



THE
Garlic Press

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WINTER 2026

Take Care Through the Cold

I love winter! There, I said it. Yes, it's cold—and yes, the Midwest doesn't hold back—but there's something grounding about this time of year. Winter invites us to slow down, take care, and lean into the routines and connections that sustain us.

That idea of care leads naturally into wellness, a word that means different things to different people. For some, wellness looks like shifting to a more plant-forward or vegetarian diet. For others, it might be adding supplements, focusing on movement, or simply creating a lifestyle that feels more sustainable and balanced. There's no one-size-fits-all approach, and we believe that wellness should meet you where you are. This issue of the Garlic Press, we're focusing on all things wellness. We hope you'll find ideas, inspiration, and resources that resonate with you. At PFC, our goal is to be your wellness partner—offering trusted products, education, and support to help you make choices that work for your life and your values.

We're also proud to highlight and support local makers who share our commitment to wellness and sustainability. [Sacred Blossom Farm](#) and [Komoni](#) offer thoughtfully made and grown products rooted in care for both people and the planet. Featuring partners like these allows us to connect you with high-quality offerings that are grounded in local values and relationships—another way we work to strengthen our regional food and wellness ecosystem.

Community is at the heart of everything we do, and that includes cooperative leadership. We're excited to welcome our new and returning board members: **Tom Halada, Liz Gamble, Jim Szymalak, and Mia Simone Davis**. Strong, engaged leadership helps ensure our co-op remains responsive, values-driven, and member-owned for years to come. We invite you to meet the board at our **Owner Annual Meeting on March 12 at 5 pm in the Rochester deli seating area**. You can [RSVP HERE](#) to join either in person or virtually.

This winter, we're also leaning into connection through a variety of outreach events. From [Winter Yoga](#) and [run clubs](#) to [Valentine's Crafts](#) and our new [Chili Cook-Off](#), there are plenty of ways to gather, move, and have a little fun together—even when the temperatures drop.

Finally, while we're embracing winter, it's never too early to look ahead. Please save the date for our [Spring Open House on April 11 from 10 am–1 pm](#). We can't wait to celebrate the season ahead with you.

Thank you for being part of this community. However you experience winter, we're glad to be alongside you.

Warmly,

Ann Mull

General Manager



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BULLETIN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As we reflect on the past year, we're filled with gratitude and excitement for all we've accomplished together. With strong leadership under Ann Mull, our new General Manager, the co-op has moved forward with clarity, collaboration, and purpose.

We were especially energized by our community involvement, attendance at local events, and open houses in Rochester and La Crosse, where we came together to share food, conversation, and a sense of belonging. Seeing owners, neighbors, staff, and producers gather under one roof reminded us why we do this work—supporting one another while celebrating the incredible food grown and made in our region.

Through it all, our commitment remains steadfast: to our owners, to our wonderful staff who bring heart and care to the co-op every day, and to our local suppliers and producers.

Thank you for being such an essential part of our shared success.

PFC Board of Directors



WELCOME TO THE BOARD!

Please join us in welcoming our new and returning board members, Tom Halada, Liz Gamble, Jim Szymalak and Mia Simone Davis! Jim and Mia are based in La Crosse, and you can read their bios [here](#).



Jim



Mia

ANNUAL OWNERS MEETING!

Join us in-person or virtually for our Annual Owners Meeting on:

March 12 5–7 pm

Location: Rochester deli seating area.

We'll have door prizes, community guest speakers and important updates from our PFC leaders.

Make sure to RSVP [here](#) by March 5.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

January 23-25 & February 20-22

3 Day Sale

Save big during our 3 Day Sales.

Enjoy special pricing on 6-10 select items across the store.

Check the flyer or stop in to see what's on sale and stock up while you can.



Starting December 31

Hot Deals are Back!

Fresh savings, updated weekly. Each week, one produce item is a hot deal you can't pass up.

A simple way to stretch your grocery budget while eating fresh.



February 11-17

Wine Sale

Toast to great deals on great wine!

