

LIVING NATURALLY

a community newsletter



Valley NATURAL
FOODS

SUMMER 2021



CO-OP HAPPENINGS

LIVING NATURALLY SUMMER 2021

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Store Hours
8 a.m. – 9 p.m. Daily

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

Open on Labor Day
Sept. 6 • 8 a.m. – 9 p.m.

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



P. 4 LETTER FROM THE BOARD

Hear from board member, Gary Sankary

P. 5 COMMUNITY IMPACT

A look back at our last quarter of shopper generosity

P. 6 PRODUCE MAKEOVER

A new floor layout

P. 8 BAKEHOUSE MILESTONES

Valley's Own Bakehouse hits two milestones at once

P. 12 PICNIC PERFECT

Easy ways to make your picnic a success

P. 14 HIT THE TRAILS

Recipes for portable protein-packed snacks

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

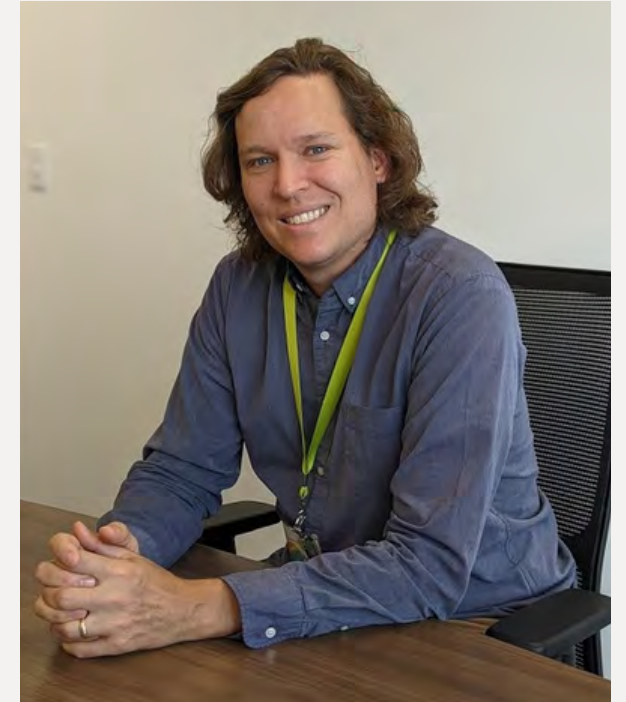
CEO UPDATE

Nick Seeberger

It's so good to see your smiles. Once we could safely remove our masks, the thing that struck me most powerfully, after the initial feeling of being exposed, was the joy I felt when I saw many of our customer and employee faces for the first time. In the absence of seeing faces, my mind made assumptions of what people looked like under their masks. What I had imagined lacked so many of the finer details that make us memorable – the shape of our noses and chins, the fullness of a smile. I'm proud of the efforts of our customers and staff to make the co-op a safe place to shop during the pandemic and am excited to see you (and your smiles) shopping and dining at the co-op.

It is an exciting time at the co-op as we focus more deeply on how we can best meet the needs of our community. One of the innovative features of our co-op is that we own and operate a wholesale bakery, Valley's Own Bakehouse, that focuses on providing certified gluten-free baked goods to grocers, institutions, and individual households across the Upper Midwest. Additionally, we provide manufacturing and co-packing service to smaller, local companies that do not have their own manufacturing facilities.

For the last several years we produced our products at a leased facility in Burnsville. Last summer we began the process of finding a new, bigger facility. I am excited to share that we have a new home in Rosemount that began production in mid-May. The facility is larger, more modern and will allow us to scale up our production. We have also entered into an agreement to manufacture gluten-free cookies for a local company. We are planning on having a grand opening in October and would love to welcome members to see the facility



and enjoy some of the delicious goods. Look for more information about our open house in upcoming e-newsletters, and find our products on the shelf and in the freezer at Valley Natural Foods.

