

LIVING NATURALLY

a community newsletter



**PICNIC
FAVORITE
RECIPES**

**SAVE THE
DATE FOR
LOCAL FEST!**

**BACK-TO-SCHOOL
BOGO SALE**



Valley NATURAL
FOODS™

SUMMER 2023



LIVING NATURALLY SUMMER 2023

Nick Seeberger
CEO

Ashley Greywitt
Marketing Brand Manager

Susie Hessburg
Communications Specialist

Brienna Schleusner
Community Relations &
Marketing Specialist

Store Hours
8 a.m. – 9 p.m. Daily

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

Open on Labor Day
Monday, Sept. 4
8 a.m. – 9 p.m.

CO-OP EVENTS AND CLASSES



August 30 - Back to School: Tips on Keeping our Immune Systems Strong with Dr. Sonja Murray from Wild Integrative Health



September 7- Snack Attack Kids Cooking Class with Jackie Mart



September 13 - Member-Owner Annual Meeting at the Ames Center



September 14 - Local Fest



September 25 - Vegan Meal Prep Virtual Class with Robin Asbell



October 10 - Vegan Mediterranean Recipes with Robin Asbell



October 21 - Make a Monster Cookie Decorating Event



October 24 - Spaghetti Squash with Jess Toliver



October 30 - Talking About Death with Jeanne Bain



November 6 - Desserts that Aren't Pie with Robin Asbell



November 13 - Spice Up Your Life with Sonja Murray

Scan QR Code for event details or visit
www.valleynaturalfoods.com/events-classes



Sustainability



Cooking & Recipes



Lifestyle & Wellness

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

Co-ops are all about community. We are owned by the individuals who shop at our store and we exist to meet their needs. This is an exciting time of year for Member-Owners as we wrap-up our fiscal year and prepare to report back on our financial performance and the impacts we have had in the community in the last year. I hope all Member-Owners will vote in the upcoming board election and join us for our return to an in-person annual meeting. Or maybe you want to attend our upcoming Local Fest event to meet some of our farmers and vendors – everyone is welcome to attend Local Fest! However you engage with the co-op, you are a valued member of our co-op community.

Valley Natural Foods (VNF) budgets and plans on a fiscal year that runs from July 1 – June 30. It's exciting to me to update our Member-Owners and customers on what we have accomplished, and where we are headed in the coming years. I want to invite all Member-Owners to join us for our return to an in-person Annual Meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 13 at the Ames Center in Burnsville. At the meeting you will hear from the VNF Board of Directors and from me while enjoying the company of fellow Member-Owners and a delicious catered menu from Crave.

The next day (Thursday, Sept. 14), we'll be holding our 2023 Local Fest at the store. It's a great chance to get a delicious, inexpensive meal, meet many of the local producers whose products are on our shelves and enjoy activities for the whole family. Last year 500 people showed up to celebrate all the co-op has to offer. My favorite memory from the event was DJ Medhi leading a group of kids in a dance lesson. They were all so enthusiastic to try out the new moves, and it served as a reminder of the power and courage of curiosity. I'm resolved to get up and dance the next time an opportunity presents itself. We hope to see you there!

The co-op's commitment to environmental stewardship has had some notable forward movement in the last year.



A huge kudos to the Valley Natural Foods Green Team staff who suggested we support the Adopt-A-Highway program, and then showed up to pick up our sponsored stretch of Highway 13 on a hot and muggy June morning! To learn more about everything that has been happening at the co-op this past fiscal year, check out our Annual Report, which will be coming out in September.

My family's summer is filled with picnics and grill-outs, whether in our backyard, at the beach or a local park. One of my favorite products is the VNF marinated Chipotle Garlic Honey Chicken Breast available in the meat service case. It cooks up so nicely and the balance of spicy and sweet is so accessible it even pleases the discerning palette of my 13-year old. Whatever your go-to for outside cooking and dining this summer, the co-op has you covered! Check out page 6 for some tasty recipes – great for bringing to a picnic!

From all of us at the co-op, thanks for supporting your local farmers and vendors and shopping the co-op!