Owners take 20% (nonowners take 15%) off our curated wine selection. Perfect for celebrations, cozy nights in, or stocking up on favorites.



February 20 - April 2

Fish Fridays

Fresh seafood meets Friday savings. Enjoy \$10 off a \$25 purchase of fresh fish or seafood every Friday through April 2.

A delicious way to make Fridays easy and affordable.

Save with Co+op Deals!

With sale prices on more than a hundred products from trusted brands each month, there is no better way to save money on the products you love.



Every Wednesday

\$6 Sushi Wednesdays

Pick up fresh, handmade ACE Sushi at the co-op for only \$6.



EVENT SCHEDULE

Stay up to date on [social](#) or our [online event calendar](#)



River City Run Club

Every Wednesday | 5:30–6:10 PM | La Crosse

20 minute run or walk going down to the waterfront, through the Riverside International Friendship Gardens, and out towards the Willow Trail before heading back to the Co-op.



Board Game Sundays

1st & 3rd Sunday each month | 2–7 PM | Rochester

This is a casual, drop-in style event where gamers of all ages are welcome. Bring your own favorite board games or choose from hundreds of games provided on site by Game Haven.



Saturday Night Yoga

Every Saturday, Jan 3–Mar 14 | 7–8 PM | Rochester

Escape the cold and join us for a 60-minute, yoga flow with Emma Smith. This class is designed to be accessible for anyone who wants to drop in, offering challenging options.



Off Season Striders Run

Every 3rd Sunday | Morning Start | Rochester

Whether you're a seasoned runner or just getting started, Off Season Striders offers something for everyone — no membership required. Routes and paces vary.



Group Acupuncture

Jan 21 (5–8 PM) or Jan 24 (8:30 AM – 12:30 PM) | La Crosse

Group acupuncture is a cost-effective and community-oriented approach to care that offers health benefits for conditions like chronic pain, stress, anxiety, and promoting connection.



Valentine's Crafting with MORPH

February 7 | 10 AM – 4 PM | Rochester

Stop by the Co-op for a cozy, creative Valentine's crafting event with MORPH. This free, drop-in activity is open to all ages and runs throughout the day.



Chili Cook-off

February 28 | 12–2 PM | La Crosse

Warm up with some friendly competition at our Chili Cook-Off! Join us to taste a variety of homemade chilis and cheer on your favorites. \$5 entry fee goes towards Hunger Task Force.



Cold Weather Get Together

February 7 | 1 – 7 PM | La Crosse

Join us at the First Annual Cold Weather Get Together at Upper Hixon Park! Stop by our table from 2-5 PM for a chat, some soup and chili to keep you warm and energized throughout the winter fun! Bundle up and bring the family!



Social-Ice

February 7 | 1 – 10 PM | Rochester

Downtown Rochester transforms into an icy oasis for Social-Ice! Unique themed bars—each with its own signature drink—and full-scale ice sculptures illuminated with vibrant hues light up the winter-drab night



Annual Owner's Meeting

March 12 | 5–7 PM | Rochester (or online)

Join us in-person in the Rochester deli seating area for a light meal and beverages at 5 PM. The meeting begins at 5:30 PM with prizes and guest speakers. Please RSVP by March 5.



SACRED BLOSSOM FARM

LIVING HERBAL TEAS

CULTIVATING Herbal GOODNESS

Sacred Blossom Farm Herbal Teas
Support Wellness All Year Long

By: Greg Lovell | Photos: Sacred Blossom Farm



Tony DiMaggio never imagined a career walking sprawling gardens of fragrant herbs on a farm near Mondovi, Wisconsin. In fact, it was a complete accident.

What started as a summer farm job blossomed into a passion for agriculture, health, and sustainability.

“I fell in love with the work. The rhythm of the seasons, being outside every day, and growing things in a way that felt responsible and meaningful,” DiMaggio recalled. “I knew I wanted to build a life around sustainable agriculture.”