Over the next several months, we will be transitioning many of our practices from what they were during the pandemic to what they were pre-pandemic, or to something entirely new. One practice we are keeping, at least for this year, is a virtual annual meeting. This will allow all who want to attend to do so safely. We have begun planning in-person events again and hope to relaunch our Community Dinners events in the Fall. I hope you are able to attend the annual meeting to hear about the last year, get a look forward at what's coming and ask questions you have about the co-op. You can always reach out directly to me at: nseeberger@valleynaturalfoods.com.

Best wishes for a safe and fun summer!

Sincerely,

Nick Seeberger

LETTER from the board



I've had a long career in retail, going back to the mid 70s when I worked in my father's shoe store. Along the way I have had the opportunity to serve in several executive roles with two of the largest, and at least in one case, most successful retailers in the United States.

Our co-op does this in many ways. From supporting local producers and farmers to educating our membership about sustainable food choices to our Register Round-Up program – where every transaction has the potential to directly support a local non-profit – our business model strives to maximize the impact of every dollar we earn in our local community.

As a member of the Board, it has been my privilege to give back to the community through our co-op. Our board works best when its composition includes voices from across the spectrum of our community and our co-op membership. Our role is not to direct strategy or supervise the day-to-day operations of the store. Our role is to bring our diverse talents and business experience to the leadership team. We provide them with a resource to help inform strategic decisions, and we ensure that our member-owners voices, through our by-laws and strategic objectives, always frame our decisions and strategies.

This year we have a number of openings on our Board. If you have an interest in serving the co-op and have a voice and strategic acumen that you are willing to share, I encourage you to think about applying by Friday, July 23. As a board member you can help ensure that the co-op is able to continue to deliver on our mission and to serve our community long into the future.

Sincerely,

Gary Sankary

For the last several years I've served as a consultant to the industry. This has provided me with the opportunity to meet with retailers from across every line of business. Bottom line, I don't think there is another industry that is as dynamic or that changes as fast as retail. This is the reason I've been in this space for more than 40 years.

Despite my experience with large national chains, I've never lost sight of the lessons I learned in my Dad's stores – small business is the backbone of every community. When I made the decision to get more involved as a board member at Valley Natural Foods, it was because I strongly believe that supporting small, local businesses is a key driver for sustainable economic growth in a community.

Have an idea or questions for the VNF Board?

Send us an email at board@valleynaturalfoods.com



COMMUNITY IMPACT

REGISTER ROUND-UP

A look back at contribution totals from our last quarter

June



\$3,774

Rainbow Health, a St. Paul-based nonprofit, centers individuals and communities at risk of and living with HIV or facing barriers to equitable health care access and outcomes because of their identity as gender, sexual, and/or racial minorities.

May



\$3,878

This Minneapolis-based education advocacy nonprofit helps students, families, educators, and community members share their stories and advocate for the education issues that matter to them, with a focus on those who have been historically under-served.

April



\$3,642

Midwest Food Connection, is a leader in healthy youth development in the Twin Cities. MWFC brings food education to students and their families. They teach hands-on lessons that empower youth to make healthy choices for their bodies, their communities, and the land.

FOOD DONATIONS



1,211 Pounds

Food donations were collected throughout the months of April, May and June for the food shelves operated by 360 Communities, based in Burnsville.

THANK YOU VNF SHOPPERS, FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY!

