

willy street co.♥op

READER

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

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SPECIAL HOURS: WILLY WEST WILL CLOSE EARLY ON SUNDAY, 8/9 AT 5PM.
THE STORE WILL REOPEN AT 8AM ON MONDAY, 8/10.

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willy street co-op

READER

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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.

Submissions: Ad space reservations due by the 10th of the month before publication; artwork due the 15th of the month before publication.

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3 WILLY NORTH
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..... **ASHWINI RAO**

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.

August 26, 2026
Sept. 23, 2026

October 28, 2026
December 9, 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



TO-GO DELI OFFERINGS

I just wanted to give a compliment on your to go offerings. I work about a half-ish mile away at MGE and I go on lunchtime walks to the yahara and back and I been stopping by Willy St Coop a lot lately and wanted to say the Nashville Hot Tofu sandwich is DELICIOUS!!! Also, y'all got me hooked on your carrot cake and banana bread (whole and sliced out ones). I'm late to being a member and finally joined this past year. I find myself going here and the Northside (I live in the Eken Park neighborhood) and have been really impressed with your selections, etc. The ONLY complaint I have is you have amazing breakfast options at the Willy St location and when I work from home I gone to the Northside location which only has a couple of options. Hopefully, you'll have more of that at the Northside location too.

Just got your comment about our offerings here at Willy Street! Very happy to hear you're enjoying the Nashville Hot and Breads! I would love to hear more about the offerings you're looking for at North though! The offerings at all three of our locations should be about 90-95% the same in the delis, so can you tell me what breakfast things you're wanting to see at North please? Our hot bar menus should be having plenty of vegan and vegetarian options, we actually made a whole new breakfast menu recently to have scramble, empanadas, and biscuits and gravy! -Nicholas Oconnor, Director of Prepared Foods
Editor's Note: Willy North has a new Hot Grab & Go merchandiser featuring breakfast sandwiches, burritos, and empanadas! Willy North also serves a breakfast frittata—in place of the scrambled eggs offered at the other locations—but the rest of the hot breakfast menu is the same.

KOMBUCHA CLASS

Wondering when your next kombucha class will be?

Our class planning team met recently to plan out our summer classes, and unfortunately, kombucha did not make it into the lineup. I'll see if we can get a class scheduled sometime during the fall. -Liz Hawley, Education and Outreach Coordinator

SIMPLE SOYMAN

Simple Soyman has reopened! Simple Soyman reopened in late March and is selling to retailers. Please tell me we'll be selling their products again! I've missed tasty tofu so much.

We have their tofu and tempeh back on the shelves at all of our stores! -Dean Kallas, Grocery Category Manager

FOLKMANIS PUPPETS

Hi, my 4 year loves robins and I notice that you carry several stuffed animals (Folkmanis brand). Any chance you could order a robin one for us? Or would a robin be at any of the other stores? Just thought I would check here before ordering online. Thanks!

It looks like all three of our stores have ordered/sold the robin finger puppet from Folkmanis. If you can't find one next time you're shopping, please check in with someone working in the Health & Wellness depart-

ment. They can call our other stores to see if they have any inventory. If so, we can arrange a transfer to get the robin to the store you prefer to shop at. Or, they can add some robin finger puppets onto a future order and set one aside for you when the order arrives. We have ways to get your kid a robin puppet! -Sara Berg, General Merchandise Category Manager

CO-OP TRIVIA

How about a Co-op trivia event or part of an event.

Thanks for your email and suggestion! We used to do this for our Annual Meeting, but we haven't done it in a while. We'll discuss this to see where else/how else we could do this. -Brendon Smith, Director of Marketing and Communications

COMMUNITY POSTING BOARDS

Please return the community posting board to the exit area. I have never been in the seated area it has been moved to. I have put up public notices about historic Madison events for years- now no one will see. Please return it to where it was. Also, the community sign place at Willy West - by the bathrooms? Again, not very open to casual visitors as it is out of the way.

Thank you for sharing your feedback about the community posting area. We were finding that when people stopped to look at the posting area on busy days they blocked the traffic of people leaving the store. As a result people were not able to stand and take their time to look at the events and postings. We hope that with the posting area out of the traffic flow, customers can take their time to look at all the community has to offer! -Kristin Esselstrom, East Store Director

I understand why having the community board near the exit area would be convenient and visible for customers. However, space in the foyer is unfortunately very limited and already experiences congestion during busy periods. Adding a community board in that area would likely create additional bottlenecks and negatively impact customer flow. I am open to exploring other possible locations within the store, but space constraints do make placement challenging. -Frantseska Kois, West Store Director

MIKE T

Can Mike T please have a monthly column on food and chef stuff? He is great! Knows so much and has fun anecdotes about all his years working in kitchens.

Thanks for reaching out about Mr. T—we agree, he is a great contributor to the Co-op. I think there will be oppportunities for him to write in our future *Readers*. It may not happen on a monthly basis but stay tuned! -Caitlyn Tompkins, Marketing Manager

SALES AT THE CO-OP

Thank you for basically having something on sale in seemingly every food category. No matter what I want, it seems to pretty much guarantee you have a version of that item on sale. It's amazing! And it seems to make shopping at the Co-op as affordable - than pretty much all your chain store competitors on an item by item basis. Thank you!

Reading this comment made my day—thank you to whoever took the time to provide this feedback! The co+op deals program really helps us to offer a large variety of great promotions on a regular basis. Additionally, our Category Managers have been working hard on improving our promotional offerings and expanding our sales programs over the last few years! -Liz Muñoz, Director of Purchasing

JUICE BAR AND SALAD BAR

I just need to say that for someone who has con-

sciously lessened the sugar and caffeine in my diet, that since you closed your juice bar, I can no longer find the healthy alternative to drinks, especially when fighting a cold. Also, removing the salad bar was an unhealthy choice for the community, I believe!

Thank you for writing in with what you'd like to see offered at the Co-op! We will keep this in mind for future planning of our services. -Nicholas Oconnor, Director of Prepared Foods

POTOSI NA BEER

I'd love to see the Potosi non alcohol beers in the 6 pack mix and match section. Both Hazy IPA and Golden brew

Thank you for your request for additions to the mix and max beer selections. We don't typically select certain products to add to this selection. This is generally an avenue to move through seasonal beers, or products that have been discontinued by the distributor. That said, I do think it's a good idea to add some NA products to this selection, so I'll be sure the share your feedback with the North team. -Nick Heitman Meat/Seafood and Specialty Category Manager

VEGAN OPTIONS

Thank you for all the great vegan options!

I'm so glad you are finding vegan products that you enjoy at our store! We appreciate the positive feedback and will keep working to provide amazing vegan products! -Kristin Esselstrom, East Store Director

JUICE BAR

Would you please consider bringing back your smoothie bar? Gemini said you had one back by deli, I came to see it for myself since I've never noticed it. Sad that it's non-existent.

Thanks for your inquiry about our smoothie bars! We know there are folks who miss our smoothies and our juice, but unfortunately, we had to stop offering these made-to-order items a few years back. We'll certainly keep your feedback in mind for the future. We love to know what folks are looking for and would like to see in the stores, so thanks for taking the time to write in! -Liz Muñoz, Director of Purchasing

CO-OP SNACK BAGS

Random question. Years ago Willy Co-op sold these awesome “Willy Street Co-op” branded snack bags. I’ve had mine for so long but would love to buy new ones. Are those still around/available?

