

LIVING NATURALLY

a community newsletter



CO-OP MONTH DELI TAKES GOLD HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS



Valley NATURAL FOODS

FALL/HOLIDAY 2023



LIVING NATURALLY FALL/HOLIDAYS 2023

Nick Seeberger
CEO

Ashley Greywitt
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Community Relations &
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Store Hours
8 a.m. – 9 p.m. Daily

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

UPCOMING CO-OP EVENTS AND CLASSES

- OCT. 30 IN-PERSON ● Talking About Death Group Discussion with Jeanne Bain
- NOV. 6 VIRTUAL ● Desserts that Aren't Pie with Robin Asbell
- NOV. 13 IN-PERSON ● Spice Up Your Life with Dr. Sonja Murray
- JAN. 8 IN-PERSON ● Caring for your Emotions & Grief with Dr. Sonja Murray
- JAN. 16 VIRTUAL ● Wellness Drinks with Jess Toliver
- JAN. 18 IN-PERSON ● Let it Snow - Kids Cooking Class with Jackie Mart

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



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

A warm, welcoming atmosphere is what we aim to create at Valley Natural Foods, and our "Everyone Welcome" sign on the front window is a testament to this commitment. It's a familiar sight in natural food co-ops nationwide, reflecting our dedication to dispelling the notion that co-ops are exclusively for member-owners and inviting all in the community to come on in. Last month, we witnessed this inclusivity in action during our annual Local Fest. This event, which brings together our farmers, vendors and customers was a resounding success. For me, Local Fest demonstrates that in our community, we are living up to our invitation of "Everyone Welcome."



October holds a special place in our hearts as it marks Co-op Month, a time to raise awareness about the invaluable role co-ops play in building resilient and inclusive communities. At Valley Natural Foods, we're taking it a step further by designating October as "Member-Owner Month." Throughout this month, we have a myriad of exciting events and promotions lined up. It's an opportunity to deepen your understanding of co-ops and enjoy the benefits of being a member-owner at Valley Natural Foods. For more information check out the article on pages 6 & 7.

Additionally, this October, we're proud to feature the Twin Pines Foundation as our round-up recipient. As supporters of the Twin Pines Cooperative Community Fund, we've utilized our dividends to donate over \$12,000 locally last year alone. The Twin Pines Cooperative Foundation, established in 1964, plays a vital role in supporting the educational and developmental needs of cooperatives. By donating at the registers throughout October, you can contribute to the growth and sustainability of cooperatives in our community.

During our Annual Meeting, we were inspired by a panel of experts who highlighted the significant impact of co-op support for local non-profits in addressing food access and education in Dakota County.

This fall, you can join us in making a difference by rounding up your purchases at the registers and donating food products to our giving bin, located just beyond the registers. The collective impact of our individual contributions is making a tangible difference in addressing hunger issues in our community. For instance, last year, the community gardens at the top of our parking lot, managed by the Open Door, yielded over 2 tons of food to feed those in need.

As the chill of colder temperatures sets in and the days grow shorter, we encourage you to shop at your co-op and support our local farmers and producers. Whether you're purchasing Featherstone Farm's delectable fall harvest carrots or savoring Hidden River Farm's roast, your plate will feature some of the finest local produce, and you'll make a substantial impact on our local economy. Don't forget to explore our slow cooker recipes on page 12 for delightful meal ideas this fall.

This Autumn let's come together as a community, celebrate the cooperative spirit, and savor the delicious flavors that make this season truly special.

Nick Seeberger

LETTER from the board



Mark Mosiniak
VNF Board Member

Happy Fall everyone!

While we might be past the Autumnal equinox, the weather outside is feeling more like summer with highs in the 80's and grass shining green in the park near my home. This is nothing like the crisp mornings filled with dew and browning leaves and grasses I've been accustomed to in years past. While the weather may not be following a traditional calendar, our co-op is and that means we recently held the 2023 Annual Meeting and elected our new Board of Directors.

On September 13th, our Co-op leadership and member-owners met in Burnsville for the Annual Meeting. At this time, we announced our election outcomes which resulted in two new members joining the Board, Lindsey Radle and Chris Coyle. While new to the Board, Lindsey and Chris are not new to our co-op and are very excited to work alongside a team that is dedicated to exploring ideas to guide our co-op's policies for future growth and ensuring sound management of our resources; and act as trustees on behalf of all our owner-members.

