



THE Garlic Press

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FALL 2025

Savor the Season

The holiday season is here, and we couldn't be more excited to celebrate it with you! **Co-op's Own™** holiday meals are back—perfect for sharing with friends and family. From savory sides to sweet baked treats, each one is made with care, quality ingredients, and a love for our community.

We hope you'll join us at our **Holiday Open House on November 8!** It's a wonderful chance to meet local farmers and producers, taste their treats, preorder your holiday sides or turkey, and celebrate the season together.

Don't forget to preorder your fresh Ferndale Market turkey! These local birds go fast, and we want every family to enjoy a fresh, beautiful centerpiece on their holiday table.

We're excited to see you at the annual **FEAST! Festival in Rochester, MN on November 1,** a celebration of all things local in the Driftless Area. The FEAST! Local Foods Network brings together organizations, businesses, and individuals committed to building a sustainable, innovative, and collaborative regional food system. We feel truly lucky to be part of this vibrant community and to share in the work of supporting local farmers, producers, and neighbors.

Autumn wouldn't be complete without apples! Be sure to try our seasonal favorites in this issue, like **Chai-Spiced Apple Butter** and **Apple Cheddar Galette**—perfect for cozy nights at home.

As a cooperative owner, your voice truly matters. **Vote in the Board of Directors election**—your participation helps shape the future of our Co-op, our products, and our community.

And now, a truly heartfelt thank you to each of you, our wonderful owners. **Your support, your visits, your stories, and your ideas are what make this Co-op so special.** Every time you shop with us, share a recipe, or vote, you're helping nurture a place where neighbors connect, local businesses thrive, and our cooperative spirit grows stronger. You are the heart of this community, and we are so grateful for the trust, care, and pride you bring every day.

We can't wait to see you in the store!

Cooperatively,

Ann Mull

General Manager



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LA CROSSE
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La Crosse, WI 54601
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519 1st Avenue Southwest
Rochester, MN 55902
507-289-9061

HOLIDAY HOURS:

Wednesday
11/26 | 8 AM - 9 PM

Thursday
11/27 | Closed

Friday
11/28 | 8 AM - 9 PM

Wednesday
12/24 | 8 AM - 6 PM

Thursday
12/25 | Closed

Wednesday
12/31 | 8 AM - 9 PM

Thursday
1/1 | 10 AM - 9 PM

OWNER TOWN HALL *Recap*

La Crosse

October 2, 2025

5:00-6:30 PM

and

Rochester

October 7, 2025

5:00-6:30 PM

KEEP AN EYE ON
YOUR INBOX!

We'll let you know
when the next
Owner Town Hall is
scheduled.

Thanks to all
who attended!

LA CROSSE

Salutations, Co-op Community,

In October, the board held two town hall meetings, one at each location, to connect with owners and address any questions or concerns about recent months and changes. We appreciate everyone who attended, asked questions, and provided feedback. We wanted to share some of the common questions and topics that were brought up at the town halls.

At La Crosse, there were a few areas that were discussed: product selection, market niche, financial relationship with Rochester, and ongoing communications about what is happening.

Regarding the product selection discussion – there were some concerns from one owner about the presence of seed oils and B vitamins in different deli items. Is this consistent with the Co-op's promise that we have in place for our deli and bakery selections?

Board members brought up how the discussion of what the co-op should offer is almost as old as the co-op itself. There were rigorous debates around selling fish and meat at one point in time. There is a wide range of opinions on what is considered healthy.

On a related note to the question about product selection, there was a question about what kind of niche should the co-op inhabit in the market.

Additionally, there were concerns about the use of plastic packaging and the possibility of microplastics in deli and bakery offerings. Ann

Mull, our GM, was present and took notes on these concerns to work on addressing moving forward.

The board heard multiple owners express concern over the financial situation, especially considering that the Rochester location has not been profitable since opening. Some seemed uncertain about whether our status as one store, two locations should continue. The board has previously looked at the cost of such a substantial change and found that there are serious risks. The board will look for the best options for PFC's future.