Thanks for reaching out! I'm glad to hear you enjoyed the Willy Street branded snack bag for so many years! Unfortunately, we no longer carry them. If you're interested in buying the same style bag, here is a link to the 'Snack Time' bags directly from Chico Bag. chicobag.com/shop/reusable-produce-bags-and-food-containers-8/snack-time-37#at-tr=97 -Sara Berg, General Merchandise Category Manager

TUNA SALAD

Your tuna salad is great. Please stock lot's of it.

Thanks for letting us know! I will say we are very proud of the Tuna Salad in particular. The pole caught tuna we buy is really important to us! -Nicholas Oconnor, Director of Prepared Foods

SUSHI-GRADE SALMON

I would like to request the return of sushi-grade salmon and tuna. Thank you.

Hello, Thanks for your recent customer comment regarding sushi-grade seafood. We made the difficult but necessary decision to stop regularly carrying these products for a variety of reasons, such as labor costs, irregular sales leading to spoiled product, and food-safety issues. -Nick Heitman, Meat/Seafood & Specialty Category Manager

Have a comment or request you would like to share?

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!



www.willystreet.coop/contact-us

AUGUST 5



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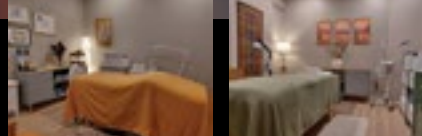
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By: Anya Firszt,
General Manager

Hello dear Owners,
WELCOME TO AUGUST

The weather this summer has surely been something. I am not sure what the rest of the summer has in store, but I do plan to fire up the grill whenever I get the chance.

Here's a sunny fact: 60% of Willy Street Co-op's electricity comes from solar power.

**WEST REFRIGERATION PROJECT—
AUGUST 9-14**

The Willy West Refrigeration Project is happening this month—be prepared for a bit of disruption!

We will close early at 5pm on Sunday, August 9, and open at 8am on Monday, August 10. Other than those few hours, we will stay open throughout the project from August 9–14, and offer a reduced selection of refrigerated and frozen products during that time.

Willy North and Willy East will keep their regular hours (7:30am–9pm) during this time. Our online store and delivery service will also be available—see shop.willystreet.coop for details. The new coolers will be more energy-efficient, and the new refrigerant will have a significantly lower climate impact than what we currently use. Thank you for your patience while we perform this long-awaited work. For more information, see the article on pg. 8.

CHANGE IN THE READER

You'll see a significant change in our August newsletter. From now on, the Co-op Deals flyer will be produced separately, allowing us to show you more sales! The flyer for the first half of the month will still be included in mailed print copies. Current and upcoming flyers will be available in the stores and online. To receive flyers by email, sign up at willystreet.coop/emails.

FESTIVAL PERKS PASSES—ROUND 2

This month, Co-op Owners can get Festival Perks Passes for the Middleton Good Neighbor Festival or the Northside Festival. Owners will enjoy half-priced meals and beverages (with or without alcohol) during a three-hour span at the following community festivals near our stores:

- **Good Neighbor Festival:** Owner perk is valid on Saturday, August 29, from 2:30pm to 5:30pm. These Perks Passes will be distributed at Willy West only starting on Monday, August 17, at 10am.
- **Northside Festival:** Owner perk valid on Saturday, September 12, from 11am to 2pm. These Perks Passes will be distributed at Willy North only starting on Monday, August 31, at 10am.

For additional information regarding the distribution schedule for Perks Passes, check out the Co-op's website (www.willystreet.coop/owner-festival-perks).

**DMA SUSTAINABILITY EXCELLENCE
AWARD**

Earlier this year, I was honored to be nominated for the Destination Madison "Sustainability Excellence" award along with a few other local leaders. The winners were announced in June, and Tim (Pio) Piotrowski, Chief Beer Officer at Delta Beer Lab, received the award, which honors people in the hospitality industry who show outstanding dedication to sustainability. Congratulations, Pio—you truly stand out as a champion!

**DON'T FORGET TO MARK YOUR
CALENDAR:**

- Willy West (only): closing at 5pm on Sunday, August 9.
- Willy West (only): opening at 8am on Monday, August 10.
- In recognition of Labor Day: on Monday, September 7, stores will close at 7pm.

In closing, have you ever wondered where the phrase "Dog Days of Summer" comes from? I used to think it meant the hottest days of summer, but it actually refers to Sirius, the Dog Star, which is part of the constellation Canis Major. The "Dog Days" are the 20 days before and after Sirius rises with the Sun, when the Sun shares the same part of the sky as Sirius, the brightest star visible from any part of Earth. Who knew?

Until next month, stay hydrated.
Anya



By: Gigi Godwin, Board
President

KEEP CALM AND RUN FOR THE BOARD

Greetings Willy Street Co-op Owners!
Summer is in full swing, and perhaps you've been hosting backyard BBQs, taking long bike rides, going on roadtrips, and enjoying outdoor music fests. And summer also means it's time to consider running for the Co-op's Board of Directors.

Maybe you've already thought about running for a seat, but haven't followed through yet due to a variety of reasons. Here is some information that might put your mind at ease, and guide you toward submitting your application.

No previous Board experience? Not a problem! After new Board members are seated, Board Member Orientation sessions will be scheduled. Topics presented will include:

- An introduction to the Carver Policy Governance model, which covers Board and Management policies;
- How to review Co-op financial documents, plus an overview of Board members' fiduciary responsibilities; and
- An explanation of the Co-op's organizational structure along with its Mission and Vision.

You will learn what a Willy Street Co-op Board member actually does—such as focusing on the Co-op's viability through a Strategic Plan. And you will also learn what a Co-op Board member does not do—such as having a say in the Co-op's day-to-day operations.

No experience using the Google Workspace platform? That's not a problem either! Another component of the new Board Member Orientation is a separate session that solely focuses on computer training. You will learn:

- sending email using Gmail
- how to create and share documents using Google Docs
- how to attend Board and Committee meetings virtually using Google Meet
- how to store and find documents in Google Drive

Concerned that your own work and life experience isn't "enough" for you to be considered a Board candidate? No worries! The Board is seeking candidates who possess a wide range of skills and who also have diverse backgrounds. There isn't one specific or "correct" experience to have in order to serve on the Co-op's Board. All that is required is to be an Owner in good standing, which means having a valid Owner number, being current with your equity payments, and having made at least one purchase at the Co-op in the past 12 months. Having a passion for Willy Street Co-op certainly helps too!

And here is another incentive to apply for the Co-op's Board of Directors: This year it is easier than ever to submit your application materials! The Board Development Committee has created an email address—BoardCandidates@willystreet.coop—for you to submit your name and Owner number, your headshot, your 50-word candidate statement, and your answers to three separate questions. So no more fretting about whether your email went through or not.

Still unsure? The Board Candidate Packet is an excellent resource that covers Board Duties and Governance along with Qualifications and Expectations. And there's also a section that contains Frequently Asked Questions. Additional information may also be obtained by contacting some of the Board members at BoardCandidates@willystreet.coop. This might provide a more personal perspective on Board service.