Nick Seeberger

LETTER from the board



Shannon Rios Paulson
VNF Board Member

Celebrating Summer at Valley Natural Foods!

Summer is in full swing and at Valley Natural Foods we are thrilled to embrace all the season has in “store” for us! I want to take time to highlight what it means to be a co-op and what co-op membership means for all of us. I recently attended the Consumer Cooperative Management Association (CCMA) event with the co-op in Sacramento. We had a great leadership team and board turnout at the conference. I know we all learned a lot and are returning energized about all the wonderful things about co-ops. One speaker put up this definition as they spoke about the Board of Directors’ role in the co-op. Basically, the board is responsible to you, our Member-Owners to help deliver our mission/purpose. A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise. As Member-Owners we all have huge roles which to me is a responsibility to our community and our food in the community. Due to this, I want to highlight what membership is and how it works. I want to share the specifics with you in case you are not yet a Member-Owner of Valley Natural Foods. Even if you are a Member-Owner, we want you fully involved in all Valley Natural Foods has to offer!

Membership at Valley Natural Foods is a one-time investment of \$100 which provides you lifetime ownership with no annual fees. As a Member-Owner you receive a range of benefits that include a 5% discount once a month that you can use at any point during the month. I used mine for June and I saved \$7.48! At that rate, my membership is paid for in a little over a year and I continue to receive my 5% discount once a month for life! Valley Natural Foods has not increased this membership investment amount with rising costs. You also can ask customer service about a payment plan for paying your membership, we want this to be accessible to all. You also receive Member-Owner only coupons and a 10% discount if you pre-order items by the case. There are so many other reasons I believe co-ops are special. One of the biggest is community impact. At Valley Natural Foods community is at the heart of everything we do. Through our register round-up and other outreach programs, we support local organizations. Together, we make a real difference in the lives of our neighbors and foster a stronger, healthier community. As a Member-Owner you are also encouraged to vote at the Board of Directors’ elections which opens on August 22. You also can serve on the board, by applying during our call for candidates period, which happens once yearly. I encourage you to consider this wonderful opportunity to make a difference in the lives of so many! This is a lifelong commitment I will have in my own life. Member-Owners are invited to attend the September 13th Annual Meeting. See page 8 for more information. Wishing you a wonderful summer of camping, grilling and picnicking and remember Valley Natural Foods is here with local and organic foods and produce to make those events the yummiest ever!

Have an idea or questions for the VNF Board? Send us an email at board@valleynaturalfoods.com

COMMUNITY IMPACT

A LOOK BACK AT SHOPPER CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR PREVIOUS QUARTER

April
\$2,077



Canine Inspired Change’s Mission is connecting and empowering vulnerable youth and adults through the healing power of dogs.

May
\$2,351



Your May Register round-up dollars will support Midwest Food Connection, an organization that teaches kids about where our food comes from, the importance of eating healthy and caring for our planet.

June
\$2,297



OutFront Minnesota’s mission is to create a state where LGBTQ+ people are free to be who they are, love who they love, and live without fear of violence, harassment or discrimination.

IT'S EASY TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR MONTHLY REGISTER ROUND-UP RECIPIENTS!

At the registers, shoppers have the opportunity to round-up their grocery bill to to the next dollar (or any amount they choose).

Shoppers who bring in reusable bags for packing up their groceries have the option to redeem or donate the 10¢ rebate earned per reusable bag.

At self-checkout, you can round up at the end of your purchase by hitting "checkout" and then the blue "Charity Round Up" button.

Food Shelf Donations 306 lbs.

Food donations were collected throughout the months of April - June for 360 Communities

THANK YOU MEMBER-OWNERS AND SHOPPERS, FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY!



The Valley Natural Foods Green Team went out on June 5 to do their first clean-up for the co-op's Adopt a Highway location. It is a part of their mission to care about the environment and the community. It was a warm day and the team collected 10+ bags full of trash. Thank you to the members of the Green Team for participating! You can see our Adopt a Highway signs on Highway 13!





Picnic Favorites

Shish Tawook

Serves 4-6. Total Time: 4 hours (20 minutes active).

