

LIVING NATURALLY

a community newsletter

WHAT'S INSIDE

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oldest medicinal ingredients

Mindfulness

Bring it to your daily routine

Drink More Water

5 ways to up your daily intake



Valley NATURAL
FOODS™

WINTER 2021



LIVING NATURALLY WINTER 2021

Nick Seeberger
CEO

Ashley Greywitt
Marketing Manager

Bre McGee
Photography

Susie Hessburg
Design

Store Hours
8 a.m. – 9 p.m. Daily

Drive-Thru Window Hours
7 a.m. – 8 p.m. Daily

Get the latest deals and news from the co-op by signing up for our e-newsletter at: valleynaturalfoods.com



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Valley Natural Foods Co-op works in partnership with the South Metro community to support health and well-being through education and expertise in local, sustainable food and wellness services.

— Valley Natural Foods Mission Statement

CEO UPDATE

Nick Seeberger

Last Thanksgiving, my family and I broke tradition, and perhaps started a new one making a lasagna from scratch as the centerpiece of our holiday feast. We missed the presence of our usual family and friends, but making the meal and spending the day together provided a warmth and closeness for us all. This was a wonderful reminder that what we're most thankful for is each other. As we enter the New Year, our focus will be on imagining what the year will bring and working hard towards that end. If your family's resolutions include trying new foods and recipes, adopting healthier eating habits, shrinking your environmental footprint or amping up support for small local farms and producers, the co-op is your place to shop. In this edition of Living Naturally, we bring you ideas for making the most of your start to the New Year.

In November we relaunched our deli hot bar with an expanded menu and delicious new dishes developed by our talented team. Among my personal favorites is the Healthy Start menu on Mondays – the tofu is flame-cooked to perfection and I love the savory beans and kale casserole. On Thursdays, the deli team shows-off some serious BBQ skills with an enticing menu that includes brisket, ribs, cornbread, and baked beans. If you are looking for an easy and delicious lunch or dinner, stop by the co-op and grab some hot food to-go.

In January, we are once again offering our Month of Wellness promotion. We are excited to highlight our Wellness department, by bringing you special discounts for the full month of January. We will also be launching some online classes, including bringing back some of our past instructors virtually and introducing new instructors and themes. Check out our website valleynaturalfoods.com for more information, and to register.



In February we will celebrate the core of our co-op all month long with special deals and giveaways – available only to member-owners. This is our way of thanking them with some nice additional perks!

Everyone deserves access to healthy foods, and I am pleased to announce that the co-op has received our WIC license, furthering us toward our mission of health and well-being in the South Metro. WIC stands for Women, Infants and Children, and it is a food supplemental program administered in Minnesota by the Department of Health that provides specific foods to pregnant women, new mothers, babies, and young children. If you receive WIC benefits, or know others who do, please spread the word that our co-op will soon be working with the WIC program. Look for more information on our website.

Whatever your plans are this year, I hope you find the co-op a helpful partner in realizing them. Warmest wishes to all for a healthy winter!

Sincerely,

Nick Seeberger

LETTER from the board

GARY SANKARY, TREASURER



One of the privileges I enjoy as a board member at Valley Natural Foods is the opportunity to see a values-driven business making a difference in my community.

I am a 45-year veteran of the retail industry. I earned my retail chops in the backroom of my father's small business

stocking shelves and working on the sales floor. We lived in a small town in central California. Dad knew most of his customers and he would keep track of which ones were also local businesses owners. It was important to him that we patronized the same people who "traded with us." He would explain that by shopping local we were supporting our community and making it stronger.

When I joined Valley Natural Foods about 10 years ago, something that attracted me, in addition to great produce and healthy food choices, were the values expressed in our mission statement. They lined up well with those my father had instilled in me. As I learned more, I grew delighted to see that these values are at the core of our business; they guide our strategy and operations every day. From our sourcing local producers to our community gardens to our financial support for local community organizations, I strongly believe that our values distinguish us

remarkably among other stores in our community. The energy that drives this sustaining support comes from all of us, the member-owners. It is we who continue to shop in our store, bolster our mission and generously donate time and resources needed to strengthen the mission we believe in.

Our co-op and our community have been through a lot this year. I have been exceptionally proud of the work our Valley Natural Foods team has done to keep the store thriving, and our shelves stocked – all while doing everything possible to protect the health and well-being of our customers and staff. I am extremely grateful to be a part of a community that has demonstrated its generosity through programs like Register Round-Up and food bin donations. Your giving spirit has enabled our co-op to support many groups that provide critical services in an historically challenging time.