I hope that all of this information was helpful, and I encourage you to run for Willy Street Co-op's Board of Directors. Candidate materials are due no later than Thursday, August 27, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. CST. Having an array of qualified candidates ensures the Co-op's continued success. Thank you!

Learn more at:

**[WWW.WILLYSTREET.COOP/
/RUN-FOR-BOARD/](http://WWW.WILLYSTREET.COOP/RUN-FOR-BOARD/)**

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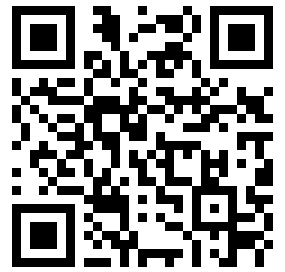
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Sign up at willystreet.coop/emails



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

www.willystreet.coop/events



PÂTE À CHOUX: SWEET AND SAVORY RECIPES

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Wednesday, August 5, 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

Pâte à choux, or choux paste, is a delicate dough used in many types of pastry, and we'll try out a few. On the menu: Savory baked gougères, cheesy little puffs flavored with Wisconsin-made gruyère. Delicious fried crab puffs, golden brown and crispy, and great for parties. French-style beignets, covered in powdered sugar when they're still hot from the oil. Last but not least, we will all have a turn at that Wisconsin State Fair staple and fill our own cream puffs. Mostly demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities. Recipes contain: milk, eggs, shellfish, wheat.

COOKING WITH CHEF PAUL: TAIWANESE WOK—NOODLES AND MORE!

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Thursday, August 20, 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

Join Chef Paul to learn how to make noodles and gnocchi from scratch and finish them in a wok. The meal will be composed of vegetables and proteins. On the menu: Stir-fried Noodles and Gnocchi with Tomatoes and Basil. Demonstration. Recipes contain: wheat.

EATING WITH OUR EYES: PRESENTATION, PLATING, AND GARNISHES

Location: Willy West Community Room
Tuesday, September 1, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Wednesday, September 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

It may sound cliché, but we really do eat with our eyes. Do you ever wonder how the foods in cookbooks and fancy restaurants look so good? Chef Mike is spilling the fancy lookin' food tea and

will demonstrate some simple techniques that will elevate the eye appeal of every course of your meal from appetizer to dessert. It's Eat Local month, too, so we'll focus on foods-less-traveled as well. On the menu: simple but elegant fruit mousse with a crispy tuile cookie, roasted chicken with tournéed vegetables, a cream soup garnished with fluted mushrooms, and a platter of hummus and crudite that will still look pretty good even after your guests tear into it. Mostly demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities. Recipes contain: milk, eggs, wheat.

TUNE IN TOFU

Location: Willy West Community Room
Monday, August 31, 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

Are you a tofu fan? Or are you a tofu skeptic? Either way, you will find something new to enjoy when we prepare crispy tofu with sweet and spicy glaze, Co-op favorites sesame tofu and southern fried, and a delicious tofu bahn mi. Join former tofu skeptic Chef Mike and be converted! Mostly demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities. Recipes contain: eggs, wheat, soy, sesame.

TUSCAN FLAVORS: A FEAST OF FENNEL

Location: Willy West Community Room
Wednesday, September 9, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Ages: 16+; adult supervision not required
Instructor: Sharon Long
Fee: \$40 for Owners; \$50 for non-owners
Capacity: 8

Sharon learned to make these dishes while taking cooking classes at the International Academy of Italian Cuisine in Lucca, Italy. You may watch or help prep all the ingredients. Munch on some bruschetta while Sharon puts the dishes together. Tartufo con finocchietti gratinate—fennel gratin with a truffle cream sauce. Chicken, fennel, and sundried tomato packets. Buon appetito. Mostly demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities. Recipes contain: milk.

A TRADITIONAL JORDANIAN MEAL

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Tuesday, September 15, 6:00pm–8:00pm
Ages: 16+; adult supervision not required
Instructor: Sharon Long
Fee: \$40 for Owners; \$50 for non-owners
Capacity: 8

Help Sharon prepare the ingredients for two iconic Jordanian dishes she learned to prepare at Beit Sitti (meaning Grandmother's house), a cooking school in Amman, Jordan. You will help prepare the ingredients for the

traditional Levantine dish, Maqluba, which contains eggplant, vegetables, and rice. We will also prepare baklava for dessert. Mostly demonstration with hands-on opportunities. Recipes contain: milk, tree nuts, wheat.

COOKING WITH CHEF PAUL: FISHERMAN'S SOUP

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Thursday, September 24, 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 trip to Norway inspired Paul to develop this class to compare recipes through different cultural lenses—the cream-based Norwegian Fisherman's Soup versus clear Taiwanese Dayboat Fish Soup. Join Chef Paul to taste the drastic differences in texture and flavor. Demonstration. Recipes contain: wheat and seafood.

MUSHROOMS IN THE KITCHEN AND APOTHECARY

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Tuesday, September 29, 5:30pm–8:00pm
Ages: 12+; adult supervision required
Instructor: Linda Conroy
Fee: \$45 for Owners; \$55 for non-owners
Capacity: 20

Mushrooms are a fantastic ingredient for delicious dishes and medicinal uses, packed with health benefits and endless possibilities. In this hands-on class, we'll explore cooking techniques like sautéing, grilling, and roasting mushrooms, plus how to whip up a tasty mushroom pâté. We'll also dive into making infused products, such as vinegars, broths, beverages, and tinctures. Recipes provided. Vegetarian. Recipes contain: milk.



CANNING 101: SUMMER IN EVERY JAR

Location: Willy West Community Room
Wednesday, August 5, 5:30pm–7:30pm
Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Saturday, August 8, 9:00am–11:00am
Ages: 14+; adult supervision required
Instructor: Wendy Porterfield
Fee: \$40 for Owners; \$50 for non-owners
Capacity: 12

Curious about canning but not sure where to start? This hands-on class breaks it down into an approachable

process you can do in any kitchen. Learn how to safely preserve seasonal produce like tomatoes, pickles, or fruit using water bath canning. You'll participate in the process, taste test, and take home your own jar of salsa, dilly beans, or jam—plus the skills to capture the flavor of summer! Mostly demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities.

PRESERVING TOMATOES FOUR WAYS

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Saturday, August 22, 9:00am–11:00am
Ages: 12+; adult supervision required
Instructor: Wendy Porterfield
Fee: \$40 for Owners; \$50 for non-owners
Capacity: 12

There is nothing like fresh, in-season tomatoes! Come explore four fun, creative ways to preserve tomatoes, including freezing, dehydrating, fermenting, and canning. While this is not an exhaustive class on any of those methods, you will learn essential skills for success in each. Take home recipes and a pint of fermented salsa. Bring a cutting board and a knife. Mostly demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities.



SPROUTS: STATE FAIR ELOTE EN VASO AND CREAM PUFFS

Location: Willy West Community Room
Tuesday, August 4, 4:00pm–5:00pm
Ages: 5–12 years old; 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

What's your favorite food at the fair? There's a lot to choose from, and Mike T. could use some help from some Co-op Sprouts to make a couple favorites that celebrate the culture of Wisconsin and the folks who make our home special: Mexican street corn (elote) in a cup (en vaso), classic creme puffs, of course, loaded with sweet Wisconsin cream and topped with powdered sugar, and strawberry lemonade slushies too. Hands-on. Recipes contain: milk, eggs, wheat.