DiMaggio says the farmer he worked for taught him a great deal, ultimately becoming a mentor. This experience, coupled with a background in business administration, helped DiMaggio start a small, regenerative herb farm producing herbal teas. In 2016, Sacred Blossom Farm officially launched.

A Vision Takes Root

DiMaggio began with the simple goal of creating something better than what currently existed.

“I spent a lot of time walking grocery store aisles, studying shelves, and asking myself what I could genuinely do better,” he recalled. “Herbal tea ended up being the perfect fit.”

DiMaggio says getting the business up and running was a borderline miracle. He was fortunate to find generous landlords who allowed him to live and work on the farm rent-free for two years. Without them, Sacred Blossom Farm would not have been possible.

“I’m still farming on that same

land today, and the landlords have become some of my best friends,” DiMaggio continued.

This same spirit of conviviality still permeates Sacred Blossom today.

“Our mission is the same one my mentor passed down to me: to farm for health. Our own health, the health of the land, and the health of consumers.”

To that end, DiMaggio is committed to growing the best herbs he can, with care and intention, and turning them into a quality product people can feel good about purchasing and consuming. The teas are crafted to taste great, are easy to brew, and support wellbeing. In fact, Angel, their best-selling tea, won first place at the Chicago

International Tea Festival.

“Our customers tend to be people who care about what they’re putting in their bodies,” said DiMaggio. “We try to make products that feel honest, grounding, and truly supportive, not trendy or over-processed.”

Steeped in Experience

Now with four full-time employees and six part-time employees, Sacred Blossom Farm boasts 20 acres and sells their teas at co-ops across Wisconsin and Minnesota.

“The co-ops really gave us our start. They’ve been such a blessing for farms like mine,” said DiMaggio. “That support made it possible for us to grow slowly and intentionally. We’re incredibly grateful for it.”

Additionally, their website sacredblossomfarm.com features information and videos about the farm and how the tea is grown and produced. There is also an online store for customers.

Most of the herbs in Sacred Blossom tea blends are grown on site at the farm, though a small percentage, like raspberry leaf and nettles, are wild harvested because they grow naturally and abundantly in Wisconsin.

“Our wildcrafting, like our farming, is not damaging to our ecosystem.”

DiMaggio says they focus on freshness and integrity, harvesting at peak potency, drying everything gently, and keeping the herbs whole as much as possible.

“That preserves both flavor and the plant’s natural character,” he continued. “A lot of people are surprised by how vibrant and alive the tea tastes. It’s not dusty or dull like what many folks are used to.”

DiMaggio and company use custom built, human-powered machines to de-stem and cut herbs with the



highest level of artisan quality.

“Small, local farm production allows us to harvest herbs carefully and at the perfect time, efficiently but with respect for the plants and their end use as the best herbal tea,” DiMaggio said.

Using methods such as polyculture systems, inter-seeding, and small scale weeding has helped Sacred Blossom Farm steward the soil and land to a point of thriving. They also strive for sustainability, minimizing inputs, tractor usage, and shipping.

“What can we say? It’s our passion!” quipped DiMaggio.



Tending to Future Generations

Looking ahead, DiMaggio says he plans to scale up the business while staying true to the values that define it.

“What we do hasn’t changed and won’t change,” said DiMaggio. “I didn’t start farming to get rich but to follow a dream of living and working in harmony with nature.”

DiMaggio says the biggest priority is continuing to produce high-quality products, which starts right in the dirt on the farm.

“Our soil keeps improving. It’s really the foundation of everything we do,” DiMaggio continued. “Healthy soil

leads to healthy plants, and ultimately healthy people.”

As Sacred Blossom Farm continues to evolve their growing and processing practices, the goal is steady, thoughtful, sustainable growth, or as DiMaggio puts it, “Doing a little more of what we do best, without losing what makes it special.”

Looking even further down the road, DiMaggio hopes Sacred Blossom Farm can be an example of what’s possible when a farm puts health first and builds slowly and responsibly.

“That sense of responsibility to the next generation, to the soil, and to the people who drink our tea really shapes how I think about what I want to contribute to the future.”