MAKEOVER



You can count on your community owned co-op to bring you the best

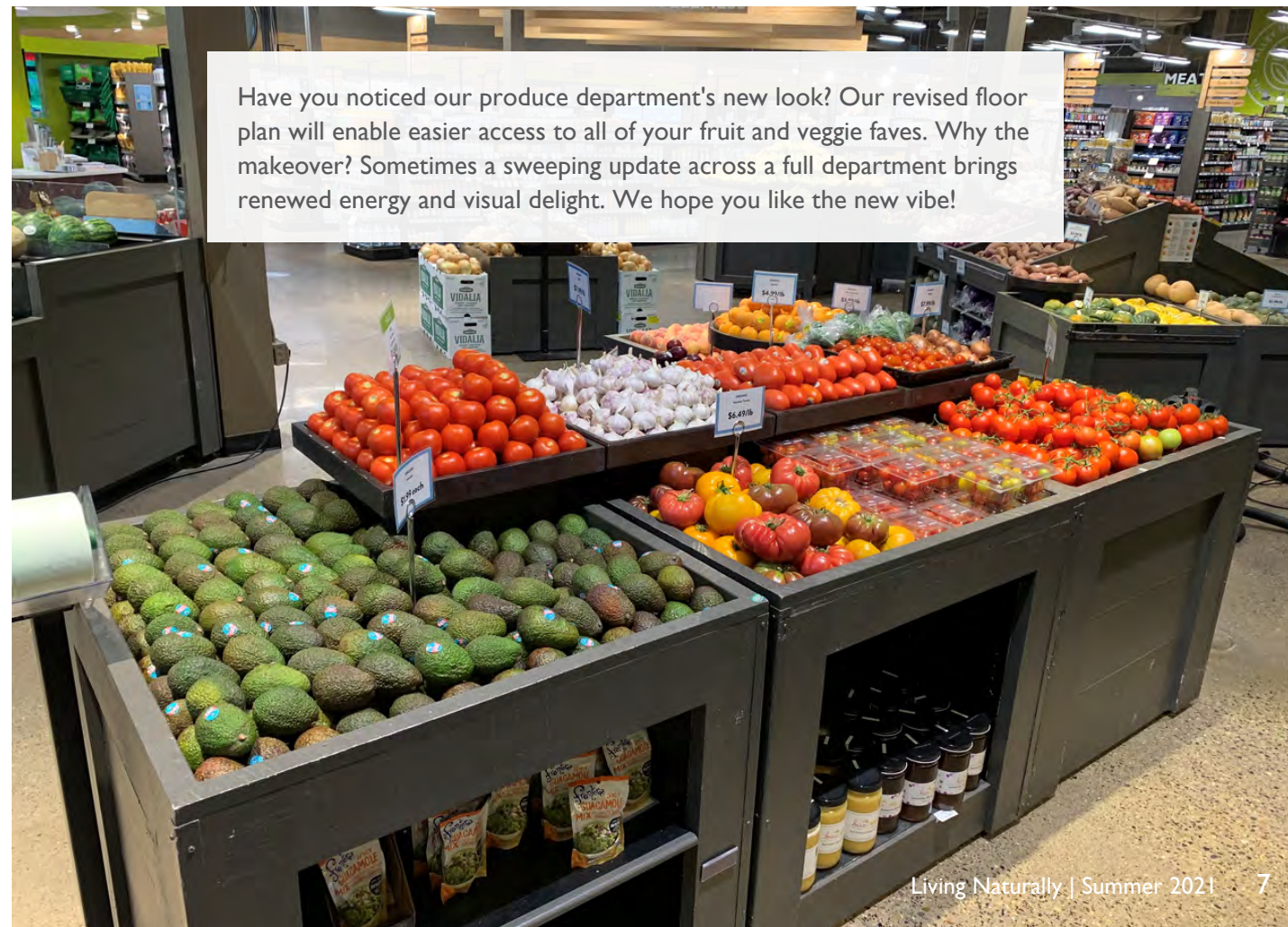
Quality Produce

Every local item you purchase supports

Local Farmers
in the community!



PRODUCE



Have you noticed our produce department's new look? Our revised floor plan will enable easier access to all of your fruit and veggie faves. Why the makeover? Sometimes a sweeping update across a full department brings renewed energy and visual delight. We hope you like the new vibe!

Celebrating 10 Years

Valley's Own Bakehouse hits two milestones – a decade anniversary and a new address!

In its 10th year of business – the first milestone – Valley's Own Bakehouse also made a move to a brand new building that offers over 8000 square feet to house their gluten-free wholesale bakery. After ten years operating out of their facility in Burnsville, the big move to a new location – though not easy – was happily quick! Valley's Own Bakehouse (or VO as the regulars call it) needed more square footage to accommodate a growing business plan.

