl oz • Save 70¢

\$1.59

Nubian Heritage
Bar Soap
5 oz • Save \$1.50

\$4.49



Dr. Bronner's
Pure Castile Magic Soap Refill
32 fl oz • Save \$6.50

\$10.99

Native Forest
Organic Simple Coconut Milk
13.5 fl oz • Save \$1.30

\$2.99

Host Defense
Organic Lion's Mane
60 cap • Save \$3.00

\$25.99



Organic Valley
Organic Mozzarella Stringles
8 oz • Save 50¢

\$6.49

Montebello
Organic Pasta
16 oz • Save 99¢

\$3.50

Food Should Taste Good
Sweet Potato Tortilla Chips
5.5 oz • Save 99¢

\$3.50



Sales on this page valid February 18–March 3, 2026.
All sales and coupons subject to availability. Sales quantities limited.

Inclusive Trade Sales

2/16/26 – 3/1/26



My Soul Brew Kombucha
Kombucha

12 fl oz • Save \$1.30

\$4.49  

Cedar Teeth
Pizza

Select Varieties
Save \$1.00

\$9.99  



Madame Chu
Cooking Sauce

7 oz • Save \$4.00

\$8.99  



Olden Organics
**Organic
Dips, Cut Fruit,
and Vegetables**

8-16 oz

20% OFF  



Marieke® Gouda

**Cold Pack
Cheese Spreads**

7 oz • Save \$1.00

\$5.99  



Marieke® Gouda
Gouda Wedges

5 oz • Save \$1.50

\$5.99  



Mango Man

Salsas

12 oz • Save \$1.00

\$7.49  



Driftless Provisions

Salami

4.5 oz • Save \$1.00

\$8.49-12.99  

**inclusive
trade**

**fresh
deals**

Sales for Everyone!

Talk to some of our Inclusive Trade vendors and try their free samples! See the schedule at willystreet.coop/inclusive-trade.



**BY: MICKY ELLENBECKER,
PURCHASING ASSISTANT**

MAYANA CHOCOLATE L

These locally made mini candy bars hail from Spooner, WI and they are fun little gems of unique flavor combinations. They consist of two or three different layers, which are then dipped in dark chocolate. The Kitchen Sink Bar has a thick layer of salted caramel topped with a layer of peanut butter, pretzels, and crispy rice, and coated in dark chocolate. The Spring Passion Bar is salted caramel topped with passionfruit flavored marshmallow and dipped in dark chocolate. You can find the Pecan Paradise Bar, Strawberry Rose Bar, Spring Passion Bar, Cloud Nine Bar, Kitchen Sink Bar, Space Bar, Fix Bar, and Monkey Bar at all three of our stores. Learn more at mayanachocolate.com.



NEWMAN'S OWN STRAWBERRY NEWMAN-O'S

These classic sandwich cookies just got a new variety added to the lineup. Newman's Own Strawberry Newman-O's are made with organic flour and sugar and feature a fruity strawberry creme filling sandwiched between two chocolate cookies. And if you aren't familiar with Newman's Own products, 100% of their profits go towards helping children facing adversity. Learn more at newmansown.com.



SITKA SEAFOOD MARKET L

Having established itself as a Madison-based seafood distributor, many of you will be familiar with the Sitka Seafood brand. They source wild-caught, traceable seafood from small-boat fisheries primarily in Alaska. They use rigorous practices to maintain healthy fisheries and source from low-impact hook-and-line, pot, and gillnet fisheries. You can find their Sablefish, Cold Smoked Salmon Lox, and Salmon Candy (yep, cured with sugar and salt and slowly smoked!) at all three locations. Additionally, both East & West offer the Sockeye Breakfast Sausage; both West and North offer the Sockeye Salmon and Swordfish Steak; and North also has Coho Salmon. Learn more at sitkaseafoodmarket.com.



NORDIC NATURALS VITAMIN C EXTRA STRENGTH GUMMIES

There is something to be said about packaging supplements into gummy form. While I gener-

ally don't support the practice of added sugar in nearly all foods, Mary Poppins was onto something. So if you're someone that struggles with the ritual of taking your vitamins, these new Vitamin C Extra Strength Gummies might help you keep the habit, especially when you're looking to boost your immune system during cold and flu season. You can find this new vitamin C supplement in the Wellness departments at all three stores. For more information, visit nordic.com.