And that is something we can all raise a cup of tea to.



SOAKING UP Self-Care

Komoni offers a variety of restorative bath & body products

By: Greg Lovell | Photos: Komoni

We all want—probably need—more self-care, but where do we start? Where can we find the restoration and relaxation we need after those long, arduous days?

Komoni may be able to help.

As a purpose-driven wellness brand, Komoni offers clean, small-batch products designed to make people feel good naturally.

Owner Vangie Stacy, a former massage therapist, certainly knows a thing or two about helping people feel better, having worked with many folks carrying stress, pain, and physical fatigue.



Getting Hands On

Stacy says she noticed a recurring problem in her massage practice: Clients would feel better after a session but struggle to maintain that relief between visits. Some people even get caught in a cycle of fatigue, tension, and recurring injury.

“I witnessed this pattern over and over,” Stacy said.

She wanted to find a way to extend care beyond the massage table and help clients carry that healing and rejuvenation into everyday life, so she created the Recovery Bath Soak and began gifting it to clients.

“The turning point came when a client asked if he could purchase them,” recalled Stacy. “That simple question sparked the beginning of something much bigger. What started as a personal remedy quickly grew into a labor of love and a family effort.”

Nowadays, Komoni specializes in hair, skin, and body care products alongside the bath soaks and essential oils that started it all.

Customers are drawn to Komoni products to support recovery, relaxation, and everyday self-care.

“Our products are mindfully designed for preventative and restorative care, making it a strong fit for active individuals, wellness-minded shoppers, caregivers, parents, and anyone looking for natural support.”



Salt of the Earth

As Komoni started to take shape, Stacy approached food co-ops in the Twin Cities area, essentially knocking on doors in search of shelf space.

“Everything had a farmers market feel,” Stacy recalled. “Products were homemade in small batches, and I did everything myself, from formulating the blends to printing the labels.”

Fast forward to present day, and Komoni products are available throughout the Midwest in co-ops, gift shops, and wellness boutiques as well as on their website. Winter seasonal

favorites include the Ayurvedic Bath Soaks and Everything Salves.

Stacy says she most enjoys the relationships she’s built through running Komoni. In fact, many of those people helped shape Komoni into what it is today. Of course, running a small business also comes with plenty of challenges, including balancing resources, navigating multiple roles, and managing growth.

Through it all, Komoni’s mission remains the same: to support everyday wellness through clean, thoughtfully-made products that honor healing, sustainability, and community care.





Wellness & Beyond

As her business grows, Stacy wants Komoni to be a well-known and respected wellness brand.

“My short term plan is to maintain a high quality, small batch production while improving efficiency and sustainability,” she said.

From there, Stacy is also eyeing an expansion into beauty products.

Regardless of what the future holds, Stacy says she is grateful for her opportunities and the trust customers have placed in Komoni. As such, she plans on staying grounded.

“From healing hands to healing brands, we are committed to supporting your wellness journey every step of the way.”

EMOTIONAL *Wellness* CORNER

How to Manage Wintertime Moods

Written by: Greg Lovell

Let's be honest. Winter can be hard, even for the most seasoned Midwesterners among us. In addition to the extra physicality of shoveling, tromping through snow, and constantly donning extra layers, the season can also bring out some emotions.