The entire Board is eager to work together in our commitment to fostering a healthy community and look forward to Lindsey and Chris's impact on this journey.

September also marked a change in Board Leadership as we elected a new Executive team to guide our activities going forward. While I've been serving on the Board of Directors since 2009, and have held leadership roles of Vice President and most recently President for the past 4 years, it was time to step down from this executive role and allow new leadership to influence our path forward. I'm very happy to announce a long-standing Board member and friend of our Co-op, Sarah Johansson has been elected our new President of the Board. Joining Sarah on the Executive team will be Delphanie Daniels as our new Vice President, Gary Sankary will continue his role as Treasurer and Chris Coyle will act as the Board Secretary.

I'm confident with the strength of our leadership team, our continued financial success and the support of our member-owners, our co-op is on course to thrive well into the future.

In the spirit of Co-operation,

Mark Mosiniak

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

July
\$2,993



The DanO Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a mission of increasing access to mental health resources and programming, and raising awareness of mental health issues. They work to end the stigma of mental illness, which often prevents those who are impacted from getting the help they need.

August
\$3,125



Midwest Food Connection is an organization that teaches kids about where their food comes from, the importance of eating healthy and caring for our planet.

September
\$2,574



360 Communities

360 Communities has a network of five food shelves located in Burnsville, Rosemount, Apple Valley, Farmington and Lakeville. They provide community members with access to healthy, fresh produce and proteins, and also hygiene items, diapers, and pet goods. They also provide culturally specific food items for their diverse client requests.

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.

If using 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 777 lbs.

Food donations were collected throughout the months of July through September for The Open Door

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

Local Fest Recap

Local Fest – our biggest event of the year, was held on September 14. We had a blast with local vendors, enjoyed a delicious community dinner featuring Gerhard's Brats & fixings, and took delight seeing so many kiddos enjoying themselves with activities that included group dancing led by DJ Medhi, face painting and pumpkin activities!

A personal care items and household cleaners drive for 360 Communities also took place at our event. Thank you to everyone who brought items to donate and to all who came out to celebrate with us at Local Fest. We look forward to seeing you at future events!



OCTOBER IS CO-OP MONTH & MEMBER-OWNER APPRECIATION MONTH

Exciting news, everyone! We shifted gears and moved our beloved Member-Owner Appreciation Month from February to the vibrant month of October. Why, you ask? Well, with Co-op Month and Fair Trade Month in full swing, we figured, why not make this change for an even more fitting and fun celebration!

This October, we are excited to celebrate all our Member-Owners with fun offers and giveaway. Not a member-Owner? Sign up today and get these great deals at valleynaturalfoods.com/ownership!



This Member-Owner Appreciation Month, Member-Owners got to enjoy free self-serve coffees on Member Mondays, Member-Owner exclusive giveaways, and a month-long special edition of Member-Owner Deals.

Participate in our Member-Owner survey running through October 31, and receive a \$5 off \$25 coupon by email!

EVERYONE WELCOME
Member-Owners, scan this code to take our survey!

Emails for participating will be sent the following Friday after completion. Please check your spam folders.



HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

Holiday season at the co-op is one of the most special times of the year! With so many fun festive holidays from all cultures, we try to celebrate them all and highlight what this time of year is really about; giving back and celebrating with loved ones. Check out some of our holiday staples this year, including our holiday catering menu from our award winning deli, our turkey preorder form from local turkey farms, and more!

HOLIDAYS ON THE HOT BAR | HOLIDAY CATERING | TURKEY PRE-ORDERS

NOVEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Get in the holiday spirit and sample our Holiday Catering Menu on the deli hot bar this year! The first three Thursdays and Sundays leading up to Thanksgiving, try some picks from the menu, which will be specially marked with Holiday Catering Menu tags.

See the full menu and order your catering order online by scanning this QR code:



Pre-order your turkey today from Valley Natural Foods and receive special discount pricing! Advanced orders are accepted through Monday, November 13, 2022.

Scan to preorder your turkey today!



No late orders will be accepted. Note that we will be closed on Thursday, November 23.