SPROUTS: COOKING BREAKFAST CONNECTION

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Thursday, September 17, 4:00pm–5:00pm
Ages: 5+
Your Co-op's Own: Mike Tomaloff
Fee: \$15 for Owners (\$12.50 for each additional child); \$25 for each child of non-owner
Capacity: 10

Just like sitting down to a meal, cooking that meal is even better when you do it with people that you care about. In this class, the Sprouts will team up with an adult to make some great breakfast foods! Kids should bring a mom, dad, grandma, grandpa, uncle, aunt, adult sibling, or anyone, really, that is an important adult in their life, and together we'll make some pancakes, cook up a veggie and eggs scramble, and how about a big fruit salad, too! Hands-on. Recipes contain: eggs, dairy, wheat.

SPROUTS: SAVORY PIES TIMES TWO

Location: Willy West Community Room
Wednesday, September 30, 4:00pm–5:00pm
Ages: 5–12 years old; 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

In this class, we'll celebrate "Great American Pot Pie Day" with Mike T. and the Sprouts to make two kinds of savory pies. We'll start with a big chicken and veggie pot pie that we'll make, bake, and eat together. While that's cooking, we'll make individual spinach and feta hand pies just like the ones from the Co-op Kitchen! Hands-on. Recipes contain: milk, eggs, wheat.



GUT HEALTH SERIES: FOOD-BASED CLEANSING

Location: Zoom
Wednesday, August 12, 12:00pm–1:00pm
Instructor: Katy Wallace, ND
Fee: Free; registration required
Capacity: 50
Learn new ways to get healthy by supporting the body's major elimination and toxin-removing organs with food and herbs that promote 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.

AGE-REVERSING HABITS

Location: Zoom
Wednesday, September 9, 12:00pm–1:00pm
Instructor: Katy Wallace, ND
Fee: Free; registration required
Capacity: 50
A recent review of research shows that aging doesn't just happen. Scientists show it is driven by predictable changes inside cells. Katy Wallace, ND, will cover the aging pathways identified by

scientists and how to affect them with lifestyle changes.



BURDOCK ROOT FOR HEALTH AND NOURISHMENT

Location: Willy West Community Room
Thursday, September 3, 5:30pm–8:00pm
Ages: 8+; adult supervision required
Instructor: Linda Conroy
Fee: \$45 for Owners; \$55 for non-owners
Capacity: 20
Burdock root is a nutrient-dense root vegetable and traditional medicinal herb. It supports the liver as well as overall digestion and is healing to the skin. In this fun class, we will prepare fresh burdock in a myriad of ways as a beverage, for food, and as medicine. Everyone will take home recipes and concoctions that we make in class. Vegetarian. Mostly demonstration with limited hands-on opportunities.



PRACTICE SERENITY: MEDITATION FOR BEGINNERS

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Sunday, September 6 and 20, 9:30am–10:30am
Ages: 14+; adult supervision not required
Instructor: Anupama Bhattacharya
Fee: \$10 for Owners; \$20 for non-owners
Capacity: 30
In this beginner-friendly meditation class, we will explore breathing exercises, mindfulness practices, and grounding techniques that support nervous system regulation and cultivate presence. Learn simple tools to reduce stress, reconnect with yourself, and bring more peace, joy, and compassion into daily life. Join me for conscious peace, one breath at a time.

45-MINUTE INDIVIDUAL NUTRITION CONSULTATIONS

Location: Aubergine, 1226 Williamson St.
Tuesday, August 18, 2:15pm–5:30pm
Wednesday, September 16, 2:00pm–4:45pm
Location: Willy West Community Room
Wednesday, September 23, 1:30pm–4:45pm
Virtual
Wednesday, August 12, 1:30pm–4:45pm
Fee: \$58 for Owners; \$93 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.



GO PAPERLESS!

Sign up to get our monthly newsletter emailed directly to your inbox!

Unsubscribe any time you wish

Sign up at: www.willystreet.coop/emails

Get a free apron!

Purchase 5 adult or 5 kids cooking, baking or food preparation classes in 2026 and receive either an adult Willy Street Co-op Apron, or a kids Sprouts Apron for free! Let's get cooking!

Sign up at willystreet.coop/events

While supplies last.
Adult and kids classes can't be mixed to receive an apron.



REFRIGERATION WORK AT WILLY WEST

By: Brendon Smith, Director of Communications

As Anya mentioned in her GM Report, we'll be replacing some refrigeration equipment at Willy West in mid-August. We wanted to explain a bit more about what that means for customers during and after the project, as well as the sustainability improvements we'll get out of it.

SHOPPING IMPACT

We expect to close Willy West at 5:00pm on Sunday, August 9, and we plan on reopening the following day at 8:00am. If you're making a special trip during this time, please check the website or our Instagram or Facebook to see if we've had to adjust our timeline as the project gets nearer.

Although the Willy East refrigeration project last year was different, we learned some lessons from it and have changed our approach with this project. The refrigeration work will continue through Thursday, August 13, but we will be able to keep the store open during the work. The following services will be unavailable between Monday August 10 and Thursday August 13:

- Meat & Seafood Service Counters (some packaged meat and seafood will be available)
- **Breakfast** Hot Bar (it will be open for lunch and dinner!)
- Sushi

There will also be a reduced refrigerated and frozen product selection in some areas.



CHANGES AFTER THE WORK IS COMPLETE

Once the project is complete, customers will notice two new Produce coolers, some additional space in the Produce department, and one new Meat cooler. These areas will be easier to shop and have more attractive merchandising, and we may be able to add some additional products in the added space. We'll also be able to refresh the layout of the Refrigerated/Dairy department. Some of the biggest changes won't be visible, though!

SUSTAINABILITY

Our new refrigeration system at Willy West will use a refrigerant with a significantly lower (67%) global warming impact than our current system. It also improves energy efficiency by 8–12%, helping reduce electricity use and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from non-solar power we use. (Willy West gets a portion of its power from the solar panels on its roof.)



Willy West will Close Early

**Sunday, August 9th at 5:00pm
and will reopen
Monday, August 10th at 8:00am**



Need a Place to Host?

**The Co-op Community Spaces
have you covered!**

We've got spaces to host your next get-together, birthday party, book club, meeting, workshop, or any other fun idea you may be envisioning!

Check out both Aubergine and Willy West Community Room features and pricing at: www.willystreet.coop/community-spaces



RUN

Run for **willy street co-op**

Board of Directors

See willystreet.coop/run-for-board

Candidates are required to attend a Candidate Orientation Session. Please see the website or Board candidate application for details!



Deadline for applications is
Thursday, August 27 at 11:59pm



BACK-TO-SCHOOL IDEAS IN OUR DELI

By: Maya Ticku, Purchasing Assistant

Willy Street Co-op Friends, summer is creeping to a close, and we are barreling closer to another school year. As the chaos ensues, busy schedules don't mean you can't enjoy good, quality meals on a weeknight. What better way to ease back into weekly routines than to incorporate a classic into your weekly menu. A lunch staple, but hearty enough to be dinner, sandwiches are the perfect combination of protein, veggies, and carbs—where the variety is up to your choosing. Handheld, portable, and so many different variations, they are one of the easiest meals, with only assembly required.