Our economy is still reeling from the pandemic and many of our neighbors are facing uncertainty in the New Year as unemployment benefits expire and savings dwindle. I ask that we all continue to keep these neighbors in mind throughout 2021. Many thanks to all of you for your unwavering support this past year. I wish you a safe and healthy New Year and hope you can find some time to relax a bit and enjoy life. We have all earned it.

Sincerely,

Gary Sankary

Co-op Principle #7 – Concern for Community – includes our own VNF staff, a vital part of the larger picture! Recently, we transformed one of our upstairs areas into an employee relaxation room, where co-op staff may take their breaks in a quiet, softly lit area. This room offers open floor space for yoga stretching, meditation or simply a place to hang loose before returning to work duties. It adds another option to our many designated spaces for staff breaks, which helps us keep each other to stay safe with proper physical distancing.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

A LOOK BACK AT OUR LAST QUARTER IN 2020

FOOD DONATION BIN

Last October, November and December, shoppers continuously overflowed our food donation bin! Your 1,500+ pounds of non-perishable food contributions went directly to the food shelf at 360 Communities in Burnsville. Learn more at 360communities.org.

An acutely urgent need for healthy food access will continue throughout the winter months, and The Open Door will receive food donations collected January through March. Learn more at theopendoorpantry.org. Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

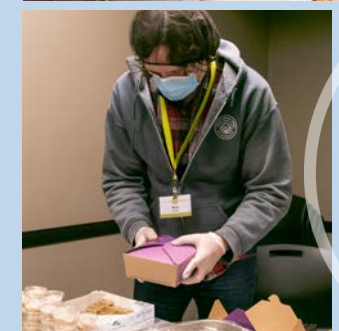
REGISTER ROUND-UP PROGRAM

Thank you for rounding up your shopping totals to benefit Loaves and Fishes last December. You raised over \$3,000 for the largest "open-to-the-public" meal program in Minnesota. For more than 38 years, Loaves & Fishes has provided healthful meals to Minnesotans in areas where need is greatest, regardless of economic, cultural, religious or ethnic background. Due to the coronavirus challenges, Loaves & Fishes has shifted from in-person dining to takeaway meals to ensure the safest environment possible for its staff, volunteers and those in need. Learn more at loavesandfishesmn.org.

In January, Register Round-Up contributions will go to the Eastview Community Foundation's "Random Acts of Kindness" program. This service offers grants, used in 12 of the district's K-12 schools, to help students with limited means. These funds help pay for meals for children, hot school lunches, winter clothing, classroom supplies and activities for kids in the community who need it most. Find out more at evcf.org.

MEALS FOR THE OPEN DOOR

VNF staff took advantage of a new opportunity to give back to the community last December. In the week leading up to the holidays, staff prepared, packed-up and delivered 480 holiday meals to The Open Door. These meals were distributed at a drive-thru pop-up pantry in the Metcalf Middle School parking lot in Burnsville.



February is ...

Member-Owner Appreciation Month!



We are grateful to you for being an essential part of our co-op community!

As a way to give back to our member-owners and their continual support of the co-op, we'll be offering member-owner exclusive specials, deals and giveaways throughout February! Refer a friend to member-ownership in February and receive a free gift as a special thank you.

Follow us on social media and subscribe to our weekly e-newsletter to be the first to know about special deals and giveaways during Member-Owner Appreciation Month!

Visit ValleyNaturalFoods.com/The-Beet to subscribe today!



STAFF PICKS

Several staffers pooled their preferences ... and agreed these local delights are among their treat faves!

Lost Capital Foods »

Fermented Hot Sauces - Made in MN

Lost Capital Foods is the latest line of hot sauce to arrive on our shelves! If the clever names alone were not enough (like Bailout and Gold Digger), the seven savory flavors – ranging from mild heat to vicious hot – are truly satisfying plus addicting, as noted by several staff. They taste great on anything needing a splash of spice, and a little goes a long way! Find all varieties in the grocery cooler, with the fermented foods.



« Pine River

Spicy Beer Gourmet Cold Pack Cheese Spread - Made in WI

Sometimes just a spoonful of cold-pack cheese spread atop a few crackers is all that's needed to curb midday cravings, our staff will vouch. It's the unique melding of ingredients – cool beer and pepper heat – that lifts this cold-pack cheese to a "whole 'nother level." You'll find it in our deli's delightful cheese island.