Turkeys available on a first come, first served basis while supplies last. Payment required upon pick up. Questions? Call our Meat Department at 952-891-1212 ext. 227

DELI TAKES

G O L D

Minnesota's Best Deli 2023 Gold Winner was awarded to Valley Natural Foods in Star Tribune Readers' Choice this year!



It's no surprise that Leo's made-from-scratch Pozole Rojo De Pollo has become an instant hit with our customers and staff alike! A hearty blend of roasted chicken, hominy, garlic, onions and chili seasonings will surely hit the spot now that soup season is in full swing. Vegan Mushroom Pozole Rojo is also available! Both versions taste great topped with sliced radish, oregano, diced onions and lime juice. Pozole condiments are located at the hot bar on Tuesdays.

We are so proud of our deli team and honored to receive this community-voted award. A BIG thank you to everyone who voted for us! The deli team – lead by Meat & Deli manager Jamie – takes pride providing not only delicious food, but also offering selections for customers with different types of food preferences or needs. Our co-op makes sure to always have vegan and gluten-free options available daily, as well as other specialties.

Many of our recipes are actually created by our staff, which makes them extra special and unique! The most recent addition to our recipe files is Pozole Rojo De Pollo, a made from scratch soup by staff cook, Leo! Look for this hearty dish at the hot soup bar on Tuesdays, with a vegan version offered as well!



For the third year in a row, Valley Natural Foods placed in Minnesota's Best Grocery Store category, and this year we were lucky enough to be bumped up from bronze to silver!

These wins would not be possible without the community we serve and we feel truly special to be not just your local grocery store, but a community space where you can learn, make connections and come together.



THANK YOU

TO EVERYONE WHO VOTED FOR VALLEY NATURAL FOODS TO BE MINNESOTA'S BEST DELI 2023!

Staff Story



Hi, I'm Linda, daughter of survivors of the Cambodian genocide. Born in California, raised in Boston and here I am now, in the Midwest. I am a mother of 3 daughters. I love to cook and eat. The recipes that I put out at the co-op are all made with love and meaning. On Thursdays, our theme for the hot bar is "International day" I choose to make some of my favorite dishes from around the world.. from southern/soul food that was born out of struggle and survival to comfort, Caribbean food where many different cultures and tastes are put together. Indian food because its meant to be eaten socially, in groups until everyone is satisfied and Greek food because its much more than sustenance-it's about culture and life itself. I bring my authentic self to the co-op as I am an ambitious, confident, enthusiastic, friendly, honest, and organized person. My strengths are always saying 'yes' and going out of my way to help, leading a systematic life, being a good planner, building family cohesiveness, and having infinite patience. My weaknesses are unfortunately my inability to say 'no', and wanting everything to be absolutely perfect. Food is the meaning of life: it brings us together, it gives us hope, and it's about love, comfort, and compassion. It even helps mend a broken heart. I believe that good food is just the beginning of what people can achieve by working together and that's why I want the co-op to be all-inclusive.

Editor's note: We are proud of Linda and her contributions to our deli's delicious food selections. Linda recently joined our meat & seafood team to gain even more skills as a meat apprentice! Congratulations Linda!



Slow and Easy

When convenience counts, turn to your slow cooker for flavorful meals that are low effort, high reward and worth the wait.

Slow Cooker Orange Chipotle Beef Tacos

Serves 6. Prep time: 4 to 8 hours; 20 minutes active.

- 1 ½ pounds beef chuck roast
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon chipotle powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled
- 2 large seedless oranges, quartered
- 12 taco shells or corn tortillas
- 3 cups shredded lettuce
- 3 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 1 ½ cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese

1. Place the beef in a slow cooker. Stir together the tomato paste, chipotle, cumin, oregano and salt in a small bowl, then rub the mixture over the beef. Place garlic cloves and oranges on top of the meat and cover the pot. Turn temperature to high and cook for 4 hours, or on low for 7 to 8 hours. When the meat shreds when pressed with a fork, turn off the cooker and take out the insert to cool. Use tongs to transfer the meat to a bowl to cool, and shred the beef.
2. Place a strainer over a small pot and strain the liquids from the cooker into the pot. Squeeze the oranges over the strainer. Bring the juices to a boil and cook for about 10 minutes, until reduced to a syrupy consistency. Pour over the shredded beef and toss to coat. Taste for seasoning; add salt or more chipotle, if desired.
3. Serve with taco shells or warm corn tortillas, lettuce, chopped tomato and shredded cheese. Pair these tacos with tortilla chips and homemade guacamole or your favorite salsa. The meat can also be folded into larger tortillas with leftover cooked rice to make tasty burritos.