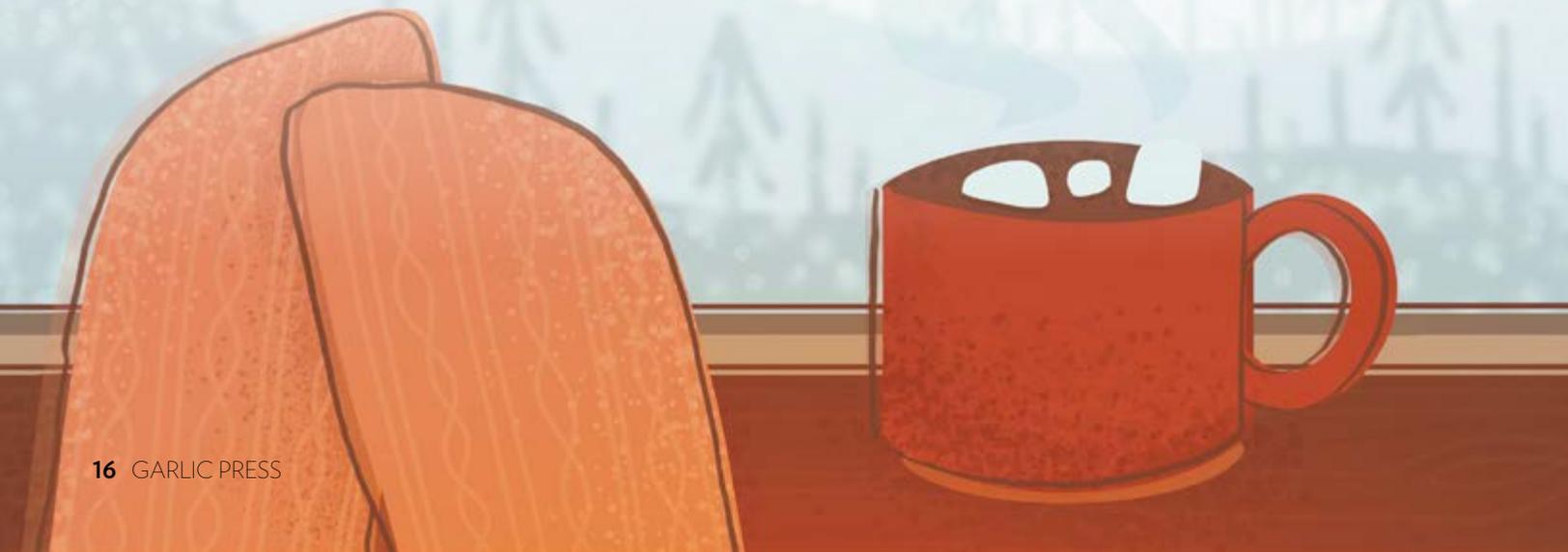
With less sunlight and more time indoors, it's easy to get caught in a doldrum of routine and emotional heaviness. As a result, sometimes we get a little disconnected from the people in our lives. Sometimes we get stuck within the walls of our own thinking as much as the physical walls of our homes and workplaces. And sometimes the holidays bring up stress or grief on top of it all.

Call it what you will—wintertime blues, cabin fever, or feelings of depression—chances are every one of us has experienced it to some degree.

So what are we to do? How might we navigate moods that shift us down into low gear where we're feeling unmotivated, uninterested, or just plain crummy?

The key is befriending and being gentle, then doing things that are truly supportive. Recognize that a part of you feels this way, and that's okay. There is no need to force it away. Think gently leading yourself to a more balanced emotional state versus dragging yourself out of it through force or criticism. The more we can be okay with and accept our feelings, the more we will settle our systems. Then our emotions will regulate naturally.

Once this attitudinal foundation is set, here are some strategies to consider:

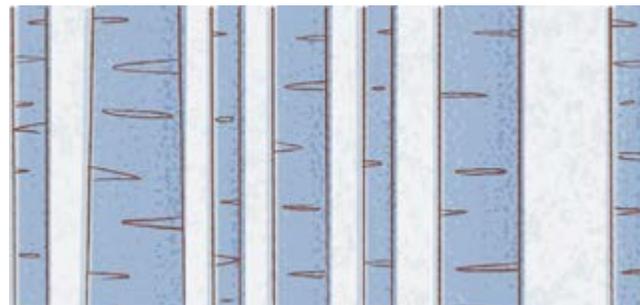




Connect with a friend.

Other people help us co-regulate. Consider expressing your thoughts and feelings to a trusted someone in your life who can listen nonjudgmentally and provide you with a safe connection. Or, simply get together for something fun.