And grow they did! From a small kitchen and an open warehouse, Valley's Own Bakehouse has added multiple spaces and streamlined many steps in the process. The new facility is located in the Biscayne Business Sector of Rosemount, Minnesota – just 9 miles from Valley Natural Foods.

The bakehouse team can now chill in their own break room. When back on duty, the team has the advantage of working with upgraded equipment, including a new flow-wrapping station designed to expedite shipping processes.

A new walk-in freezer was added in the back of the building to house more product to fill a growing number of wholesale orders. Additional space for prep tables in the kitchen offers the growing bakehouse staff several new areas to prepare more product, with better light, more tools and a modernized working environment.

Valley's Own Bakehouse General Manager, Renee Johnson, is especially ecstatic for the new location as she finally has her own office – complete with a window – which is a major step-up from her small desk area in the former location's warehouse.

The Grand Opening 10 Year Celebration will be held at the new location in Rosemount. Follow us on social media for more details!



Photos: Bre McCreel

A DAY AT THE BAKEHOUSE IN SNAPSHOTS



TAKING PRIDE IN THE WORKPLACE

Wide-open work stations, great lighting, and upgraded equipment all contribute to a comfortable and modernized production environment where bakehouse staff can reach their peak efficiency.

Are you an inspired to join our growing community? Find out what positions we have available at valleynaturalfoods.com/careers



We are proudly certified by the Gluten-Free Certification Organization. The GFCO certification mark stands for the independent verification of quality and integrity, and products that carry the mark represent unmatched reliability for meeting the strictest of gluten-free standards. -gfc.org



Celebrate summer with a leisurely picnic. Our simple recipes and tips will help you plan a picnic that's delicious, fun and bug-free!

Picnic Perfect

Here are some easy ways to make your picnic a success

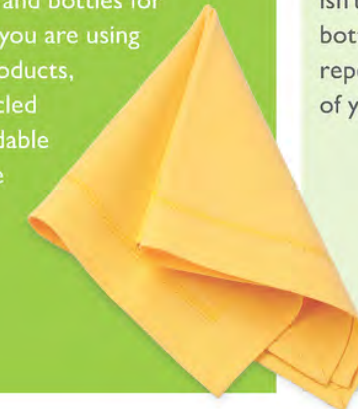
Prep everything ahead of time

This may seem like a no-brainer, but putting in the time to chop your veggies, assemble your kebabs, or slice your baguette before leaving the house will keep the fuss—and mess—to a minimum once you get outside.



Keep it earth-friendly

Bring reusable napkins (you'll not only avoid fly-away paper napkins, but cloth napkins can also be used to wrap food and bottles for transport). If you are using disposable products, look for recycled and biodegradable options at the co-op.



Stay bug-free

Bring small citronella candles to place along your picnic table. If you're picnicking on a blanket (where fire isn't the friendliest option), pack a bottle of chemical-free mosquito repellent from the body care section of your co-op.



Avoid foods that spoil easily

That means mayo, cream-based dips, and fresh cheeses are best left at home—unless you're planning to transport them a short distance on ice and eat them immediately. Any leftovers should be thrown away (so plan your portions carefully!).



Practice food safety

Take care to make sure all raw meats are wrapped separately, and transport them on ice. Use separate cutting boards and utensils for handling raw meat (bring an extra plastic bag to keep them in), and wash your hands as often as possible. Hand sanitizer is a must.



Cook meat with care

If you're grilling outdoors, keep raw meats below cooked meats on the grill at all times, and make sure they're cooked thoroughly before eating (a meat thermometer can confirm doneness). Hamburgers should be cooked to 160 degrees, poultry to 170 degrees, and beef, veal, and lamb cuts to 145 degrees.



Hit the Trails

These portable, protein-packed snacks will give you the energy you need for your outdoor adventures.



Nut Butter and Flax Powerballs

Servings: 15. Prep time: 20 minutes.