A slow cooker transforms affordable cuts of meat like chuck roast, pork shoulder and chicken legs into tender, juicy main dishes.



Slow Cooker Chicken Cacciatore

Serves 6. Prep time: 8 hours; 1 hour active.

- 14 ounces diced canned tomatoes
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 medium green pepper, chopped
- 1 medium zucchini, sliced
- 2 ribs celery, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup dry red wine
- ½ cup chicken stock
- 4 ounces tomato paste
- 6 chicken legs, skinless
- 2 cups brown rice

1. In a large slow cooker, combine the tomatoes, onion, green pepper, zucchini, celery, garlic, basil, oregano, salt, red wine, chicken stock and tomato paste. Stir to mix, then add the chicken legs and press down to cover them with the vegetable and spice mixture as much as possible. Set the cooker on low and cook for 7 hours.
2. Start cooking the rice about 45 minutes before the chicken is finished cooking.
3. When chicken cooking is completed, taste and add salt and pepper as needed. Serve a cup of cooked brown rice in a wide bowl or pasta plate, with a chicken leg and vegetable sauce.



Crockpot Calico Beans

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

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



Slow Cooker Teriyaki Beef Ribs

Serves 6. Prep time: 7 hours, 30 minutes; 30 minutes active.

- 4 pounds beef short ribs (about 4 inches long)
- 3/4 cup teriyaki sauce
- 1 tablespoon Sriracha sauce
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 2 medium scallions, finely chopped
- Canola oil

1. In a large skillet, heat a tablespoon or so of canola oil over medium-high heat, and swirl to coat the surface with oil. When the pan is hot, place several ribs, meaty side down, in the hot oil. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes to sear and brown the surface. Transfer the ribs to a 4-quart slow cooker, and continue until all the ribs are browned, adding more oil as needed.
2. In a cup, mix the teriyaki sauce and Sriracha sauce and pour over the ribs, turning to coat. Cover the slow cooker and set to low. Cook for 7 hours.
3. Uncover the ribs and transfer them to a platter; cover to keep warm. Pour the liquids from the cooker into a small pan and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce to a strong simmer and cook for about 10 minutes, to reduce and thicken the sauce. If desired, skim the fat from the sauce. Pour the sauce over the ribs and sprinkle with sesame seeds and scallions. Serve warm.

Citrus-Chile Pork with Herb Sauce

Serves 6. Prep time: 6 hours, 30 minutes; 30 minutes active.

- 6 cloves garlic, sliced
- 2 large jalapeños, seeded
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 1/2 pounds pork butt or shoulder, bone-in
- 1 large orange, quartered
- 1 large lime, quartered
- 2 large scallions, chopped
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro
- 3 cups cooked brown rice

1. In a food processor or food chopper, mince the garlic and jalapeños; remove half to use later for the sauce. Add 1 tablespoon of the olive oil, cumin, oregano and salt and process to mix.
2. Trim extra fat layer from the roast. Place the roast in a 4- to 6-quart slow cooker. Rub the olive oil mixture all over the roast — make sure the whole roast is covered. Place the orange

and lime quarters on top of and around the roast, then cover tightly. Cook on low heat for 6 hours.

3. When the pork is tender, transfer to a cutting board, reserving the juices and the citrus quarters for the sauce. Let stand for 5 minutes before cutting; keep warm while you make the sauce.
4. To make the sauce, place the remaining tablespoon of olive oil in a small pot and place over medium-high heat. Add the reserved garlic and jalapeño mince and saute for about 1 minute. Squeeze the reserved orange and lime into the pot, using a strainer to catch any seeds. Pour in the reserved roast juices. Bring to a boil and cook for about 10 minutes to thicken slightly. Add the scallions and cilantro and simmer on low for 1 minute.
5. Remove the bone, then slice the pork and serve it on a bed of rice, drizzled with the citrus sauce.