Get outside. Bundle up one more time with an eye to engaging nature with your senses. Doing so can have a soothing, regulating effect.



Try some gentle exercise.

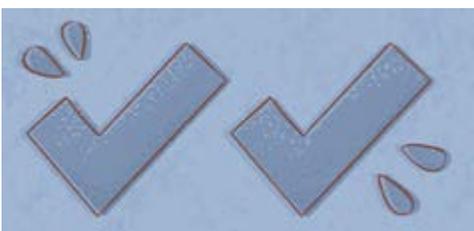
Activities, like yoga, tai chi, or a quiet walk can help ease the mind and body out of depressive or anxious states as they have a grounding effect, gently awaken your system, and enhance mood.



Don't forget to breathe. The classic mindfulness exercise of abdominal breathing is a great way to soothe any type of emotion, increase wellbeing, and bring equanimity.



Give yourself a hug. Massage, self-touch, and other self-compassion exercises enhance positive mental states and lead to emotional regulation.



Double your efforts. Consider using a combination of the above exercises to enhance the effect. For example, reevaluate your thinking while taking a walk through the park or breathe deeply as you get a massage. *If you're in Rochester, try **Saturday Night Yoga** for connection and mindful movement!*

In the end, managing any type of emotion is a dance. Be patient. Listen to your mind and body. Proceed gently, knowing when to push out of your comfort zone and when to pull back.

In time, our emotions—even the heavy, painful ones—can become our teachers and guides, not our enemies.

This article is produced free of charge. Please consider donating to the Mental Health Coalition of La Crosse alongside the PFC to support mental health efforts in our area.

<https://lacrossementalhealth.org>

Oats ALL DAY

Hearty, Healthy, & Savory

When you think of oats, you often picture sweet bowls with berries and honey for breakfast, but oats are so much more than a morning treat! Their creamy texture, mild flavor, and hearty nutrition make them perfect for savory meals any time of day.

Oats as a Grain Alternative

Oats aren't just for porridge; they can take on the role of rice, quinoa, or other grains in your meals. **Try them:**

- As a base for stir-fries or veggie bowls instead of rice.
- As a hearty side dish with beans, greens, or roasted vegetables.
- They absorb flavors beautifully, making them a versatile canvas for savory cooking.

Health Benefits of Oats

High in fiber

Supports digestion and keeps you full.

Good source of plant-based protein

Perfect for vegetarian and vegan meals.

Heart-healthy

Oats contain beta-glucan, a type of fiber linked to lower cholesterol.

Mineral-rich

Packed with iron, magnesium, and B-vitamins to support energy and overall health.

By swapping rice or pasta for oats, you can make your meals more nutritious, hearty, and budget-friendly, all while experimenting with flavors and textures.



Savory Oats Base

Ingredients (1 serving)

- ½ cup rolled oats
- 1 cup water or vegetable broth
- Pinch of salt
- 1 cup fresh greens (spinach, kale, or chard)

Instructions

- Bring water or broth to a boil.
- Stir in oats and a pinch of salt, reduce heat, and simmer 5–7 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- Sauté greens lightly and stir into cooked oats.



Eggs & Greens Oats

(for Savory Oats Base)

Ingredients (1 serving)

- 1–2 eggs
- 1 cup fresh greens (spinach, kale, or chard)
- 1 tsp oil or butter
- Pinch of salt and black pepper
- Optional: grated cheese, fresh herbs, hot sauce

Instructions

- Heat oil or butter in a skillet over medium heat.
- Add greens and sauté until just wilted.
- In the same skillet, cook eggs to your liking (scrambled, fried, or soft-boiled).
- Season with salt and pepper.
- Spoon eggs and greens over Savory Oats Base and add optional toppings if desired.