So, think of this as your sandwich guide where we've put together some options. We've done the hard part for you—the star of each sandwich is made by the Co-op and found in the Deli. All that's left is to pick up the remaining fresh ingredients to build your sandwich. Hot sandwiches, cold sandwiches, meat-free, or gluten-free—you'll find something for everyone here!

SOUTHERN FRIED TOFU PEPPER JACK

A plant-based alternative to a Southern classic. We do the frying, you do the topping and enjoying. Start with Co-op made Southern Fried Tofu—a slab of firm tofu, marinated and fried, for a crispy bite. Bonus points if you throw it in the toaster oven for 10 minutes. Next, the build. To add a spicy kick, add a slice or two of pepper jack cheese from Cedar Grove. For your carb, I recommend S. Rosen's Brioche Buns straight out of Chicago, IL. Their pillowy softness and subtle sweetness balance out the spice. For more color, cooler flavors, and a nice crunch, snag a container of traditional coleslaw or sumi salad to top your sandwich with—both made by the Co-op and found in the Deli cooler.



FLORENTINE PATTY MELT

If you spent the summer eating nothing but cold sandwiches for lunch, spice it up with a Florentine burger on a toasted Schär ciabatta roll! Our Florentine burger is a vegetarian patty made with spinach, walnuts, cheddar cheese, egg, panko bread crumbs, onion, tamari, garlic, basil, and sea salt. Next, top with the melted cheese of your choosing—I recommend a slice of Muenster cheese from Silver & Lewis. It's mild, perfectly creamy, and perfect for melting. Just like your regular burgers, condiments are key! Top this melty sandwich with one of the flavorful sauces from Maazah Aioli. For a spicy kick, their Chili Aioli will offer a creamy, punchy blend. Prefer a summer flavor? Try the Lemon aioli for a sandwich with a bold, citrus flair.

TARRAGON CHICKEN SALAD & SWISS

Chicken salad is the perfect "in-a-pinch" sandwich because the one ingredient is really five ingredients. Pick up a clamshell of our creamy, aromatic tarragon chicken salad. Next, head over to our bakery section for some flakey, buttery croissants from Madison Sourdough. If you prefer your chicken salad on a toasted croissant, add a slice of Deppeler baby Swiss cheese from Chalet Cheese Cooperative in Monroe, WI. Their cheese is made with whole milk—elevating the creamy and buttery flavor to another level. For an added crunch, consider topping it with green leaf lettuce.



SESAME TOFU BANH MI

This Vietnamese street food favorite deserves a spot on the menu every week! With Co-op-made sesame tofu, you can throw together the perfect plant-based banh mi. Once you've secured your protein, it's time to add your banh mi staples. Pickled Olden Super Slaw gives the fermented kick and crunch. For your greens, Co-op-made Cucumber Salad is a quick way to elevate an already crucial component of the iconic banh mi. Finally, keep it vegan by serving it on a crispy, flakey Turano French roll, and topping it with your favorite vegemaise.





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THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1
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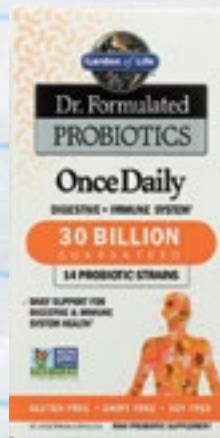
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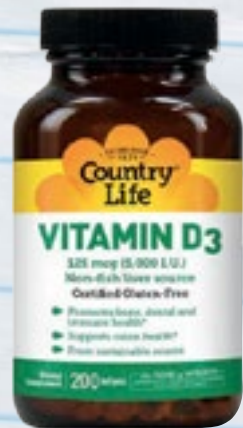
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**BLACK
BUSINESS
MONTH
2026**



FAR BRETON BAKERY
Fresh Bakery



MANGO MAN COOKS
Salsa



MY SOUL BREW
Kombucha



NATURAL RENEWALS
Sea Moss Gel



SHARAY'S
Brittle

In August, we're highlighting Black-owned Inclusive Trade vendors for Black Business Month.

For our full list of Black-owned Inclusive Trade vendors, visit:
www.willvstreet.coop/inclusive-trade



**BY: MELISSA REISS,
MERCHANDISING ASSISTANT**

**FIELD DAY
ORGANIC
BUTTERMILK
PANCAKE
& WAFFLE
MIX**

Also new from Field Day! The first ingredient is organic unbleached wheat flour, crafted to fuel your mornings. Just add milk, eggs, and butter. Its versatility allows it to be used for pancakes, waffles, and biscuits.



**FIELD DAY
ORGANIC
SALAD
DRESSINGS**

Co-op brand Field Day introduces five new salad dressings: ranch, French style, Italian, Caesar, and balsamic. All USDA-Certified Organic and all certified classic flavors. Grab some to dress up all your salads!



**ROTTEN
CANDY SOUR
GUMMY
WORMZ**

Rotten Candy is on a mission to never exceed nine grams of sugar per serving in their sweets.

These candies deliver bold flavor with a real tart kick—all with less sugar and no artificial dyes. All of their confections are made with colors from fruits, veggies, and superfoods.

**EQUAL EXCHANGE CO-OP
ORIGINS SERIES PACKAGED
COFFEES**

Designed to showcase the nuanced flavor profiles of exceptional farmer groups, this new collection features four light-roast, whole-bean coffees.

These expertly crafted selections highlight long-term partnerships committed to regenerative organic agriculture and community wellbeing. To protect local ecosystems, these innovative environmental stewards employ creative techniques such as native beekeeping, staggered farm renovation, and species experimentation.

Bolivia Rare, high-quality organic Bolivian coffee from La Montaña Verde, a co-op specializing in sustainable organic practices. To ensure long-term productivity and soil health, farmers manage five different “age groups” of coffee plants. The co-op also harvests honey from native stingless bees, which aids pollination, is used for traditional medicine, and provides supplemental income.

Guatemala The Asociación Chajulense Va'l Vaq Quylol, established in 1990 in San Gaspar Chajul, unites nearly one thousand smallholder coffee producers from dozens of Indigenous Maya Ixil communities within Guatemala’s mountainous Quiché region. Together, these farmers collaborate to process and export their coffee crops. The organization emphasizes community resilience by renewing farms and increasing opportunities for youth and women. Their family plots utilize biodiversity to protect the soil, while shared investments in communal infrastructure further bolster the association.

Peru Guided by a commitment to environmental stewardship and transparency, the Sol y Café cooperative flourishes through a culture of systemic innovation. By collaborating with international colleagues to exchange expertise, they founded a cooperative-led school designed to motivate and train future farmers. This forward-thinking strategy also prioritizes financial autonomy and leadership training, which has directly contributed to improvements in both crop quality and overall yields.



Cloudbreak Located in Chiapas, Mexico, members of the CESMACH co-op practice organic farming within the UNESCO-recognized El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve. This critical ecological region acts as both a watershed and a migration route for birds. Through the use of shade-canopy coffee farms, CESMACH protects biodiversity and prevents soil erosion. Farmers utilize biofertilizers and compost to replenish natural resources, fostering economic stability that discourages logging and deforestation. For CESMACH, maintaining high-integrity environmental stewardship is essential to producing premium quality coffee.