Lastly, there were some questions about follow up from what was discussed at the town hall meeting. We got a question about whether board meeting minutes are available to owners. The meeting minutes are made available in a binder at the Customer Service desk and they can be requested. We have discussed whether we could add them to PFC's website and this is still being worked out. There was another suggestion for having written updates on what is happening at the co-op in the Garlic Press or perhaps email. This subject has been handed off to the board's Owner Engagement Committee.

Thank you again to everyone who attended!

ROCHESTER

The People's Food Co-op Rochester Town Hall was held on the evening of October 7.

We welcomed a small but eager crowd who shared some great insights and thoughtful suggestions, including adding a composting option or educational event; adding movie screenings in the community space; and introducing cooking classes.

We also heard that you'd like to get additional communication from us on the goings on at the store, so we are certainly looking forward to being in touch more often.

Thanks to all who attended! We'll be sure to let everyone know as soon as our next Town Hall event is scheduled.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

October 1 – November 4

Owner Only Deals

It pays to be an owner! Enjoy exclusive savings on select items all month long.

OWNER ONLY
Deals

Every Wednesday

\$6 Sushi Wednesdays

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

November 5 – December 2

Field Day Sale

Save big on over 300 Field Day items – perfect for cooking, hosting, and holiday prep.

We're partnering with the National Cooperative of Grocers (NCG) for an incredible opportunity. For every Field Day product sold between November 5 and December 2, NCG will donate 5¢ to NATIFS. **Learn more about NATIFS.**



November 21

Preorder online or call us! | See page 8 for more details!

Holiday Preorders Due!

Made-from-scratch in our kitchen, we're here to make your holidays a breeze. Whether you need full dinners, fill-in sides, or pies. Order fresh, local Ferndale Market turkeys to enjoy at your table.

From everyday deals to special promotions, there's always something worth checking out at the Co-op!

December 12–14

Wine Sale

Raise a glass to savings! Owners take 20% (non-owners take 15%) off our curated wine selection. Toast to the season and great deals.



To be Announced

Winter Wellness Sale

Start the year right with deals on your wellness favorites.

YOU'RE
Invited



Holiday

OPEN HOUSE

Saturday,
November 8
10 AM – 1 PM

Stop by our celebration of all things local and holidays. It's free, it's festive, and everyone's invited!



Meet local makers
& sample products



Enter to win
gift baskets



Listen to live music
by area artists



Preorder fresh turkeys,
dinners, sides & pies

Thanksgiving

AT THE CO-OP

PREORDER *Today!*



FERNDALE MARKET TURKEY

Fresh, never frozen.
Locally-raised, and free-range.
Always antibiotic-free.



CO-OP'S OWN™ DINNER, SIDES & PIES

Made in our kitchen with fresh ingredients
and plenty of love—none of the stress.

Preorders due November 21 by 6 PM



Grab a
brochure
in-store to
learn more!



Cannon Falls, MN

Learn more

about the Peterson Family
and Ferndale Market's story

*Three generations of raising turkeys
without shortcuts since 1939.*



Upcoming at the Co-op

OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			01	02	03	04
05	06	07	08	09	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

NOVEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
30						01
02	03	04	05	06	07	08
09	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

DECEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	01	02	03	04	05	06
07	08	09	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace

November 1 | 10 AM – 4 PM | Rochester

Stop by our booth to sample PFC favorites: including pumpkin bread, cranberry orange bread, hot cider, and some of our delicious Thanksgiving sides. Come taste, shop, and say hi while exploring this incredible local food festival that brings together makers from across Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa.



Board Basics with Hunt + Gather

November 23 | 10 AM – 1 PM | La Crosse

Get ready to wow your guests this holiday season! Join the experts from Hunt + Gather for a hands-on, drop-in, class where you'll learn the art of creating beautiful and delicious charcuterie boards.

You'll learn ways to spruce up your own creations. From perfect pairings to styling tips, you'll leave with the skills (and confidence!) to snazz up your own board-making at home.



Holiday Open House

November 8 | 10AM – 1 PM | Both Locations!

Stroll through the co-op as you meet local small business owners, all passionate about what they do. Sample food and products from local vendors, and let the sounds of live music set the perfect groove.