Colorful Mushroom Stir-Fry Topping

(for Savory Oats Base)

Ingredients (1–2 servings)

- 1 cup mushrooms, sliced, any kind
- ½ cup bell pepper, thinly sliced (any color)
- ½ cup carrots, thinly sliced or shredded
- 1–2 tsp oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tsp soy sauce or tamari

Optional: grated ginger, green onions, sesame seeds, splash of sesame oil

Instructions

- Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat.
- Add mushrooms and cook until they release moisture and begin to brown, about 4–5 minutes.
- Add bell pepper and carrots and stir-fry until just tender but still colorful, 2–3 minutes.
- Stir in garlic and soy sauce and cook 30–60 seconds until fragrant.

Spoon generously over Savory Oats Base and finish with optional toppings if desired.

STAFF PICKS

You gotta try these Co-op favorites, taste-tested by us!

View all our Staff Picks [here!](#)

Bolthouse Farms Coffee Beverage

Tasty, energizing, reasonably filling.

Submitted by:
Matthew Hicks
(La Crosse Front End)



Co-op's Own™ Red Curry Tofu

The rich blend of flavors in the mayo sauce combined with the crunch of the fresh vegetables and the perfect texture of the tofu makes my mouth happy!! It's always so filling, too!

Submitted by:
Serena Flick (La Crosse Front End)



Mose's Fish Shop Tartar Sauce

Submitted by:
Steve Vittum
(La Crosse Front End)



Mandala Teas

It turns tea drinking into an experience.

Submitted by:
Pete Dvorak (Rochester Produce)



Deer Creek Wild Boar Cheese

It is the greatest cheese on Earth!

Submitted by:
Perrin Iacopino
(Marketing)



Wonderstate Coffee Driftless Blend

It's delicious!

Submitted by:
Rusty Daines (La Crosse Produce)



Fair State Brewing Co-op German Style Pils

Submitted by:
Michael Carpenter (Rochester Wine, Beer & Spirits)



GIVE **WHERE YOU** LIVE

* WINTER RECIPIENTS *

January

La Crosse

Rochester

- **Children's Museum of La Crosse**

The Children's Museum provides affordable opportunities for the young and the young at heart to learn, connect, and grow through interactive play. They are a dynamic, interactive resource for families, community organizations, and visitors.

- **Salvation Army Rochester**

The Rochester Salvation Army believes in faith put into action and making life better for others. Our services meet physical, emotional and spiritual needs to rebuild lives and create lasting change. Help is given freely and without discrimination, while preserving the individual's dignity. We're here to change lives, one at a time.

February

- **Adult & Teen Challenge of Western WI**

Adult & Teen Challenge of Western Wisconsin's mission is to provide support for individuals seeking to gain freedom from chemical addictions and other life-controlling problems by addressing spiritual, physical, and emotional needs.

- **125 Live**

Through extensive programming, fitness amenities, gathering spaces, and personal health resources, 125 LIVE provides opportunities for all adults to embark on their journey to "aging successfully." Our mission is to enrich the lives of active adults.

March

- **Friends of the La Crosse River Marsh**

Our mission is to preserve and enhance the La Crosse River Marsh through community action, advocacy, and education. Regular volunteer work parties help restore the marsh ecosystem.

- **Camp Companion**

Camp Companion is dedicated to preventing future generations of homeless animals and working toward a day when no animal is without a home. By stepping beyond the traditional humane society model, our work centers on an aggressive Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program that focuses on farm, feral, and stray cats.

View All Recipients at:
<https://www.pfc.coop/community-involvement>



Owner-Only Coupons

Take a photo and show the coupon on your phone at checkout - no clipping needed!



**20%
OFF**
PLU 299

One Komoni item
Valid February 1 through 28, 2026

One-time use per owner only. Owners may use their 5% discount. Not valid on prior purchases. Valid in-store at both People's Food Co-op locations, while supplies last. Not valid with any other discounts or coupons.



\$1.49/lb
PLU 1727

Bulk Organic Oats
Valid March 1 though 31, 2026

One-time use per owner only. Owners may use their 5% discount. Not valid on prior purchases. Valid in-store at both People's Food Co-op locations, while supplies last. Not valid with any other discounts or coupons.



   People's Food Co-op | La Crosse, WI | Rochester, MN

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