



February 2025 Newsletter

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By Gary Taylor

Hello Cooperators!

I hope this letter finds you well!

This is the time of year when we find ourselves with a little extra time to catch up on some projects and get our house in order. Our main focus for February and March will be the start of a new (to us) food access program here at the Co-op.

We are excited to announce that within the next couple of months, we will start participating in the Illinois WIC (Women, Infant & Children) Program! We were awarded \$83K in state grant funds to be used for desperately needed energy-efficient

refrigeration upgrades and in order to use it, we are required to be WIC certified. While we're still waiting on the official certification, we will be getting a head start on carrying all of the products needed in order to pass the state audit. This program requires us to carry specific non-organic brands for the pre-approved WIC list. The WIC program is a state and federal program that provides nutrition counseling and monthly stipends for low-income women, children, and infants to use towards supplemental food. It is our aim that this program expands food access for WIC participants and also benefits our customers/owners looking for more affordable prices and brand-name products that they are shopping for elsewhere.

In order to participate in this program we have engaged another warehouse to provide us with the necessary items for WIC eligibility. This new warehouse, Winkler, in Southern Indiana, not only can provide the WIC items we need for the program but also many of the products that some of our owners and regular shoppers have been requesting for a long time. We also have to meet certain minimum purchases from this warehouse to avoid paying penalties. We will need to order and sell many of the conventional items that our owners and customers have been requesting to reach the minimum. Do not worry, we will still be the best store to shop for the local, natural, and organic items you need.

If you have any favorites that we do not carry and have to go to other stores to purchase them, please let us know and we will do our best to get those items in the Co-op to save you that extra trip!

Thank you all for reading and have a great February!

Gary

FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



By Hannah Andresen

Happy New Year, owners!

As we begin 2025, the Board would like to introduce some of our newer Board members. I'd like to take this chance to share a little about me, but stay tuned for more interviews later this year!

What motivated you to join the board of Common Ground, and what do you hope

to contribute to its mission?

Common Ground has always been a place of community for me. I've been an owner for years, and it's rare for me to visit without seeing a familiar face! I want to give back to the community as best I can.

How do you see the role of the Co-op in supporting local farmers, sustainable practices, and the community?

I think the educational programming of the Co-op is so important. Everyone benefits when our owners learn about where their food comes from - the farmers, the environment, and our health. I think the cooking classes are an amazing way to teach important skills in a friendly atmosphere.

What do you think are the biggest challenges facing the Co-op today, and how should we address them?

Only time will tell how the opening of H-Mart will impact the Co-op. We can hope that as more businesses move into downtown Urbana, we'll receive more visitors overall. It will be important to show these new visitors the benefits of becoming an owner.

How do you approach decision-making in a cooperative setting where multiple stakeholders have different priorities?

I think it's important to make space for different perspectives while keeping the Co-op's mission at the center of decisions. When we listen to each other with an open mind, we can find creative solutions that benefit the whole community. It's important that everyone feels valued even when we need to make tough decisions.

What skills or experiences do you bring to the board that help strengthen Common Ground's leadership and operations?

I have experience balancing budgets, leading teams, and making strategic decisions with long-term goals in mind. Most importantly, I love connecting with people and finding ways to bring our community together.

Upcoming Classes & Events

Owner Appreciation Days

Owner Appreciation Days are our special sales celebration where all of our Co-op owners get great store-wide deals! Owners will receive a 10% discount off their entire purchase of one shopping trip of their choice (excluding Co+op Basics, alcohol, and items already on sale).

Owners will also receive a special coupon book with exclusive deals from March to May (including an additional 10% storewide discount).

There will also be exclusive owner deals, free Golden Ticket items, and the chance to win one of four amazing raffle giveaways!

owner appreciation days

March 5 - 11



10% OFF



COUPONS



RAFFLES



OWNER DEALS



**GOLDEN
TICKET ITEMS**



[Learn more](#)

Brazilian Virtual Cooking Class & Meal Kit

Saturday, February 22nd, 3-5 pm

Join us for our next virtual cooking class and meal kit and learn how to make a traditional Brazilian meal with feijoada, collard greens, garlicky rice, and sliced orange! This class will be taught by instructor and Brazilian cook, Julia Paniago. Tune in for the Zoom live class and cook along in your kitchen using the pre-portioned meal kit and enjoy a delicious dinner by the end of class.