THOUSAND HILLS SLICED SALAMI

Thousand Hills Life-time Grazed is headquartered in Becker, MN, but they are a network of 50 different farms throughout the US that are 100% grass-fed and practicing regenerative agriculture. Additionally, all of their farms have been

Bird-Friendly Certified by the Audubon Conservation Ranching program, which aims to partner with farmers and ranchers to help stabilize declining grassland bird populations. Thousand Hills offerings are now expanding to include woodland and pasture-grazed heritage pigs. We're now offering Genoa Salami, Hot Soppressatta, Toscano Salami, and Napoli Red Wine Beef Salami, which are available at all stores. Learn more at thousandhillslifetimegrazed.com.

TOTS ON THE STREET i L

This local, women-owned business is offering something unique: gourmet, hand-stuffed tater tots! In 2019, Hannah Kopplin started her Milwaukee-based food truck slinging these special tater tots, and her mom Tami teamed up with her in 2021 to continue to grow the business. They have expanded to offering their tater tots to retail settings, such as ourselves, and we're excited to be selling both their Basil Pesto Mozzarella Tots (which are made with local basil and cheese) and Sour Cream & Chives Tots. You can find them in the frozen section at all three of our stores.

In addition, you will find some of their tot varieties featured on our hot bars. Learn more at www.totsonthestreet.com.



i L DRIFTLESS PROVISIONS SNACK STICKS

Driftless Provisions is very intentional with all aspects of their business. They source humanely-raised, heritage-breed Berkshire hogs free of antibiotics and growth hormones for their salami offerings. They source local honey, local maple syrup, and other local ingredients when possible. Their drying chamber officially became 100% solar powered in 2023. And now they are offering new snack sticks that are made with locally sourced grass-fed beef. You can find their Grass-fed Beef Hot Honey, and Original Snack Sticks at all three stores. Learn more at driftlessprovisions.com.



Four Elements Organic Herbal Teas ⓘ L

I'm a big fan of this company! Peppermint Nettle is my favorite tea of theirs. Everything they use in their products is grown on their Certified Organic farm in the Baraboo Bluffs of Wisconsin. Learn more about their farming practices at their website, FourElementsHerbals.com

-Melissa, Purchasing

Catalina Crunch Cereal ⓘ

I like this product because of the nutrition facts: low calories, high protein, high fiber, zero sugar, low carbs. This plant-based vegan cereal is great for a quick snack! I haven't been disappointed with any of the flavors.

-Janet, Grocery

Bunky's Plain Hummus ⓘ L

DIPPER! I'm a dipper!! I love to dip all the things! Bunky's locally made hummus is a deliciously smooth and healthy alternative to many other unhealthy vegetable and chip dips that I adore! As an added bonus you can easily zhuzh it up with spices, herbs, cheese powders, or anything else that entices your palate!

-Rick, Meat & Seafood

Pan's Original Mushroom Jerky ⓘ

Bursting with flavor this little packet satisfies that umami chew and staves off the snack urge any day of the week.

-Beth, Customer Experience

Ernessi Farms Basil ⓘ L

Local and fresh, the taste is much like stuff you would grow in your own garden!

-Jake, Produce

Bunky's Rachid's Carrot Cake Slice ⓘ L

Your sweet tooth will thank you for this healthy choice carrot cake, chock full of wonderful flavors. Carrots of course, cinnamon, walnuts, almonds, pineapple, and the creamiest cream cheese frosting. Added bonus, it is gluten-free.

-Ellen, Produce

Mango Man Cooks! Monte Verde Salsa ⓘ L

This is such a wonderful and unique spicy sauce. It is so creamy, but has no cream. Monte Verde Salsa has a nice kick with a wonderfully citrus flavor. I add it to my eggs and tacos, but it is good any time you need a flavorful kick. Also, Thony, the owner and maker, always has great ideas for how to use it.

-Rodney, Administrative (LODs)

Hidden Springs Creamery Farmstead Feta ⓘ L

This local, Driftless-area-grazed sheep's milk feta has tons of glorious flavor and makes my life worth living.