Sugar & Spice

Spice up your holiday spread with these much-loved classic treats.

Recipes by Robin Asbell

Gingerbread Cookies

Makes 48 3-inch cookies. Prep time: 1 hour

- 1½ cups unbleached flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 stick unsalted butter, softened
- ¼ cup light brown sugar
- ½ cup molasses
- 1 large egg

Royal Icing

- 2 cups powdered sugar, approximately
- 1 large pasteurized egg white or
- 2 ½ tablespoons meringue powder
- ¼ teaspoon lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons water, approximately

1. In a large bowl, mix together flours, baking soda, baking powder, salt and spices. Using a stand mixer or an electric beater, cream butter until soft, then add brown sugar and beat until well-mixed. Add molasses and beat, scrape down and add egg, beat again until combined. Stir in the flour mixture. Divide dough into four rectangular pieces, place between sheets of parchment and roll out ¼" thick. Stack sheets of dough on a baking pan and chill for 3 hours.
2. Preheat oven to 350°F. Lay sheets of dough on counter, remove top layer of parchment and use a cookie cutter to cut into shapes. Using a thin spatula, transfer cookies to parchment-lined baking sheets. Repeat process with scraps.
3. Bake 12 minutes, switching the pans between oven racks halfway through. When cookies are puffed and look dry, remove and cool on the pan for five minutes, then move cookies to a cooling rack.
4. Using a stand mixer or electric beater, mix powdered sugar with egg white or meringue powder. Mix in lemon juice and water, a tablespoon at a time, to reach desired consistency. Transfer icing to a piping bag with a small round tip and use to draw outlines on the cookies.



Poppy Seed Rugelach

Makes 24 cookies. Prep time: 6 hours (includes chilling); 1 hour active

- 1½ sticks butter, room temperature
- 8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
- 2 cups flour
- ½ cup sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup poppy seeds
- ¼ cup milk
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons raisins, chopped
- ½ teaspoon lemon zest

1. Cream butter and cream cheese together until fluffy. Add flour, sugar, salt and beat to combine. Form 2 disks, wrap in plastic wrap; chill 4 hours.
2. In a coffee grinder, grind poppy seeds coarsely then heat in a pan with milk, honey, raisins and zest. Stir over medium-low until thickened, approx. 20 minutes, then cool completely.
3. Preheat oven to 325°F and line two sheet pans with parchment. Roll out dough to make two 12" rounds about 1/8" thick, then spread each with half the filling. Use a pizza cutter to cut each round in 12 wedges. Roll up each piece from the wide end, bend in tips to make a crescent. Place on pan, chill 1 hour.
4. Bake for 40 minutes, switching the pans between oven racks halfway through. When done, cool cookies on pan for 10 minutes, then transfer to cooling racks.

Rugelach, a traditional Jewish treat, can also be filled with chocolate chips, walnuts, marzipan or fruit preserves.

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Chocolate Glazed Nut Brittle

Servings: Makes 2 ½ lbs. (approx. 27 servings). Prep time: 1 hour; 20 minutes active

- 2 cups sugar
- ½ cup water
- 1 stick unsalted butter
- ⅓ cup light corn syrup
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 2 ½ cups roasted salted peanuts or cashews plus an optional ¼ cup, finely chopped
- 8 ounces dark chocolate, melted

1. Line a large sheet pan with a rim with parchment paper.
2. In a 2-quart saucepan, combine the sugar, water, butter and corn syrup and bring to a boil to create caramel. Cook over moderately high heat, stirring occasionally, until the caramel is light brown and registers 300°F on a candy thermometer, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and carefully stir in the baking soda. The mixture will bubble. Stir in the nuts, then immediately scrape the brittle onto the prepared baking sheet. Using the back of a large spoon (oil it lightly if it sticks), spread the brittle into a thin, even layer. Let cool completely, about 30 minutes.
3. Spread melted chocolate over the brittle, sprinkle with the finely chopped nuts, if using, then chill. Break the brittle into large shards. Store in airtight containers for up to two weeks.

A recipe of decadent brittle makes wonderful gifts, a little goes a long way! Portion and package festively for teachers, coworkers and friends.



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BECOMING A VNF
MEMBER-OWNER IS A
ONE-TIME PAYMENT
THAT LASTS A LIFETIME



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