- 1 ½ cups almond butter
- 1 banana, peeled and mashed
- 2 tablespoons ground flaxseed
- 2 tablespoons whey protein powder
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 1 tablespoon honey
- ⅓ cup almonds, finely chopped

1. In a mixing bowl, stir together the almond butter, banana, flax, protein powder, cocoa powder and honey. Blend until smooth.
2. Line a plate or pan with parchment paper. Roll the mixture into 1- to 2-inch balls and place on parchment paper. Next, roll each ball in the chopped almonds and return to parchment paper. Place in the refrigerator or freezer until firm.



No-Bake Apricot Cashew Energy Bars

Servings: Makes 14 bars. Prep time: 1 hour, 15 minutes; 15 minutes active.

- 1 ½ cups chopped dried apricots
- ½ cup cashews
- ½ cup almonds
- ½ cup cashew butter
- ½ cup peanut butter
- 1 cup flaked coconut
- ⅓ cup shelled hemp seeds
- ⅓ cup chia seeds
- 3 tablespoons cacao powder
- 1 tablespoon maca powder

1. Place the apricots, cashews, almonds and cashew butter in a food processor and mix until the apricots are finely chopped and the ingredients have come together. The mixture will still be coarse.
2. Transfer to a mixing bowl and add the remaining ingredients. Stir until the mixture takes on the consistency of a very thick dough. Line a loaf pan with parchment paper and press mixture firmly into the bottom of the pan. Chill in the refrigerator for at least one hour, then check to make sure it has set. When set, turn the mixture out onto a cutting board and slice into 14 pieces. Keeps refrigerated up to 5 days.



Chocolate Matcha Energy Balls

Servings: Makes 16. Prep time: 15 minutes.

- ½ cup raw cashews
- ¼ cup raw walnuts
- 1 cup pitted dates
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup or honey
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon matcha, divided
- Pinch of salt

1. Place cashews and walnuts in the food processor and grind the nuts to a fine mince, then scrape them to the center of the container. Add the dates, maple syrup or honey, cocoa, 1 tablespoon matcha and salt. Process until the dates form a thick paste and the mixture holds together if you squeeze a bit of it.
2. Scoop out a tablespoon of the mixture, form into a ball and place into a medium bowl; repeat until all of the mixture has been used. Use a wire mesh strainer to sift the remaining matcha over the balls. Roll the balls around to coat. Store, tightly wrapped, in the refrigerator for up to a month.



Chewy Cocoa Granola Bars

Servings: Makes 12. Prep time: 20 minutes active; 50 minutes total.

- 2 cups rolled oats, thick
- ½ cup raisins, dried cherries or other dried fruit
- ½ cup coarsely chopped almonds, walnuts or peanuts
- ¼ cup cocoa
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup applesauce
- ½ cup honey or agave syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Cut a piece of parchment paper 8 inches wide, and place it in an 8" x 8" baking pan, with the edges hanging over to make handles for easy removal of the finished bars.
2. On a sheet pan, spread the oats and toast them in the oven for about 10 minutes, until fragrant and lightly golden in spots. Let cool on a rack.
3. Place the cooled oats in a large bowl and add the dried fruit, nuts, cocoa and salt and stir to mix well.
4. In a medium bowl, combine the applesauce, honey and vanilla. Stir until smooth, then pour over the oat mixture. Stir until well mixed, then spread in the prepared pan. Using a spatula, press the mixture firmly and evenly in the pan.
5. Bake for 30 minutes, until the bars feel firm when pressed. Cool on a rack for 10 minutes, then use the parchment to lift the bars out and let cool completely. Cut 3-by-4 to make 12 bars. Store, tightly wrapped, for up to 4 days at room temperature or a week in the refrigerator.



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SAVE THE DATE!

9/21

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

**Valley Natural Foods
Community Dinner**

9/23

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

**Valley Natural Foods
Virtual Annual Meeting**

10/1

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1

**Valley's Own Bakehouse
Grand Opening and
10 Year Celebration**



Be sure you subscribe to our e-newsletter for the most up to date information on events and happenings at the co-op