Photos: Bre McGee

Wedge Community Co-op »

Fresh Sourdough Boule - Made in MN

Q. What could be better than sourdough bread?
A. Sourdough Boule that is baked from scratch and delivered fresh from another local co-op! We discovered this perfectly chewy, crusted bread tastes great warm and served with butter. However, enhance a slice with a dab of cold-pack cheese plus a splash of hot sauce, and you may never go back to just butter alone. You'll be singing under your breath "hooray for the brilliant Boule." Grab one as you breeze through our bread area. You'll be glad you did!



RESPECT YOUR *Elder-Berries*

A look at one of our oldest medicinal ingredients

Long before there were pharmacists in white coats and doctors with prescription pads, natural treatments, herbs, and tinctures weren't considered alternative health products – they were the only health products. Somewhere along the line, many began believing that homeopathic treatments weren't as effective as a pill with a co-pay.

Amid a pandemic, many of us are doing the best we can to stay as healthy as possible. We wear masks and social distance, try to eat a balanced diet (even when comfort food can be far more appealing), and exercise regularly. Even with these measures, your immune system can be left vulnerable.

One tried and true natural, immune-boosting superfood is the elderberry.

The small, dark purpley-blue berries are packed with antioxidants and vitamins, which are linked to immune-boosting properties. Rich in vitamins A, B, and C and loaded with dietary fiber, many consumers have found elderberries help tame inflammation, reduce stress, and prevent and ease cold and flu symptoms. A comparative study of two types of elderberry trees published in the Journal of Medicinal Food in 2006 found elderberries to contain anti-cancer attributes.

Elderberries and their medicinal properties have held their place in history long before the term “superfood” was ever coined. Native Americans used elderberries as a natural treatment for various ailments. The Cherokee treated rheumatism with elderberry teas and infusions. The Mohegan used elderberry elixirs for jaundice and liver complications. The Menominee used dried elderflowers to break fevers and the Lenni-Lenape used them to soothe colic.

It's believed that ancient Egyptians used elderberries to improve skin complexion and heal burns and scars. Hippocrates, often referred to as the ‘Father of Medicine’ wrote about elderberry, making it one of the oldest ingredients used in traditional medicine. In Victorian times, distilled elderflower water was popular among those seeking a younger, brighter, and healthier complexion.

Today, elderberry is most commonly consumed in a syrup or tablet form.

One of our favorite elderberry syrup producers not only helps boost your immune system but also boosts our local economy. From their home kitchen in Inver Grove Heights, Bug & Mini was launched on a whim a few short months before the coronavirus pandemic erupted, according to founder, Jennifer Antiel.



“I started buying elderberry syrup when [my daughter] Hannah was in daycare and started getting sick all the time,” Jennifer recalls. “Honestly, it was to the point where I had to figure out something because I couldn't keep missing work while also having to pay for daycare when she wasn't there!” After researching online for natural, medicinal alternatives, Jennifer came across elderberry syrup. Seeing rave reviews and huge success stories, she decided to give it a try. Soon after, Hannah began not getting sick as often, and if she did, she recovered more quickly. “That was when I knew that elderberry syrup was going to be a staple in our house.”

After almost five years of perfecting her elderberry syrup recipe through rounds of experimentation and earning her young daughters' stamps of approval, Jennifer's entrepreneurial spirit got the best of her.

In November 2019, Jennifer made the leap into selling her special blend of elderberry syrup on a whim after only one month of preparation. “I am an entrepreneur to the core – I am always coming up with business ideas. In October, I was trying to come up with a business that I could start with Hannah and Harlow, to teach them about entrepreneurship and owning a business, and then realized that elderberry syrup would be what we would do!”

Now a family business, Jennifer's husband, Don, is Bug & Mini's operations manager and their daughters help out too – stamping bags, placing stickers, and with other small marketing projects until they can take on more involved tasks.

Bug & Mini Elderberry Syrup's recipe is created from simple, easy-to-pronounce, whole ingredients like ginger, cinnamon, lemon, orange, vanilla, raw honey, and of course, elderberry. Each taking a one tablespoon per day suggested serving, a 16-ounce bottle would last a family of four about one week.

“We believe life is too short to be sick and that there are tools for us to help keep us from getting sick,” Jennifer explains. “And if you aren't into elderberry syrup for its health benefits,” she adds “Ours just tastes pretty darn good!”

But where does a name like “Bug & Mini” come from? Those are nicknames of Jennifer and Don's daughters, Hannah (Bug) and Harlow (Mini)!



Bringing Mindfulness To Your Daily Routine

We've finally said sayonara to what may go down as one of the most challenging, if not memorable, years in recent history. Now, we're in the thick of winter — the seemingly never-ending season of bleak, sub-arctic weather is appropriately fit to follow the year that felt infinite.