Stop by our community-centered celebration of all things local and holidays. Grab your friends, bring the family, and spread cheer, good food, and great tunes. It's free, it's festive, and everyone's invited!

Reccuring Events:



Group Acupuncture

See dates below / La Crosse

November 13 / 5-8 PM November 16 / 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

December 4 / 5-8 PM December 6 / 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Group acupuncture is a cost-effective and community-oriented approach to care that offers health benefits for conditions like chronic pain, stress, and anxiety, while fostering social support and reducing isolation.

Your session will begin with a 15-minute consult and needle placement by Brennan Quin. Once set, you will have up to 30 minutes to relax in a zero-gravity chair to soothing meditative music.



Saturday Night Yoga at the Co-op (Fall Series)

Every Saturday / 7-8 PM / Rochester

As the days grow shorter and the air turns crisp, make space to slow down and reconnect. This fall, classes are led by Emma Smith, a seasoned instructor known for her thoughtful, grounding teaching style. Emma teaches at Uptown Pilates & Yoga and the University of Minnesota Rochester, and we're thrilled to welcome her to the co-op community. All levels are welcome and don't forget to bring your yoga mat!



Co-op Tabletop: Board Game Sundays

1st & 3rd Sunday each Month / 2-8 PM / Rochester

Hosted in partnership with Game Haven and led by local gaming pro Dave Razidlo, organizer of Rochester's very own board game convention: Castle Con. Dave brings a massive library of board games, so whether you're a seasoned gamer or just curious, there's something for everyone.



Off Season Striders Run

3rd Sunday each Month / Morning Start / Rochester

Join Rochester Running Club's Off Season Striders for a community run starting at People's Food Co-op! This informal, all-levels running group meets year-round on weekends. Enjoy the run and connecting with others.

All events & classes have

Hyperlinks

Click on the titles to get more information and details.

Organic TO THE Core

A Conversation with
Ana Skemp of Fruit Acres
Written by: Greg Lovell

NEARLY 80 YEARS AGO, Dr. Archie Skemp saw something special in the bluffs just north of La Crescent. A doctor by trade but farmer at heart, Skemp made a move that would lay a foundation for generations of apple growers to come: he purchased **Fruit Acres**.

Today, Fruit Acres occupies about **400 acres** of scenic bluffland overlooking the Mississippi River. Certified organic and home to thousands of trees producing dozens of different apple varieties, Fruit Acres is as strong as ever.

And it's still owned by the Skemp family.

"I love the challenge to do the best we can for the land we're honored to tend," said Ana Skemp, one of Fruit Acres' current owners.

With their earliest apples arriving in August and latest varieties coming in October, Skemp spends much of her fall harvesting.

"Basically, each week we walk the orchard and taste the fruit. We want to bring people apples at peak ripeness," she said.

When apples are ripe and ready, they pick from that section by hand and reach out to local co-ops with that week's offerings. Additionally, customers can come pick their own in designated rows on weekends.



Going Organic

Skemp says she and the others operating Fruit Acres were initially farmers, not orchardists, but soon learned the tricks of the trade and got the entire orchard certified organic.

“Growing fruit organically is arguably one of the most challenging paths as a food producer,” Skemp said. “We learned how to track degree days and fungal spore emergence, insect pest populations, and how to harvest at peak ripeness. We get better each year.”

Many of the apple varieties grown at Fruit Acres originated in Minnesota or Wisconsin, which means they have been selected to do well in this climate. SweeTangos, for example, tend to produce a robust yield all on their own.

“Our orchard couldn’t be more perfectly situated to grow good crops of organic fruit,” Skemp continued. “The warmth from the river rises up and helps protect the blossoms from late frosts in the spring and the ridge top winds keep fungal pressure lower. We benefit a lot from the smart planning and layout from the farmers who came before us.”

Through it all, Skemp takes pride in using organic methods and being a good steward of the land, ensuring its viability for years to come.

“I love to see the abundance of fruit on our trees and know that pollinator strips and managed mowing are doing their job to create habitat for dwindling insect populations,” she added.



From Orchard to Oven

We've got two comforting apple recipes to celebrate the season.