The menu includes:

- **Feijoada** - a savory meat stew with black beans, spices, pork ribs, sausage and bacon. Feijoada is a dish that brings a lot of Brazil's soul and history. Stories will be shared during this class including the myths behind it and its ties to Brazilian culture. (Vegan modifications are available.)
- **Rice** - a very light garlicky rice
- **Collard Greens** - a typical side for feijoada that adds a lot of flavor and

freshness

- **Orange slices** - the perfect combination to balance the deep flavors from the feijoada, the orange brings a palate cleanse that makes you want to eat more and more

Meal kit serves 2-3 and is \$50 for non-owners, \$45 for owners.



[Register](#)

Art Gallery Reception with Kathy Micek

Thursday, February 20th, 4-6 pm

Join us for an Art Gallery Reception for Kathy Micek, our current featured artist in our Flatlander Art Gallery. Get a chance to meet the artist, view the art installation, and browse artwork available for sale.

We will also be sampling some wines, charcuterie, and other refreshments.

Artist Statement

Art has become both therapeutic and fun. Heres my take on it:

Write on the canvas the emotions you are feeling, or a conversation in your head or ANYTHING. Begin to paint, allowing those words to direct you. By the time the painting tells you it is finished, you will have worked through much of the pain you started with.

Let's try it, come along with me and see a few paintings that have helped me get past through some tough moments.



Announcements

February Owner Deals

Owner Deals are bigger and better than ever! We have a brand new set of owner-exclusive deals. Over 100 amazing products will be on sale for owners for the entire month of February.

February 5th
-
March 4th

OWNER DEALS



2/\$5
Barbara's
Cheese Puffs
5.5 oz - 7 oz
reg. price varies



Shop over 100
amazing owner
exclusive sales!



\$3.69
Cretor's
Popcorn
5.5 oz - 8 oz
reg. price \$5.49



2/\$8
Califa Farms
Oat Milk
48 fl oz
reg. price \$5.99



\$4.39
Endangered Species
Dark Baking Chips
10 oz
reg. price \$6.99



2/\$5
Eternal Alkaline
Spring Water
84.5 fl oz
reg. price \$4.19



\$3.79
Kewpie
Squeeze Mayo
12 oz
reg. price \$5.69



2/\$8
Oregon Chai
Tea Concentrate
32 fl oz
reg. price \$5.69



\$5.99
Flavorganics
Vanilla Extract
2 fl oz
reg. price \$9.69



2/\$5
Snopac Mixed
Vegetables
10 oz
reg. price \$3.99



\$4.39
Food For Life
Ezekiel
English Muffins
16 oz
reg. price \$6.49



2/\$7
San-J
Sauces
10 fl oz
reg. price \$4.69

Common Ground Food Co-op | 300 S. Broadway Ave Suite #166 | 217-352-3347 | www.commonground.coop | Open 7:30 am - 9:00 pm daily

View more deals

Community

ROUND UP FOR GOOD

UPDATE

Last month we raised \$4,904 for Daily Bread Soup Kitchen!

Mission: "The mission of the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen is to feed the hungry in our community regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity. We welcome all volunteers to this service who share an unconditional regard for every human being. We provide a safe, respectful, and inviting environment in an atmosphere of hope and dignity."

Project Proposal: "During the COVID pandemic of 2020, we began offering meals to-go. In order to make this possible, we installed a window where guests can receive a hot meal with sack lunch without entering the building. This process has allowed us to serve more people who suffer from food inadequacy while we have continued with indoor eating. Thus, the number of guests and meals has increased significantly. Currently, we are providing an average of 400 hot meals and 350-400 sack lunches daily for the most in need in our community."

The most expensive monthly expenditure we have is the purchase of protein: meat, cheese or peanut butter. We strive to provide a hot nutritious meal daily with a to-go sack lunch. We always offer a vegetarian option for guests who do not or cannot eat meat. In addition, we provide a sack lunch for each guest to take with them. Often, these meals are their only food source. If we receive funds from the Round Up For Good Grant we will purchase food items rich in protein like meat, cheese and peanut butter for our guests. Thank you for your ongoing support as we work together to address the issue of hunger in our community."



[Learn more](#)

February's Round Up For Good organization is Planned Parenthood of Illinois: Champaign Health Center!

Mission: "Planned Parenthood of Illinois is the leader in providing and promoting compassionate, comprehensive reproductive health care, education, and rights."

Project Proposal: "The Round Up For Good Grant will be used to support care provision at Planned Parenthood of Illinois' Champaign health center. PPIL Champaign provides vital sexual and reproductive healthcare to the community, including STI testing, contraceptive counseling, youth education, gender-affirming care services, and medication and procedural abortion services. Funding also supports the provision of community programming on sexual and reproductive health issues, LGBTQ+ affinity organizing, and wraparound support connections. In FY24 PPIL Champaign served 4,927 patients, providing 5,235 STI screenings, 116 cancer screenings, and 1,655 contraceptive counseling sessions among other services."