-Matt, Cheese

ECOS Free & Clear Hand Soap ⓘ

This soap is so gentle on my sensitive skin. No dyes or fragrances. Doesn't leave a mess around my sink. The larger refill bottles are a great deal and so nice to have on hand.

-Hahna, Production Kitchen

Citra Solv Concentrated Cleaner & Degreaser ⓘ

A hardworking all-purpose cleaner that is not tested on animals, is biodegradable, and safer for septic and grey-water systems. Smells like oranges, and is an all-around pleasant experience.

-Caitlyn, Communications





Olden Organics Super Slaw

i L

I've enjoyed experimenting with this product in several ways. Most of the time I sauté it and put it in a wrap or tortilla. I've also made egg rolls a few times, and it's great for that, too.

-Justin, Produce

11

Cafe Spice Cauliflower & Potato Curry

i

This is pretty good for a pre-made dinner idea. The veggies are cooked in a caramelized onion curry sauce that has a nice zing to it. I add some baked tofu to make a complete meal.

-Michele, Front End

12

Driftless Provisions Andouille

i L

The flavor tastes straight out of Louisiana! It's not greasy like some sausages. Anytime I need sausage for my Louisiana food, this is it! It goes great in my red beans and rice and holds up in the pressure cooker, too!

-Steffry, Finance

13

Michele's Granola Salted Maple Pecan Granola

i

This granola will part the clouds, and make glorious sunshine rain upon thee. So tasty, I have to stop myself from eating the whole bag in one go! A great breakfast staple.

-Dylan, Produce

15

Equal Exchange Organic Dried Mango

i

This delicious and cost effective product is a staple of my pantry. Perfect for long trips, bike rides, or everyday snacking, these sweet and chewy fruits can't be beat! Both the bulk and packaged options are great, but with the amount I eat, buying in bulk is the way for me!

-Jon, Grocery

14

Marmalade Sky Bakery Chocolate Macaroon Bar

i

A delectable gluten-free treat! It's chewy on top, and the shortbread underneath is buttery. The chocolate and coconut balance each other nicely.

-Zoe, Front End

17

Cedar Teeth Large Marge Frozen Pizza

i L

This local pizza is great as it is but is also a great base for adding favorite pizza toppings. The sourdough provides a little chew while the cheese melts on top.

-Thayer, Front End

16

MUSH Overnight Oats

i

These are a quick and tasty breakfast on the go! The different varieties provide great options for multiple days!

-Cari, Administrative

18

Chip Magnet Mango Habanero Salsa

i L

This locally made salsa packs a little heat and a little sweet. It's perfect for snacking or topping tacos. One jar won't last long in your fridge!

-Meghan, Front End

19

Giovanni Smooth as Silk Shampoo and Conditioner

i

Very conditioning and moisturizing for both my scalp and hair. If you use this combination, you won't need additional styling products. My hair is frizz-free and luxurious! It's soft, voluminous, and absolutely dreamy!

-Frantseska, Administrative

20





Photo provided by Wisconsin Women's Network

GIVE TODAY TO BUILD TOMORROW

THE BIG SHARE® IS TUESDAY, MARCH 3

The Big Share is an online day of giving that advances social and environmental justice in our community. Your donation supports the 82 member nonprofits of Community Shares of Wisconsin.

These local nonprofits are working on the causes you care about most including civil liberties, sustainability, LGBTQ+ rights, voting rights, healthy food and farms, criminal justice reform, affordable housing, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

With a minimum donation of only \$5, it is easy to get involved in The Big Share. You can even become a fundraiser for your favorite member nonprofit.

For more fun on March 3, tune in to "The Big Share Live," a day-long telethon streaming live on TheBigShare.org.

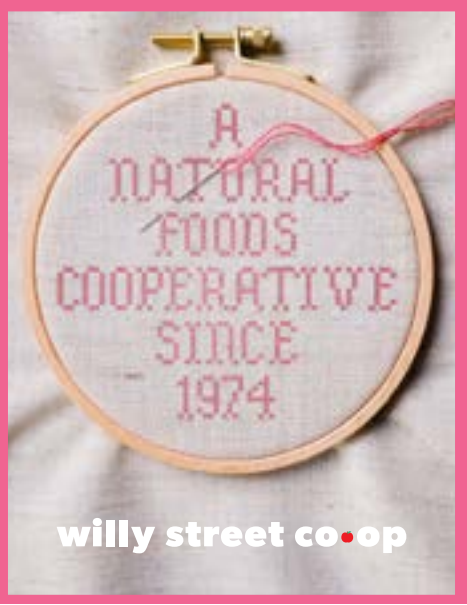


Principal Partner



Donate now through March 3 at

THEBIGSHARE.ORG



Savings Emailed!