Pages 15 & 16

Find more recipes on our website!

Community Partnerships

With years of experience under their belts and a bountiful harvest of apples in hand each fall, Skemp and company have expanded partnerships, including with the People's Food Co-op.

“We love working with the People's Food Co-op so much. The staff is so supportive and easy to work with,” said Skemp. “It's pretty great how often we hear from people who just bought our apples at the store. That's really the beauty of a local grocer and how it should be.”

In addition to distribution, Skemp says another big goal was to open the orchard to the community.

“We're less than 10 minutes from downtown La Crosse and we adamantly wanted to share the beauty of the place with others,” she continued.

Currently, Fruit Acres offers pick-your-own days, an apple CSA, and pop-up sales. They are also looking to expand into classes and events on the orchard and have even hosted a wedding.

“It's such an honor to be a special place for families,” Skemp said. “Our goal is to connect people with good food and a beautiful place.”

Future Blossoms

Skemp and the rest of the Fruit Acres team have worked hard learning to grow beautiful, delicious, certified organic apples. For them, there is nothing better than when someone takes a bite and exclaims it's the best apple they've ever tasted.

It's the fruit of pride and tradition, and it's all in the orchard—perhaps with more to come.

“I love thinking and dreaming about what a farm or orchard can be for its community and then working step by step toward those goals,” said Skemp. “It's an honor to grow food for local families.”



APPLE CHEDDAR *Galette*



INGREDIENTS: *(makes around 1½ cups):*

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 store-bought pie crust (round, thawed) | |
| 3 medium firm apples (<i>like Honeycrisp or Granny Smith</i>), thinly sliced | |
| 2 Tbsp brown sugar | |
| 1 Tbsp granulated sugar | |
| 1 Tbsp all-purpose flour | |
| 1/2 tsp cinnamon | *Optional: pinch of black |
| 1 tsp lemon juice | pepper or fresh thyme |
| 1 tsp vanilla extract | leaves for a savory edge! |
| pinch of salt | |
| 3/4 - 1 cup sharp white cheddar, grated | |
| 1 egg, beaten (<i>for egg wash</i>) | |
| 1 tbsp turbinado sugar (<i>optional, for finishing</i>) | |

A fall classic with a twist!

Sweet meets
savory in this
rustic galette,
where sharp
cheddar melts
into flaky pastry
and tart apples.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F and line a baking sheet with parchment, and toss apple slices with both sugars, flour, cinnamon, lemon juice, vanilla, and salt. Set aside.
2. Roll out pie crust and place on lined baking sheet and sprinkle half the cheddar in the center, leaving a 2-inch border.
3. Layer the apple mixture over the cheese, then top with remaining cheddar.
4. Fold edges of crust over the filling, pleating as needed. And brush crust with egg wash and sprinkle with turbinado sugar (if using).
5. Bake for 40–45 minutes, until crust is golden and apples are tender. Let cool slightly before serving.

CHAI-SPICED Apple Butter

INGREDIENTS: (makes around 1½ cups):

4 large apples (any variety), peeled, cored & chopped	
1/2 cup apple cider or water	
1/3 cup brown sugar (adjust to taste)	*Optional: splash of lemon
1 tsp cinnamon	juice or apple cider vinegar
1/2 tsp ground ginger	for brightness
1/4 tsp cardamon	
1/4 tsp allspice	Shortcut Tip: Don't want to
1/8 tsp cloves	mix chai spices? Use 1-2 chai
1 tsp vanilla extract	tea bags steeped in the cider
pinch of salt	first. <i>Easy flavor bomb!</i>

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Combine** apples, cider, sugar, and spices in a medium saucepan.
2. **Simmer** over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until apples are very soft, about **25-30 minutes**.
3. Use a **stick blender** (or regular blender carefully) to puree until smooth.
4. Return to pot. **Simmer uncovered**, stirring often, until thickened and dark about 20 more minutes.
5. Stir in vanilla and lemon juice (if using).
6. Let cool, then store in a jar in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.





Like fall in a jar!

Warm, rich, and deeply
spiced with cozy chai flavors.