[Learn more](#)

Recipe Features

Co+op Basics: Millet Tofu Bowl with Spiced Chickpeas



As we carry on through the cold winter months, few things are as nourishing as a well-crafted grain bowl! Utilizing Co+op Basics products, we've created a simple, delicious, and nutritious grain bowl that is perfect for dinner or lunch meal-prep. This bowl features millet, walnuts, sweet corn, chickpeas, tofu, kale, and a tahini dressing. Plus, it features 7 Co+op Basics products and is only \$3.27 per serving!

[Get recipe](#)

Game Day Spinach Artichoke Bites



Skip the classic dip and try our Spinach Artichoke Bites! Using our Immaculate brand crescent roll dough, these savory, crispy bites are sure to delight a crowd.

[Get recipe](#)

New Products

Grocery



Vermont Smoke & Cure Meats

Nestled between the Green Mountains and the Champlain Valley in Hinesburg, Vermont, these are premium meats smoked with only natural hickory or maple hardwood chips. Available in Gourmet Summer Sausage and Smoked Uncured Pepperoni.

\$9.29

Fishwife Albacore Tuna

Wild-caught in the Bay of Biscay, this tuna is tender, flavorful, and perfectly buttery. Try the classic olive oil version, or a spicy variety with just the right kick to keep things interesting.

\$7.99



Siete Variety Pack Chips



Siete has doubled down on the delectable simplicity of the potato by kettle-cooking it in avocado oil, sprinkling on some of their favorite heritage-inspired flavors, and behold: thick, crunchy, and delicious Mexican-style potato chips. Available in Sea Salt, Chipotle BBQ, and Sea Salt and Vinegar.

\$12.49

Meat & Cheese

Belgioioso Scamorza Cheese

Scamorza is a "cheese between mozzarella and provolone". This cheese is crafted from a traditional Italian recipe and naturally cured for a rich, smooth flavor that enhances with age. Perfect for snacking and convenient for adding to any recipe.

\$6.45



Produce



Guided By Mushrooms Powders

GBM Umami Blends are made with beautiful gourmet mushrooms grown at a farm in Dayton, Ohio. The mushrooms are dried, milled to a fine powder, and then mixed with a variety of spices that will add a lovely umami taste to any style of cuisine.

\$9.99 - \$11.99

Melissa's Polenta

Once a staple of Northern Italian kitchens, Polenta (corn-meal) is now a popular item on American menus. Traditionally cooked like a hot cereal, precooked Polenta from Melissa's eliminates the need for lengthy preparation before serving. Available in Italian Herb and Sundried Tomato.

\$4.99



Bakery

O'Dough O'Dippers



These bite-sized, naan-style dippers are vegan and gluten-free! Heat, top with olive oil and sea salt for the perfect snack.

\$7.00

Treat Shop Mousse Parfaits

Stop by the bakery cooler for a quick yet decadent on-the-go dessert! Try Banana Pudding, French-Style Cheesecake, or Strawberry Cheesecake.

\$4.99



Wellness



Big Moods Candles

Made from 100% soy wax, these vegan-friendly candles offer a long burn time, filling your home with their delightful scents.

\$13.29

Mountain Rose Sprouting Seeds

Organic sprouting seeds are easy to grow, economical, and bring ample nutrients and crisp flavor to your culinary creations. Available in Alfalfa, Wheatgrass, and Daikon Radish.

\$2.99 - \$8.89



Kikkerland Scrub Sponges

These handy nylon scrubbers are ready to take on your dishwashing duties! Durable, effective, and safe for all dinnerware & cookware surfaces.

\$6.79



Beer & Wine

Southern Tier Irish Cream Stout

This Irish cocktail-inspired stout features hearty dark malts with a subtle balance of hops to create a dark ale of comfort with a sure-fire salute to the famous spirit.

\$10.99



Jam Jar Sparkling Sweet Red Wine

Bubbly and bright, this sweet sparkling red will sweeten your day with its vibrant red fruit, berries, and a whisper of chocolate.

\$12.99

**THANKS FOR
READING!**

ENJOY \$2 OFF

with a purchase of \$15 or more

Show this coupon at the registers.
Cannot be reused or used for sale items, Co+op Basics,
or Alcohol. Valid during the month of February.



Common Ground Food Co-op | 300 S. Broadway Ave #166 | Urbana, IL 61801 US

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