See what's new & tasty in produce or what's on sale for Owners each week!

www.willystreet.coop/emails to sign up
- you can unsubscribe any time you wish.

**ATTORNEY
PAUL O'FLANAGAN**

Coop member,
**PROGRESSIVE & LOCAL
LAW FIRM OFFERING:**

**WILLS, TRUSTS, TAX,
ESTATE PLANS, PROBATE,
GUARDIANSHIP & FAMILY
ASSISTANCE TO FOLKS
AT REASONABLE COST.
FREE HOUSE CALLS.**

CALL: 608-630-5068

Shopping with Kids?

Kids are free to take a piece of pre-washed fruit from the basket near the Produce Department.



Compliments of the Willy Street Co-op Produce Department

Shared Solar 

Power your home or business with community solar from MGE.



Get affordable, carbon-free energy from MGE's Strix Solar array in Fitchburg. Learn more about Shared Solar today! Scan the code or visit mge.com/sharedsolar to enroll.



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Find info at willystreet.coop/advertising

willy street co-op



Do you currently get the print *Reader* mailed to you?

For decades we've mailed Co-op Owners the print *Reader*, but printing and postage costs have greatly increased in the last few years. The Co-op is committed to offering a print newsletter for the near future, but we need to reduce costs. We are sure there are some Owners who would be open to or even prefer receiving the newsletter via email, maybe occasionally picking up a print copy in the store. And switching to the email version could help save a few trees as well!

In April 2026 we'll be switching Owners who don't confirm they want to continue receiving the newsletter via mail over to getting the emailed version. Please let us know what you'd prefer! (If you already get the newsletter via email, no action is needed on your part.)

I want to switch to an emailed *Reader*

Go to willystreet.coop/emails and choose Newsletter, then Email (digital version)

I want to keep receiving the *Reader* via mail

Go to willystreet.coop/emails and choose Newsletter, then Postal Mail (paper copy)

Please fill out this short form by **March 15** if you'd like to continue being mailed the newsletter.



Staying the Course: 5 Years of DEI at Willy Street Co-op



By: Amy Kesling, Cofounder of Step Up: Equity Matters

In the summer of 2020, after the murder of George Floyd and ensuing social unrest, dozens of organizations were contacting Step Up: Equity Matters asking for help to start or restart their efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion. We knew it would take time and commitment to make these efforts sustainable, so we responded with dozens of proposals for 3-year engagements that covered training, assessment, planning, and implementation.

Willy Street Co-op was the first to sign on. This wasn't their first go at DEI; they had spent the previous few years self-organizing, participating in some of our first Step Up workshops in 2014, pursuing cultural competency certification, and completing self assessments and internal training. But none of it seemed to stick. As I interviewed leaders, managers, and staff, I sensed a deep skepticism about whether the organization would bring the level of commitment and accountability needed to make real change happen, especially amidst the havoc the covid pandemic wrought on the grocery industry and navigating a newly established relation-

ship with a workers' union.

Fast forward to 2025: The Co-op has made significant, measurable progress in many aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion and our partnership is still going strong.

TAKING ROOT

After initial in-depth equity training and coaching with the management team and an organizational DEI assessment, we set out to co-create a DEI strategy that would reach across the organization—five sites, 375+ employees, and hundreds of vendors. The planning work culminated in the creation of a DEI oversight committee plus three working groups: Owner & Community Engagement, Retail & Supply Chain Strategy, and Employee Engagement & Development.

The strategy laid out goals for each of the groups, initiatives to work toward those goals, and metrics for measuring success.