Pair with Fayze's bread for
charcuterie boards, hosting,
and holiday gatherings.

fayze's
Bakery

EMOTIONAL *Wellness* CORNER

Written by: Greg Lovell

Know Your Signs to Manage Stress

STRESS. We've all heard about it, we've all had it, we've all tried to handle it as best we can. A quick Google search or stroll down the self-help aisle of any bookstore quickly reveals just how much has been said on this topic. While there is a great deal of helpful information out there, it can be overwhelming—*stressful even!*

So how do we wade through all the information, sift out the most reliable and accurate sources, and find strategies that work?

One great starting place—and a common theme running across multiple schools of thought—is knowing your signs of stress. In other words, getting familiar with what stress looks like for you. This is the starting point that builds your awareness and unlocks all other potential stress management strategies.

Knowing your tendencies and patterns will lay a foundation for effective stress management and personalizing what to do in response.

Here is how to do it.

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

Donate here: <https://givebutter.com/LaCrosseMentalHealth>



1 Notice your personal set of signs.

Take some time to explore what's going on internally when stress activates.

- What does your stress reaction feel like in your body? Locate it and sense into it.
- What is stress like in your mind?
- What kind of thoughts do you have? What tends to happen mentally when you're under stress?
- When does your stress come up? Under what conditions or situations? Do you notice any consistent patterns or triggers for it?



2 Add a dose of compassion and self-care.

- Remember, stress activation is normal and actually “good” in many ways, believe it or not.
- How we handle stress and what we believe about ourselves and stress itself is actually what’s most impactful emotionally.

Therefore, tending to yourself with compassion and understanding—just like a kind, loving parent would to an upset and hurting child—will put you in a healthy direction



3 Experiment with different activities, strategies, or techniques.

- See how you respond and notice what works for you.
- Read about different approaches or ask others what nourishes or helps them.

Consider consulting additional resources or experts who have more information, insight, and techniques.

With a solid understanding and reliable strategies in mind, we can manage stress effectively and maintain a healthy relationship with it. More balance and calm are sure to follow.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIPS

For only ten bucks a year, you get access to real, good food that fuels your brain and keeps you going. Eat smarter, feel better, and maybe—just maybe—stay awake through that 8 AM lecture.

a friendly,
convenient
place to shop

annual
\$10
membership
(september-august)

access to fresh,
local groceries

a community
that's here to
support you

take
5%
off 12 trips
per year

Find it in
BOTH
LOCATIONS!

"The Comfort Food King"

Chicken Bacon Ranch

classic, no fuss, like a warm hug



What's your ideal night in?

Sweatpants, a cozy blanket, a big bag of snacks, and rewatching my favorite sitcoms with zero shame



2025 BOARD ELECTION



The PFC Board of Directors is made of nine representatives elected by owners. All positions are “at large” and do not have a specific store affiliation. For the year starting January 2026 there are three open seats and seven candidates.

Voting starts:
**Monday,
December 1
at 9AM**

Voting Ends:
**Friday,
December 12
at 10PM**

Register email addresses
to receive a link to the
electronic ballot by:
Friday, November 21

Owners will receive a postcard from People’s Food Co-op (PFC) in November requesting an email address for online voting.

If you have not registered your email address with PFC, or if it has changed in the past year, please visit: <https://www.pfc.coop/owner-email-address-collection>.

All PFC Owners with a valid email address will receive an email from electionrunner.com on December 1. This email will provide you with instructions on how to access your ballot and cast your vote.

Internet-accessible computers are available at each store for owners needing access during the election.

Save the
Date

Annual Meeting

Thursday, January 22, 2026 | 5 PM | Rochester Seating Area (Café)

7 CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Hans Needham

1. Reason for Running

To have open communication between the PFC Board, the owners and those employed by the PFC. Make changes that can help everyone within the PFC so we may flourish together. Be the change I want to see within the PFC



2. Relevant Skills

Out of the box thinking, ability to listen to everyone, open to all thoughts, ideas & concepts that may be able to help the PFC and all involved, ability to adapt to any situation I am in and the ability to plan complicated concepts so they may succeed in the long run.