The shorter days, longer nights, and fewer opportunities for new experiences (now more than ever), has left many of us in a suspension of "Blurs-day" that can wreak havoc on our internal well-being. The "should's" and "to-do's" around our homes — that have turned into makeshift schools and offices — are easier to focus on and grasp an ounce of control over in times like these.

This year, we're focused on mindful wellness and self-care. We're choosing to live more fully aware and trying to find the good in daily life. If you feel that you could benefit from it too, we encourage you to join in! Here's how we're trying to focus on our wellness:

Create a Self-Care Focused Environment

For many of us, our bedrooms are no longer just a place to sleep. Our dining tables aren't just for sharing meals. No matter the amount of multi-tasking your spaces need to do to get by these days, think about how the spaces make you feel.

To reset your spaces at the end of each day, consider lighting candles or diffusing essential oils to help yourself unwind and reclaim your space. Different scent blends are known to offer benefits for different ailments.

Keep in mind: Essential oil blending for diffusion doesn't need to be an exact recipe or science. The size of your room and capacity of your diffuser make a big difference. More drops will create a stronger aroma than fewer drops. Aim for 5-10 drops total. Avoid dropping full strength essential oils on bare skin.

ANXIETY EASE

4 drops Rose
3 drops Chamomile
2 drops Tangerine

STRESS RELIEF

3 drops Clary Sage
1 drop Lemon
1 drop Lavender

WINTER RESCUE

3 drops Orange
2 drops Grapefruit



Practice Gratitude

When you're feeling extra down, stressed or the day is already getting to you and it's not even 8:00am, take a 5-minute break. Look around the room you're in and list 10 things that bring you joy in that moment. What can joy look like? Anything! It can be the sunshine coming through the window or your pet's face staring up at you that makes you smile. It can be your favorite java in a warm mug in your hand or the soft crackle of a new candle burning. Challenge yourself to find 10 things and reflect on why they make you happy. This practice will get easier the more you do it — and will help you appreciate the little things in life!

Press Play

Whether it's your favorite podcast or go-to playlist, filling your space with sounds that bring you joy (or laughter) will raise your spirits in no time. Pick a podcast that grabs your attention and gets you excited about something new or blast some tunes that get you up for a full-body dance session!


Make a Small Change

When looking to better yourself, making small adjustments rather than full overhauls can often times produce better results. Try swapping one cup of coffee for herbal tea to cut back on your caffeine intake. Add another half mile to your walk or another 10 minutes to your yoga practice. Set your alarm for 15 minutes earlier than normal each morning and focus on what brings you joy with your extra time. It's the small steps that really add up in the bigger picture.

Pay it Forward

One of the best things you can do for yourself when you're feeling low is doing something for someone else. Pay for the coffee for the person behind you when you're in the drive-thru. Send a card to a friend to let them know you appreciate their presence in your life. Give your pet a full body massage. Focusing on others can help you find new purpose. Plus, a little extra kindness can go a long way. You never know the impact you could have on someone's day.

5 ways to *Drink More Water*



Most of us don't think about gulping down an ice-cold glass of water in the winter. After all, it's below freezing outside, the furnace is blasting, and we just want to warm up under a cozy blanket with a hot mug filled with a toasty beverage. It's second nature to drink water during the warmer months, but it's equally, if not more important, to stay just as hydrated in the cooler months.

Living in the Minnesota, we're no stranger to the dry, frigid air our winters bring. Because the outdoor air is so dry (plus indoor heat is dehydrating), our bodies need to humidify the air we breathe in, causing us to use more liquid. In turn, we need to drink more to have liquid to spare. Dull, dry and, cracked skin and lips are clear indicators that you need to up your daily water intake!

"How much water do I actually need?"

Exactly how much water people should be drinking each day is still a subject of debate. The most common recommendation is six to eight, 8-ounce cups per day, but that figure is dependent upon a few other factors. The climate you live in, how much water you get from fruits and vegetables and your activity and exercise habits all play a role.

If you're drinking water as your main beverage (drinking it when you're thirsty and with meals), there's no need to get too caught up with tallying your daily ounces. A good rule of thumb is to aim for eight or so glasses per day (64 ounces), however depending on your lifestyle, it's not bad to add another glass or two!

Drink it Unconventionally

If you've already tried getting excited about water with a new bottle and it hasn't worked, have you tried it in a martini glass? A champagne flute? We could all use a little more pizzazz in daily life these days, so why not try to have a little more fun in a small way! Try garnishing it with blueberries or an orange peel twist! You may have a little explaining to do (or prefacing) if you happen to take a sip while on a video call with your boss though!