For more information on this special line of coffee, visit www.info.equalexchange.coop/co-op-origins



**EARTHBOUND FARM
ORGANIC BABY SPINACH
AND SPRING MIX IN NEW
PLANT-BASED TRAY PACKS**

Earthbound Farm's latest packaging innovation is engineered to preserve the crispness of your salad greens while significantly reducing environmental impact. By transitioning from traditional plastic clamshells to this new tray design, plastic usage is cut by 87%. The tray features a specialized food-grade coating, while the integrated peel and reseal film technology ensures lasting freshness and ease of use. The tray is designed to be recycled, but first simply remove the film.

For more information, see earthboundfarm.com/meet-our-new-packaging.



Host Defense MyCommunity®

Medicinal mushroom polysaccharides are all the rage and for good reason—they have a wealth of published scientific results behind them (check online). According to some sources, they work synergistically to support and stimulate your immune system when you take them in tandem, so this 17-species blend from Paul Stamets should have you covered.

-Matt, Cheese



Sartori Merlot or Garlic & Herb Spreads



I love to spread this on a bun and put a grilled burger with all the fixings on it! Takes it to the next level!

-Nicholas, Production Kitchen



Forage Kombucha Organic Peach Kombucha



This is a wonderfully dry kombucha, not too vinegary, and it makes a very satisfying (NA) tippie for a balmy summer evening.

-Kjerstin, Front End



Sprout Living Vanilla Lucuma Organic Plant Protein

I have a weak spot for anything reminiscent of butterscotch or caramel. This protein fulfills that craving and then some. It contains no erythritol or sugar alcohols and is packed with gut-loving prebiotics. Try this sweet healthy treat after one of your workouts! You will not be sorry.

-Philip, Produce



Organic Flavor Grenade Pluot

Flavor Grenade Pluots are a wonderful seasonal treat. They are sweet and flavorful with a bit of a crunch.

-Sena, Produce



Saffi Saana Dark Balsamic Vinegar



Hands down, my favorite balsamic vinegar. Imported from the Jerez region in Spain, I adore the rich, complex flavors that I use for everything from glazes on meat and veggies, salad dressings, and shrubs.

-Thayer, Front End

Willy Street Co-op Grass Fed Lean Ground Beef



Fresh ground beef prepared right here in store. The price is right, and the quality is great! Never too dry and always tender. When it's burger night at home or just a quick noodles sauce beef night, I can rely on this hamburger and it doesn't break the bank.

-Beth, Customer Experience

Just Coffee Humdinger Light



The blend of citrus, tangerine, and honey wake me up in the most kind way. It hits my senses, and I instantly have more energy, concentration, and humanity. I drink this everyday and it goes great with a donut or your favorite baked good! Available at Willy West only.

-Ryan, Meat & Seafood

Cascadian Farm Honey Oat Crunch Cereal

Tastes very similar to the Big Corp brand, without all the sugar and bad stuff! It is not as sweet, which I appreciate now as an adult and I love their 1% Kernza Initiative. Give it a try!

-Kristina, Customer Experience



Organic Colorado Peaches

I don't know what's not to love about these peaches, the only negative about them is they are only available for a certain portion of the year—so get them while you can! They are so flavorful and juicy, every bite is like an explosion of flavor and freshness. You may need a towel or a napkin, they're that juicy!

-Justin, Produce





**Jolly Llama
Mango Sorbet Pops**

These creamy sorbet pops are perfect for spring and summer. The flavor is excellent and not too sweet or watered down. If you are a mango lover like me, these sweet treats will not disappoint.

-Amelia, Deli



**Tajín
Clásico Seasoning**

This is my favorite seasoning. I love the zesty lime paired with the spice from a blend of chilis. I use it in tacos, on popcorn, and on fresh fruit like watermelon and mango. I may or may not have a bottle of it in my desk at work.

-Melissa, Purchasing



**Organic
Thomcord Grapes**

A perfect mix between a table grape and the concords you pick from your backyard. Great flavor and no seeds!

-Demeter, Produce



**Greenfield Natural Meat Co.
Oven Roasted Chicken &
Cheese Lunch Kit**

My inner child loves this so much. It's so cute and fun to eat, and it's a perfect portion to get me through long stretches between meals. Plus, it's delicious, fresh tasting, and includes teeny tiny chocolate chip treats.

-Alexx, Bakery



**Willy Street Co-op
Lemon Cheesecake Bar**



The best refreshing sweet treat for spring and summer—so rich and creamy with a delicious crumbly topping. Cannot recommend these enough!

-Gracie, Deli



**Nightingale Ice Cream
Sandwiches
Banana Pudding**

This is my favorite treat during the summer! They use real bananas for the ice cream and it makes all the difference! The sugar cookies taste like an updated grown up version of the vanilla wafers we loved growing up. A perfect bite!

-Rachael, Deli



**EVOL
Cilantro Lime Chicken Burrito**

Frozen burritos can sometimes be bland or mushy—or both—but this one has great flavor. A perfect back-up plan for lunch.

-Brendon, Communications



**Usinger's
All Natural Black Forest Ham**



This ham is smoky and delicious. It's perfect for the base level on my Muffaletta sandwich AND it's local! It's my go to when all I want is a Muffaletta or a sandwich! It's perfectly smoked and sliced!

-Steffry, Finance

Sometimes I just need two-bites worth.

-Amy, Administrative (LoDs)



COMMUNITY CHANGE-MAKER AWARDS

Thursday, September 17, 2026
5pm · The East Side Club
RSVP at communityshares.com

Join us as we celebrate local leaders and organizations who are advancing social and environmental justice in our community.

Monique Minkens

Nominated by End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin

Winner of the Liesl Blockstein Community Leadership Award

Mikayla Sandin

Nominated by RCC Sexual Violence Resource Center

Winner of the Linda Sundberg Civil Rights Defender Award

Sandra Rivera

Nominated by Nuestro Mundo, Inc.

Winner of the Sally Sunde Family Advocate Award

Midwest Environmental Advocates, River Alliance of Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Conservation Voices

Winners of the CSW Collaboration Award for their statewide advocacy to take action on PFAS.

Steve Starkey

Nominated by OutReach LGBTQ+ Community Center

Winner of the CSW Lifetime Achievement Award

Presenting sponsor:



communityshares.com

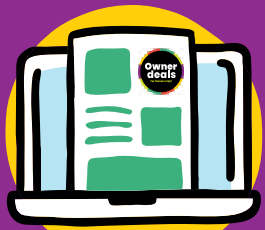


JUST ENOUGH!

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!

willy street co-op



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Sign up to get weekly Owner Deals flyers emailed directly to your inbox!

Unsubscribe any time you wish

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PROGRESSIVE & LOCAL
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ESTATE PLANS, PROBATE,
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ASSISTANCE TO FOLKS
AT REASONABLE COST.
FREE HOUSE CALLS.**

CALL: 608-630-5068

Shopping with Kids?