- 1 cup Greek yogurt, nonfat
- ½ cup lemon juice
- ¼ cup chopped fresh garlic (about 12 cloves)
- ⅓ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ cup chopped fresh mint
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into 2-inch cubes
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 green bell pepper
- 1 small eggplant
- 8 ounces whole fresh mushrooms, rinsed and halved

1. In a medium-sized bowl, mix together the yogurt, lemon juice, garlic, olive oil, vinegar, tomato paste and spices. Add the cubed chicken to the marinade and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight.
2. Heat the grill to 375°F.
3. Seed peppers and cut into approximately 2-inch squares. Slice the eggplant crosswise into ¼-inch thick slices. When the grill or oven is hot, remove chicken from the marinade and place on skewers, alternating with the cubed peppers, eggplant slices and mushrooms. Place kabobs on grill, and cook, covered with grill lid, for 10 to 12 minutes or until chicken is done and vegetables are tender, turning occasionally. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

A lemony, garlicky, minty yogurt marinade makes for out-of-this-world shish tawook.

Mediterranean Cucumber Tomato Salad

Serves 4. Prep time: 15 minutes.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and minced
- Juice of 1 lemon
- ¼ cup chopped fresh mint
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- ½ cup diced red onion
- 2 cups diced cucumber
- 2 cups diced tomatoes
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. In a large mixing bowl, gently toss together all of the ingredients. Add salt and pepper to taste.
2. Let sit 10-15 minutes before serving to allow the flavors to meld.

This chopped salad is amenable to all sorts of variations. Add Kalamata olives, feta cheese, cubes of watermelon or cantaloupe, or just about any other seasonal diced veggies you like. Serve on a bed of fresh spinach or cooked leftover grains.

This simple, refreshing salad is perfect for picnics or any summer meal.

Crockpot Calico Beans

Serves 10. Prep time: 15 minutes active; 5 hours, 15 minutes total.

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 15-ounce can pinto beans
- 1 15-ounce can butter or cannellini beans
- 1 15-ounce can kidney beans
- 1 15-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- ⅓ cup ketchup
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons tamari
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. Rinse and drain the canned beans.
2. Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat and sauté the onion, pepper and garlic for 5-10 minutes until tender.
3. Add the onions and peppers to a crockpot along with the rest of the ingredients and stir well.
4. Turn the crockpot to low and cook for 5 hours. Taste for salt and pepper. Serve warm.

Not too sweet, not too tangy, these just-right beans are the perfect dinner, party or potluck side.

Reprinted by permission from grocery.coop. Find more recipes, plus information about your food and where it comes from at grocery.coop.



AUGUST 22

MEMBER-OWNERS,

IT'S YOUR CO-OP IT'S YOUR VOTE

August 22 | Voting Opens for the Board of Directors Election.

September 12 | Voting Ends, 9:00 p.m. for Paper Ballots, 11:59 p.m. for Electronic Ballots.

September 13 | Election Results Announced at the Annual Meeting.

Not a member-owner? Sign-up today to become one! Visit us at customer service instore or visit: www.valleynaturalfoods.com/signup



SEPTEMBER 13

MEMBER-OWNERS,

RSVP NOW

VALLEY NATURAL FOODS MEMBER-OWNER ANNUAL MEETING

HELD AT THE AMES CENTER IN BURNSVILLE
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023 | 5:30-7:30 p.m.



Member-Owners who attend will enjoy a catered buffet dinner from Crave and learn about the co-op's past year and future plans!

RSVP by scanning the barcode, or visit: valleynaturalfoods.com/annual-meeting



SEPTEMBER 14

EVERYONE

WELCOME

Enjoy food, music and fun at this year's Local Fest on Thursday, September 14, 2023 from 5-7:30 p.m.

Meet local vendors and learn about their products, enjoy FREE kids activities, a \$4 Community Dinner, live DJ with group dance session at 6 p.m. and more!

Stay tuned for more information on this event as the date gets closer!