EXAMINING GAPS

You know the saying, “you can't manage what you don't measure.” While this is true, it doesn't provide much guidance

on what is worth measuring. It's one thing to measure customer experience. It's another thing to measure experiences of Black, Indigenous & People of Color (BIPOC) customers and compare it to the overall measure. The Co-op, like many organizations, found that they had gaps: compared to overall staff, vendors, and shoppers, BIPOC staff had lower employment rates, vendors brought in less revenue, and shoppers reported less positive experiences in the stores.

Over the last five years, we've seen many of those gaps closing.

In 2023 and 2025, the biannual Owner Survey has included the question: How well does the Co-op prioritize DEI? In 2023, BIPOC respondents were 18 percentage points less likely than the overall response group to respond with “Very Well” or “Well.” In 2025, that gap narrowed to eight percentage points.

Because we added more in-depth demographic questions, we were also able to get a better understanding of different priorities based on race/ethnicity, primary store visited, and other demographics. For example, we now know that BIPOC respondents are more likely than the overall response group to prioritize supporting local, sustainable agriculture and development of small, local businesses.

Employee racial and ethnic representation gaps are also closing. Since 2021, the overall employee population has come closer to representing the racial and ethnic composition of Madison overall, though employees identifying as white are still overrepresented.

In 2023, sales from local Inclusive Trade brands made up 2% of total sales. In 2025, that number increased to 2.5%.

ON THE GROUND

How is the Co-op working on closing these gaps? Since 2022, each DEI work group has identified initiatives to make a positive impact. Some are standalone programs, like Day to Day DEI. Others reflect changes to existing programs and processes to better embed equity, like streamlining the vendor application process to remove unnecessary barriers.

Here are some of the initiatives:

- Launched and maintained a public-facing DEI Dashboard to transparently communicate progress and setbacks
- Launched and expanded the Inclusive Trade program to better support and promote brands owned by people from underrepresented groups
- Launched Day to Day DEI, a quarterly education program for managers and staff to engage in conversations about specific identity groups and their experiences
- Refocused Owner Survey to better understand differences in Owner experience and priorities based on demographics
- Established and deepened northside community relationships to further embed the Co-op into the community surrounding its newest retail location
- Completed Access to Independence accessibility assessment and made updates to signage, physical spaces, and more
- Updated brand identity philosophy to better capture the breadth of product priorities
- Updated vendor application

Our DEI Statement

The Eight Cooperative Principles that guide our daily work are deeply grounded in equity and inclusion, underscoring our commitment to a fair and just world. Principle One, “Voluntary, Open Ownership,” affirms our openness to all—embracing people of all genders, social backgrounds, races, political beliefs, and religions. This principle is a promise to break down barriers and create a truly welcoming space for everyone. Principle Seven, “Concern for the Community,” drives us to actively support the sustainable development of the communities we serve.

Principle Eight, “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion,” is a guiding light, urging us to mirror the rich diversity of our community in our staff, customers, partners, and suppliers. By prioritizing equity and inclusion, we are building a culture where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, contribute, and feel valued. Through these principles, we are creating a cooperative where every individual's uniqueness enriches our collective success.

- process to remove unnecessary barriers
- Created Inclusive Environment Policy to establish shared expectations of staff, shoppers, and vendors at the Co-op
- Hosted employee engagement events
- Conducted a variety of DEI-focused staff and manager training and coaching

You can learn more about many of these initiatives and track the Co-op’s progress at willystreet.coop/dei.

LESSONS LEARNED

Not all of our initiatives were successful and, even where there has been success, the Co-op still has a long road ahead to continue closing identity-related gaps.

Engaging staff and community members has been a slow process. At first, the leaders of the DEI initiatives felt wary – the “what-if monster” ruled. What if our ideas don’t make a difference? What if people think it’s all talk, no action? What if we somehow make things worse? What if we ask what people need from us and we can’t fulfill it?

So the work got started carefully and, for the most part, quietly. We worked on building and recalibrating internal systems to better support the DEI goals, including building out an HR function that could adequately support the organization’s growth, examining and updating vendor processes, and establishing baseline data.

This approach ultimately proved more sustainable – when you embed a DEI lens into existing and growing systems and processes, it’s more likely to be taken seriously – but it also meant that the Co-op’s progress wasn’t obvious to most people. Even this past summer, after three and a half years in the implementation phase, many managers were surprised to learn that so much work had been underway.