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WILLYSTREET.COOP/FRESH-DEALS

**fresh
deals**

**BACK TO
SCHOOL**

**KLEAN
KANTEEN**

**12oz Kids Classic
Water Bottle**

\$13.99

Everyone Saves \$4.00
8/5-8/18 While Supplies Last

**coop
deals**
For Everyone!

Ways to Save



**BUY ONE
GET ONE
FREE** August 19 through
September 1

Annie's
made with organic pasta
**Shells & Real
Aged Cheddar**
MACARONI & CHEESE

Annie's
made with organic pasta
**Shells & Real
Aged Cheddar**
MACARONI & CHEESE

**Annie's
Macaroni
& Cheese**
6 oz • Select Varieties
Save \$3.49
when you buy two

**coop
deals**

**BO
GO**

**Fire UP!
THE
Grill**

AUGUST 31 - SEPTEMBER 7

**Driftless Provisions
Bratwurst**
16 oz
\$4.99 **i** **L**
SAVE \$2.50

**S. Rosen's
Brat & Sausage
Rolls**
18 oz
\$3.99 **L**
SAVE \$1.50

**Bubbies
Snacking Pickles
Dill Flavored**
3.5 oz
\$2.29 **L**
SAVE \$1.00

30% OFF!

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By: Noah Bloedorn, Executive Director at REAP Food Group
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As a Willy Street Co-op Owner, we know you care about food, and about the people who grow, harvest, transport, prepare, and sell it. Every meal is connected to a much larger system, and as we enter election season, there is a lot on the ballot related to food and agriculture. We hope this article gives you food for thought as you research these issues, engage with candidates, and consider how policy choices shape our food system, food access, and community well-being.

And who are we? We're REAP Food Group, a Madison-based non-profit working to cultivate connections with communities to build a resilient local food system. We were founded more than 25 years ago as Research, Education, Action, and Policy on Food Group; those four pillars remain central to how we support farmers, schools, businesses, and communities across Wisconsin. When asked about why we

do our work, the answer is simple: our food system is broken. How is it that in one of the richest agricultural states in the country and in the world, we have such great disparities in food access, land access, and access to the wealth that is generated from our food system? REAP is on the ground, working across the supply chain to build a resilient, just local food system.

Our current food system holds both tremendous opportunity and significant challenges: disparities in food access, the undervaluing of farm laborers, strain on our ecosystems, and uneven health outcomes for our neighbors. It shows up in who profits from the system and the limited choices left for the rest of us. At the same time, we know the power of local food to create change. Every dollar invested locally supports farmers, workers, and businesses, and helps build a food system that values the people who produce our

food, the land that sustains us, and the prosperity of our region.

One of REAP's flagship initiatives over the past two years has been the Dane County Food System Action Plan, a community-centered initiative to develop a comprehensive regional blueprint for a more equitable, healthy, vibrant, resilient, sustainable, and collaborative local food system. It's intended for elected officials, local government staff, nonprofits, educational institutions, food businesses, and everyday residents alike, serving as both a policy tool and an educational resource.

Creating a more equitable, resilient food system requires leadership from elected officials who can help shape the policies that influence how food is grown, distributed, accessed, and valued. We encourage readers to reflect on these findings and ask candidates where they stand on these issues and what actions they would take if elected.

THREE TENSIONS DEFINING OUR FOOD SYSTEM

Dane County has deep agricultural roots and a strong culture of local food: home to the nation's largest producer-only farmers' market, dozens of farm-to-table restaurants, a network of CSAs and community gardens, and of course, Willy Street Co-op, a leader in our community for local and ethical sourcing. Yet, alongside these assets, our analysis of community input surfaced three core tensions that describe the structural challenges our food system faces, and the choices our elected leaders will help decide in the years ahead.

Agricultural Abundance vs. Rising Food Insecurity. Dane County's fertile

soil makes significant food production possible, yet much of that land isn't growing food for the hundreds of thousands of residents in Dane County. These crops are instead fueling our cars, and inefficiently feeding livestock across the globe, all while the wealth from this production is siphoned off to corporate entities that exist outside of our community. Meanwhile, Dane County is experiencing a rise in food insecurity. Food banks and pantries were designed for short-term crisis response, but low wages, high housing costs, and limited healthcare have turned food insecurity into a chronic condition. Emergency food infrastructure remains under-resourced relative to demand, leaving the county tenuously positioned for the next disruption.

Disconnected Supply and Demand. Dane County residents have an extraordinary appetite for local food, and institutions, hospitals, school districts, and large employers are often best positioned to provide the steady demand that helps regional food systems thrive. Yet many can't find enough local products and turn to national distributors instead. It's a frustrating paradox: a county with thousands of acres of farmland, most of it exported to commodity markets, even as institutions and consumers actively seek out more local food.

Community Control vs. Consolidation. Large financial entities and commodity operations are absorbing farmland that once supported diverse, small-scale production, while multi-state processors and distributors crowd out the mid-scale retail options local producers depend on. With each round of consolidation, control over pricing, shelf space, and access moves further from our community. Investing in locally owned infrastructure and businesses is how our community keeps these decisions closer to home.

These tensions aren't just abstractions. They show up in specific, well-documented trends:

- 1. Rising food insecurity.** Over 10% of Dane County residents, more than 58,000 people, struggle to access consistent nutrition, and 42% of that population earns too much to qualify for SNAP. U.S. food prices have risen roughly 28% since 2021, and pantry demand has reached record levels while pandemic-era programs and investments have declined.
- 2. Consolidation.** Since we began the food plan project, major local and regional retailers—including Metcalfe's, Festival Foods, and Fresh Market—have been acquired by national corporations. Similarly, Wisconsin has lost 26.4% of its farms over the past 25 years. Large distributors and chains increasingly dictate shelf space, pricing, and sourcing, sidelining local producers.
- 3. Lack of emergency preparedness.** The COVID-19 pandemic exposed real vulnerabilities in regional supply chains. Many emergency food providers still lack the refrigeration, staffing, and coordination needed for sustained crises, and gleaning