Testing a New Trend

COTTAGE CHEESE

FOR THOSE WHO MAY OR MAY NOT KNOW, CREATIVE WAYS OF USING COTTAGE CHEESE ARE TAKING THE INTERNET BY STORM. WE TESTED AND RECOMMEND THESE DELICIOUS COTTAGE CHEESE RECIPES FOR ADDED PROTEIN AND CREAMINESS TO TWO FAVORITE DISHES!

Cottage Cheese "Vodka" Pasta

You don't need alcohol for this delicious recipe! The cottage cheese will add extra protein to this carb-filled favorite and will give just the right amount of creaminess-- and bonus it adds the sour tang just like a vodka pasta sauce with half the work!

- Your favorite pasta, (We used farfalle)
- 2 cups red sauce - jarred or homemade
- 1/2 cup cottage cheese

1. Cook pasta of choice as directed, (optional- reserve just under 1/4 cup pasta water)
2. While pasta is cooking, take 2 cups of your favorite jarred or homemade tomato sauce and blend it with 1/2 cup of cottage cheese until smooth.
3. Pour blended mix over cooked pasta and 1/4 cup pasta water and stir on low until creamy and combined.
4. Top with your favorite herbs and serve.

Note: this pasta does not keep well as leftovers and gets mini curds when brought down in temperature. If you plan on having leftovers, we suggest blending your sauce right before serving every time. If the suggested serving is too much for who you're serving, adjust accordingly.



Cottage Cheese Protein-Packed Pancakes

This dish is for the kiddos that need sneaky added protein to their meals! These cottage cheese pancakes taste just like regular pancakes and will fill you up!

makes about 4-5 large pancakes

- 1/2 cup cottage cheese
- 1 cup water
- 1 tbsp. cooking oil of choice
- 1 egg
- 1 cup pancake mix
(we used locally produced Whole Grain Milling Golden Wheat Pancake Mix,)

1. Mix cottage cheese, water, oil and egg in a blender until smooth.
2. Pour into mixing bowl and gently stir in dry pancake mix until all is moistened, with just a few lumps remaining. Pancakes will be tender if you avoid overmixing. Note: Adjust water in recipe accordingly if you prefer thicker or thinner pancakes.
3. Cook pancakes in pan as you would normally and enjoy with your favorite toppings!



A Tasty & Unlikely Combo

If you love the taste of Kimchi, here's a must-try food combo. Don't knock it before you try it – this soon could be a thing! Staff Member-Owner Susie tells her story.

"Growing up in Hawaii with an adventurous-foodie father and a farm-raised midwestern mother, it was a given that mom's favorite cottage cheese was always in our fridge among other constant food staples. Another staple included jars of Kimchi as well. In Hawaii, it's commonplace to find this Korean staple in every grocery store on shelves jam-packed with countless varieties to choose from – which is why my dad would eagerly purchase it often.

Back in the day, my mom's go-to lunch was simply a generous scoop of cottage cheese topped with a spoonful or two of that tangy, bubbly fermented Kimchi. Though Kimchi has been a part of my diet for almost my entire life, it took nearly five decades before I would even try this unlikely combo, which to date has now become my easy go-to lunch. This combo is best enjoyed when both ingredients are well chilled. These days organic cottage cheese and a jar or two of Kimchi are constant staples in my own midwestern fridge."





Back-to-School Fuel

Buy One, Get One FREE

Deals start on Wednesday, August 30!

Buy One, Get One

Back-to-School season will be here before we know it! For two weeks, beginning August 30, we'll be having a BOGO sale on your favorite organic Field Day quick breakfast and lunchbox items. What a great time for stocking up your back-to-school pantry while enjoying tremendous savings at the same time!

Buy One, Give One

Consider purchasing BOGO items to help stock a food shelf pantry with some back-to-school fuel items. Place an item or two in our convenient donation bin near the store's registers.

Flip to the next page for healthy lunch ideas, including an engaging lunchbox prep activity using an easy kid-friendly formula to follow: 1 + 1 + 1 = 1 lunch.