Infuse It

Having a hard time downing plain ol' water? Try infusing it to wake up your taste buds! While flavor packets pack a serious flavor punch, they often are not the healthiest additives. Instead, infuse your water the natural way.

Place your favorite fruit, veggie and herb combinations in a container (we like mason jars with twist-on lids), fill with water and refrigerate overnight. Bonus points if your jar can hold an entire day's worth of water!

Try these combinations:

- Watermelon Cucumber Mint Infusion
- Orange Lemon Basil Infusion
- Raspberry Lime Infusion

Spice it Up!



If you're trying to drink (or chug) more water, adding a kick to your food will have you reaching for your water twice as much! Though we Minnesotans aren't known for our love of spicy foods, adding a little hot sauce, fresh hot peppers or spice to your soups, chili and stews is an easy (and delicious) way to bump up your water intake — and perhaps change up some routine recipes you've prepared the same way for years.

Multitask the Day Away

If you work a standard 8-hour workday, drink one 8-ounce glass of water each hour. Drink a full glass when you start your workday, then fill it up at the top of every hour. Either sip it throughout the hour or down it right away. No matter your approach, your time on the clock will feel even more productive!



Treat Yourself

Drinking from the same glass day after day can get a little monotonous. Pick up a reusable water bottle that brings a smile to your face and you'll be excited to keep it with you all day. Plus, it's easier to toss in your bag on your way out the door so you're prepared when thirst strikes while you're out and about! The co-op has a variety of styles and colors to fit any personality!





Wellness

Product Highlight

ULTIMATE PALEO PROTEIN

Ultimate Paleo Protein was developed to address a gap in the powdered protein category. Nowadays, with many people sensitive to a number of food ingredients, this company delivers a hypoallergenic protein line and strives to use only the cleanest ingredients. You will never be confused by label jargon such as “proprietary formula or blend” on their honest lists of ingredients.

Ultimate Paleo Protein incorporates a unique manufacturing process for their beef protein and collagen peptides called Agglomerated or Instantized.

During this special process, the beef protein and collagen are injected with water molecules, so when the protein is mixed with a drink, the water molecules are already present in that drink. They then have a much easier time connecting with the water found in the agglomerated/instantized protein. This leads to easier dissolving.



FAST FACTS >> ULTIMATE PALEO PROTEIN

- >> Made with grass fed, pasture raised, non-GMO beef with no hormones or artificial ingredients.
- >> Synergistic nutrients are included in the formulas to increase digestion, assimilation and support immune function.
- >> Mixes easy in room temperature liquids or smoothies and tastes GREAT!
- >> Can be used any time of day for all ages. Enjoy after a work-out or anytime for a great tasting protein pick me up.
- >> Free of common allergens including gluten, wheat, dairy, corn, egg, soy and sugar.
- >> Locally owned and operated in Woodbury, MN

Wild Rice Protein Pancakes

ADDING PROTEIN POWDER TO PANCAKE BATTER PACKS A NUTRITION PUNCH!

Ingredients

1 cup flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 scoop unflavored or vanilla protein powder
1 tablespoon brown sugar
3 tablespoons sour cream or yogurt
1 cup milk (or milk alternative)
1 egg lightly beaten
3/4 cup cooked wild rice
1/4 cup chopped pecans
1 tablespoon melted butter

Preparation

In a medium bowl whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt, protein powder and brown sugar. In a separate bowl, whisk together the sour cream, milk and egg, and then stir in the wild rice and nuts. Combine the dry and wet ingredients, gently stirring until just blended and then fold in the melted butter. Preheat a skillet or griddle to medium heat and brush with butter or oil. Pour 1/4 cup batter onto the skillet for each pancake and cook for 2-3 minutes per side or until pancakes are golden brown.

Makes approximately eight 5-inch pancakes.

Serving Suggestion

Tasty optional toppings: Fresh blueberries, pecans, maple syrup, apricot fruit spread, candied ginger pieces



Photo: Susie Hessburg

STAY HOME & ***\$AVE***

Winter in Minnesota is rough...

You deserve a reward!

Beat the black ice, windchill and wrestling your cart through a snowy parking lot by shopping your favorite co-op online. It's quick and so convenient you can pick out produce in your PJ's!

For a limited time, new online shoppers can use the coupon code **VALLEYNATURAL10** to save \$10 on a \$50 minimum purchase at Valley Natural Foods. Visit valleynaturalfoods.com/shop and jump-start your order today for curbside pick-up or delivery. Snow kidding, it will make your day.

Offer valid for new customers only. One use per customer.
Offer valid January 1 through March 31, 2021.