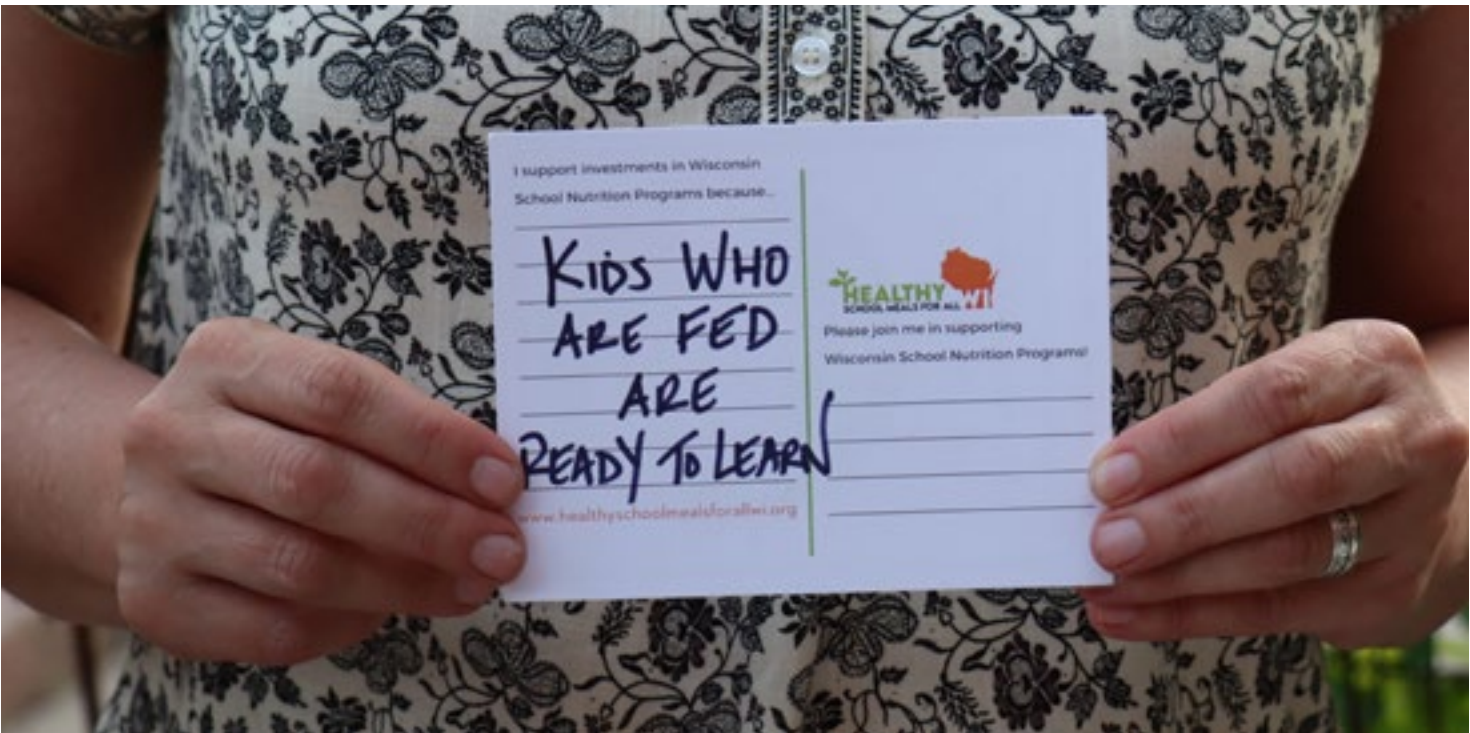
networks have grown unstable just as government funding is being cut. With the population projected to grow 25-50% over the next 25-30 years, the strain will only increase.

- 4. **Large amounts of waste.** In 2020, Wisconsin sent roughly 615,500 tons of food and 238,500 tons of food scraps to landfills, the largest single component of Dane County's landfill, while recovery and composting programs remain far short of meeting demand.
- 5. **Large disparities in access.** A retail gap leaves fresh produce geographically out of reach in both low-income neighborhoods and rural Dane County. Black and Hispanic households face food insecurity at significantly higher rates than state and national averages, and over 99% of Wisconsin farms are owned by white individuals.
- 6. **Demand not meeting supply.** Despite growing institutional interest from anchors like UW-Madison, UW Health, and Epic Systems, over 95% of Dane County's agricultural acreage grows commodity corn and soybeans rather than food for people. A "missing middle" gap in processing, cold storage, and distribution keeps small and mid-sized farms from meeting that demand.

SEVEN GOALS FOR A STRONGER FOOD SYSTEM

Drawing from community input and this research, the Dane County Food System Action Plan identified seven interconnected goals to build a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable food system:

- Goal 1: Collaboration.** Build social infrastructure and relationships across food system partners, government, and community members to foster coordinated action.
- Goal 2: Production.** Increase local food production, expand land access for diverse producers, support small farm viability, and grow markets for locally grown food for human consumption.
- Goal 3: Access.** Ensure all residents have access to affordable, healthy, and culturally relevant food through expanded programs, reduced barriers, and investment in under-resourced communities.
- Call out: REAP Food Group is actively working to improve food access for Wisconsin students through its leadership in Healthy School Meals for All Wisconsin (HSM4A WI), a statewide coalition advocating for free school breakfast and lunch for all Wisconsin K-12 students.
- School meals in Wisconsin currently operate a tiered payment system, free, reduced-price, or full price, determined by household income or qualification for other assistance programs. This creates administrative burdens for schools, can stigmatize students based on family income, and allows meal debt to accumulate when families struggle to pay. In 2023, the School



- Nutrition Association of Wisconsin estimated over \$3 million in school meal debt statewide.
- Reliable access to nutritious meals helps students learn, participate, and reach their full potential. It also strengthens school nutrition programs themselves, since meals are funded through student participation rather than local property taxes: more participation means more revenue for staff, kitchen infrastructure, and high-quality ingredients, including from local farms. When participation declines, so does funding, yet schools must still serve meals, often with fewer staff and greater reliance on processed foods.
- These programs are also a valuable market for Wisconsin farmers and food businesses. Schools have shown strong interest in purchasing local food, as demonstrated by the now-defunded Local Food for Schools program, but tight budgets often limit their ability to source local products consistently.
- For families, the impact is significant: HSM4A WI is estimated to save a family up to \$1,000 per student each year, money that can instead go toward housing, utilities, transportation, and healthcare, meaningful relief during a time of rising costs.
- Goal 4: Infrastructure.** Expand regional capacity for storage, processing, and distribution, prioritizing shared-use and "middle-of-the-chain" facilities that connect local producers to institutional markets.
- Goal 5: Efficiency.** Reduce and divert food waste through stronger recovery networks, expanded composting, business-to-business tools, and investment in the upcoming Sustainability Campus.
- Goal 6: Resilience.** Strengthen the food

system's ability to withstand and recover from supply chain disruptions, natural disasters, and long-term population growth through proactive planning.

Goal 7: Prosperity. Create sustainable, well-compensated food system careers by reducing barriers to entrepreneurship, improving labor conditions, and building wealth for workers and small business owners.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU THIS ELECTION SEASON

While it's easy to feel overwhelmed by these challenges, many organizations are already working to address them. But federal funding cuts over the past two years have reduced nonprofits' capacity to sustain this work, and ongoing investment from elected officials is critical to strengthening food access and security for all.

As you research candidates, ask where they stand: How would they support emergency food infrastructure ahead of the next crisis? What would they do to build regional infrastructure and support local food production? How would they protect community control of our food system against continued corporate consolidation? And would they support Healthy School Meals for All Wisconsin, ensuring every student has reliable access to breakfast and lunch, regardless of family income?

Our food system reflects the choices we make together, as shoppers, neighbors, and voters. We hope this article helps you head into the polls a little better informed, and a little more ready to ask the questions that matter.

LEARN MORE:

- **Healthy School Meals for All Wisconsin (HSM4A WI)** <https://www.healthyschoolmealsforallwi.org/>
- **In 2023, the School Nutrition Association of Wisconsin estimated over \$3 million in school meal debt statewide** <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UOVn8tSR-8wCltSuuABQgU-ClgwX-sL/view>
- **Sustainability Campus** <https://landfill.danecounty.gov/projects/WastandRenewableProjects/Sustainability-Campus>



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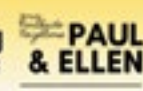
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You'll notice a big change in our August newsletter—Co-op Deals flyers will be produced separately from newsletters so we can add many more sales! The flyer for the first half of the month will be added to mailed print copies. We'll always have the current flyer and the next flyer available in the stores and online.

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