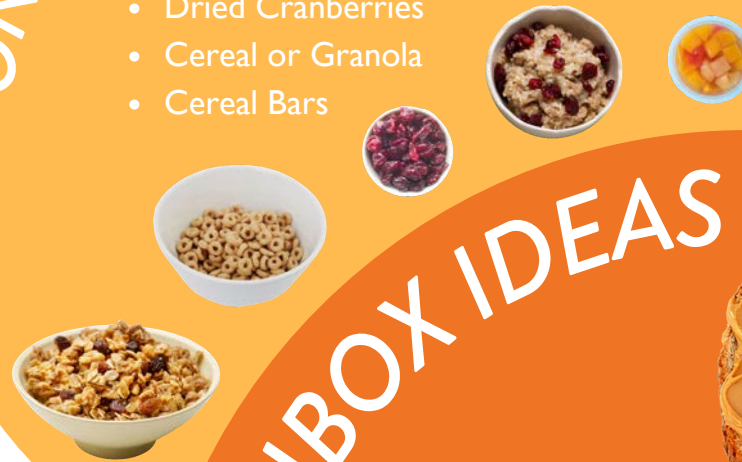
Can't go wrong with two for the price of one!

HAVE A FIELD DAY WITH 40 BOGO DEALS!

- 1 lb. 2 oz. Peanut Butter - 2/\$4.99
- 4 pk. Fruit Cups - 2/\$4.49
- 4 pk. Applesauce Cups - 2/\$3.99
- 12 oz. Granola - 2/\$4.99
- 8 oz. Crackers - 2/\$4.49
- 8 oz. Pretzels - 2/\$2.79
- 6 pk. Cereal Bars - 2/\$3.49

ON THE GO BREAKFASTS

- Applesauce or Fruit Cup
- Instant Oatmeal
- Dried Cranberries
- Cereal or Granola
- Cereal Bars



LUNCHBOX IDEAS

- Celery Sticks with Peanut Butter
- Peanut Butter Sandwich
- Pretzels
- Cereal Bars
- Applesauce or Fruit Cup
- Crackers or Pretzels
- Sparkling Water



AFTER SCHOOL SNACKING

- Cereal Bars
- Pretzels & Crackers
- Crackers or Apple Slices Spread with Peanut Butter



Healthy Kids Lunches

Simple ideas to banish lunchbox boredom.

By Mandy Makinen

Okay, parents. We all know that back to school is, although bittersweet for our children, pretty good for us. Our children are again occupied in noble pursuits, they get regular exercise, they have plenty of time with their friends and the echo of “I’m bored” vanishes from the halls of our homes. Things are always good for a few weeks — at least until a new boredom sets in. School lunch burnout.

For those who regularly pack lunches for an elementary school-aged child, you may have run into a few common points of friction. Namely, boredom with content, arguments over what did not get eaten that day, and issues revolving around trading for junk food. Let’s look over the issues, one at a time.

Battling boredom

I had always planned on being the mom who would break out the cookie cutters to make lunchtime sandwiches special, or who would creatively market sacks of carrot coins or a stand-up broccoli forest to my child. But the reality is, that takes time.

Our family tries to put emphasis on dinner and eating (mostly) home-cooked meals together

at night, so with already limited time in the evenings, packing elaborate bag lunches has fallen by the wayside.

Working under time constraints might take some of the creativity out of presentation, but it doesn’t have to mean a boring or unbalanced lunch. We adopted a baseline of this equation: 1 + 1 + 1 = 1. One fruit or vegetable (e.g., carrots, banana, cucumber, apple), one protein (turkey, peanut butter, ham, cheese), and one carbohydrate (bagel, crackers, English muffin, tortillas) = one lunch. Dividing lunch-building into predictable units makes it easy for my son to participate by choosing different, changing components. One of the best side effects of this lunch style is that it teaches my son about nutrition — which types of food have what nutritional value. Now my son knows that peanut butter is a protein, not a vegetable. He knows that a banana is not a significant source of complex carbohydrates but that a whole wheat bagel is.