Now, the Day to Day DEI program and other changes in internal communication and collaboration processes help more staff and managers stay aware and get involved in DEI efforts.

Logistical constraints have also been challenging. When the Retail & Supply Chain work group initially rolled out the Inclusive Trade program, we didn’t factor in the amount of time, equipment, and collaboration it would take to get new signs and labels printed in the stores. On top of that, National Cooperative Grocers, the association that provides support for the Inclusive Trade program, provides updated brand lists every quarter that reflect changes in brands carried by national distributors, meaning that the number of Inclusive Trade-qualifying brands changes quarterly, making tracking difficult.

To ease the stress of this, the group decided to focus their expansion initiatives on brands that are both Inclusive Trade and local. This is a more consistent metric to track and emphasizes the Co-op’s commitment to investing in Madison’s local economy.

WHAT'S WORKING?

Step Up has worked with dozens of

organizations on embedding inclusive and equitable practices into their strategy, operations, and culture. The Co-op has taken a unique and impactful approach in several ways: deep leadership buy-in, consistent focus, and engaging in active accountability.

From the start of our work together, the Co-op’s entire general management (GM) team, including directors from all sites and function areas, has been deeply engaged in setting the direction and following through on the execution of the diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy. Every member of the GM team is actively involved with at least one of the DEI work groups, participates in regular strategy sessions, and leads their site or team’s Day to Day DEI discussions. These responsibilities are written into their job descriptions and part of their performance feedback process. Additionally, the DEI Committee includes board representation to ensure alignment with governance practices and incorporate community perspectives. Because of this structure and buy-in, the strategy and initiatives are designed more effectively and have survived turnover of leadership positions.

Consistency has also been key to the Co-op’s progress. There is an established schedule of meetings and reporting to ensure measured, consistent progress. The annual DEI plans take into account the organization’s busier seasons, creating realistic timelines and expectations. The work is steady and purposeful, not an intense rush to check all the boxes.

Ultimately, leadership buy-in and consistency have set the conditions for an active approach to accountability. The board and leadership monitor the efforts and outcomes. Staff, vendors, and community members are invited to monitor progress via the public DEI dashboard (willystreet.coop/dei). The Co-op’s ongoing partnership with Step Up provides an additional level of accountability. We hold leadership and work groups accountable for adhering to the plans and providing subject matter expertise to guide effective, equitable decision-making.

ON THE HORIZON

As we look ahead in our partnership with the Willy Street Co-op, the journey toward equity and inclusion is far from over—but the foundation is strong. The progress made over the past five years demonstrates what’s possible when an organization commits to sustained, collaborative DEI work rooted in accountability and transparency. The Co-op’s willingness to learn, adapt, and keep equity at the center of its strategy has closed gaps and set the stage for a more inclusive environment for staff, vendors, and shoppers alike. Moving forward, the Co-op will continue to build on these successes, deepen community relationships, and refine its practices to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion remain integral to its mission and daily operations.

LEARN MORE AT WWW.WILLYSTREET.COOP/ABOUT/DIVERSITY-EQUITY-INCLUSION-AT-WILLY-STREET-CO-OP/

A timeline of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the Co-op

October 2025

Updated New Hire Orientation including a DEI and culture section

February 2025

First annual Inclusive Trade Vendor Showcase event

August 2024

Began “Day-to-Day DEI,” a series of quarterly discussions on identity with all Co-op staff

July 2024

Created “Northside Ambassador” program to gather feedback & share Co-op info

October 2023

Identified DEI initiatives aligned with strategic focus areas

September 2023

Published Inclusive Environment Policy

June - August 2023

Conducted accessibility audit and implemented improvements

May 2023

Launched Inclusive Trade initiative

April - June 2023

Inclusive leadership training follow-up

October - December 2022

Inclusive manager training

June 2022 - February 2023

Gathered feedback about BIPOC customer experiences

May - August 2022

Established DEI metrics and launched DEI dashboard

January 2022

Launched DEI workgroups

October - November 2021

Developed DEI strategy

March - July 2021

Inclusive leadership training

August 2020

Launched Uprooting Bias/Microaggressions training (ongoing)

July 2020

Contracted DEI consultant (Step Up: Equity Matters)

March 2020

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) prioritized by Board of Directors



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