Emphasize efficiency

There was a time, I am sure, when all kids would sit down to lunch at school with enthusiasm and dig in, focused on the task of chewing their food and getting refueled for an afternoon of

learning. I believe that time was somewhere around the year 19-oh...never? The truth is that lunch is, and has always been, an important social time for kids. This is when jokes get told, bragging gets done and where today’s hilarious sight gags are tomorrow’s doctor’s visits (raisins in the nose, anyone?). This is also when your child is supposed to focus and eat their whole lunch.

Remembering to keep portions small and the eating process efficient (think bite-size finger foods) helps ensure that more food gets eaten. This is the way toddlers eat, but I find it works great at any age (I love



a “snack lunch” at the office myself). It doesn’t have to look extremely coordinated to be a good lunch — a handful of nuts, a bag of snap peas, some cheese cubes, grapes, whole wheat bagel half. All these things are easy to eat, and more important, can be safely eaten while paying attention to at least three other things at once.

Less lunch trading

My son reports that a lot of unsanctioned lunch trading happens. Packaged, processed foods designed for lunchboxes — fruit snacks, cookies, chips and cheese puffs — are a hot commodity. For a kid who brings a healthy lunch every day, those things help him build an argument that his mother is the meanest, most boring person alive. It’s disappointing to think that the healthy meal we spent time and money planning and purchasing could be traded for less healthy food on a whim. Though I suspect my son’s whole wheat bagel or almonds rank low in lunch table trading values. But to alleviate the feeling that my child is going to be scarred by his health-fanatic mom who never

allowed him to have fun foods, we’ve added “mystery” items to the lunchbox — something that doesn’t fall into the main food groups: fruit leather, organic chocolate milk, natural energy bars, a single serving of chips. We shop for these mystery items, along with the rest of his lunch, at our local food co-op, where it’s easier to minimize the stuff I don’t want him to eat: high-fructose corn syrup, hydrogenated fats, artificial chemical sweeteners and dyes. My hope is that he’ll covet these treats enough that they don’t end up in trading action and it keeps him eating our home lunches, which are healthier than the alternative overall, for years to come.

$$1 + 1 + 1 = 1$$

fruit / vegetable protein carbohydrate lunch

Dividing lunch-building into predictable units makes it easy for kids to participate by choosing different, changing components.

Reprinted by permission from grocery.coop.



UPCOMING CO-OP CLASSES

Scan this code
to sign-up!



Back to School: Tips on Keeping our Immune Systems Strong

Wednesday, August 30 | 6 - 7 p.m.
Valley Natural Foods - Education Room

Join Dr. Sonja Murray, Doctor of Acupuncture + Herbal Medicine, Registered Nurse and mom, as she shares lifestyle tips to support our immune systems and prevent illness as the kiddos return to school!

This class is for parents and kids entering 6th grade and up!

WITH DR. SONJA MURRAY



Snack Attack Kids Cooking Class

Thursday, September 7 | 6 - 7 p.m.
Valley Natural Foods - Education Room

Join local Holistic Nutritionist, Jackie Mart, for this children's hands-on cooking class! We will be making a few yummy, mouth-watering, after-school snacks! All supplies are included. Please list any dietary restrictions your child has in the sign-up form.

On the Menu: Chocolate Peanut Butter Pudding, Peaches and Cream Smoothie

*This class is suitable for children ages 6-16 years old.

WITH JACKIE MART



Vegan Meal Prep

Monday, September 25 | 5 p.m.
Zoom - Virtual

Join local chef, Robin Asbell, as she teaches how to make delicious vegan meal prep recipes to make your weeks easier! On the menu: Creamy Cashew Dressing, Big Nutty Caesar Salad, Black Bean and Sweet Potato Chili with Dumplings, Whole-Grain Baking Mix, and Sweet Potato Hummus.

WITH ROBIN ASBELL



Vegan Mediterranean Recipes

Tuesday, October 10 | 5 p.m.
Zoom - Virtual

Join local chef, Robin Asbell, as she teaches how to make vegan versions of Mediterranean lifestyle dishes. On the menu: Romesco Sauce with Asparagus and Scallions, Mediterranean Farro Salad, Greens with Pine Nuts and Currants, Chickpea and Pecan Pesto Calzones.

WITH ROBIN ASBELL