3. Relevant Experience

I worked within the La Crosse PFC store for a year and have first-hand experience in knowing what can be changed to make it better for everyone involved.

4. Upcoming Challenges

Listening to everyone & keeping an open door for all to use when any issues arrive. Adjusting to the ever-changing economics around us. Staying true to the values that started the PFC in a world that promotes going against them.

5. Opportunities for PFC

Be open to new ideas that can benefit everyone within the PFC umbrella so that we can all flourish together.

Jim Szymalak

1. Reason for Running

My professional life has been dedicated to public service and PFC Board membership would be a natural extension of this commitment.



I have served my local community the past ten years in my roles as professor, nonprofit board member, and now as a part of four city commissions. I believe that my legal and academic careers provide the needed competencies to help guide PFC through a challenging operating environment, while also fostering entrepreneurial initiatives.

2. Relevant Skills

Served as a senior Pentagon attorney for almost twenty years specializing in employment and general administrative law.

Recently retired public administration & legal studies professor, with specialized knowledge in personnel, ethics, and nonprofit leadership.

Former board president of a leading housing nonprofit. In addition to holding a doctorate in public administration and a law degree, possess an MBA specializing in management and organizations.

Currently serve on four city commissions addressing housing (City Plan and BoZA) and public welfare (Police & Fire and EMS).

3. Relevant Experience

During my seven years on the Greater La Crosse Area Habitat for Humanity Board, including three years as president, we grew annual revenue from \$900K to \$2.3M and increased assets from \$2.1M to \$6M while also navigating through the pandemic. I directed a strategic plan requiring programs to be self-sustaining in the absence of government funding/charitable donations, which resulted in an expansion of capacity and new initiatives such as

public policy advocacy and an environmental sustainability program.

4. Upcoming Challenges

It appears operations may be improving, but from the 2024 Annual Report I would be concerned with the cash burn rate, rising SG&A expenses, and likelihood of expanding CoGS due to current trade/immigration policies. Additionally, lack of CEO tenure, combined with unusually short board terms, impedes the effectiveness of strategic planning to address these challenges.

5. Opportunities for PFC

Focus on developing competitive advantages, such as value-added foods and customer convenience. For example, offering fresh pastas with separate fresh sauces to form higher-margin grab and go meals. In addition to more grab and go meal options, leveraging customer convenience may also include expansion to meet population centers. La Crosse's high-density housing is not being developed close to the current PFC and these very large projects typically have ground floor retail and would benefit from satellite PFC locations offering meal convenience.

producers and what I can do to better support them.

2. Relevant Skills

I believe my skills in writing, communication and community building would be useful to the board and the PFC.

I have also authored successful grants for nonprofits and have built coalitions of supporters for public fundraising campaigns. I have created visual, informative presentations to governing boards on behalf of nonprofits and businesses that I've worked with.

3. Relevant Experience

I am a longtime journalist who enjoys digging through complex information and creating informative, coherent narratives.

I authored an award-winning column for a daily newspaper called Greenspace that focused on environmental issues including land use, stewardship, sustainability and urban homesteading.

I have served on multiple nonprofit boards including as president of the Main Street Waterloo board and co-founded the Save the Waterloo Wonderbread Building (we did).

4. Upcoming Challenges

Inflation has increased costs for shoppers and everyone along the food production and supply chain.

Keeping costs down for customers but supporting PFC partners and producers will likely become more of a challenge.

Building local resilience by supporting producers helps mitigate rising costs, but won't offset them indefinitely.

Federal funding has been cut for farm-to-shelf programs. Costs for maintaining the brick-and-mortar stores are also rising.

John Molseed

1. Reason for Running

I've been a PFC member since moving to Rochester in 2018. I joined because I believe in supporting my community and local and regional producers.



I would like an opportunity to do more to help shape PFC's future, grow membership and to help share the stories PFC already tells about the people and businesses behind locally produced food there. I think serving on the board would also allow me to better learn the perspectives of our local food

Staffing appears to be a challenge at both locations and has affected some of the services available at the Rochester store.

5. Opportunities for PFC

These challenging times help more people understand the PFC goals and the importance of local food production. More people are learning how local food production builds resiliency against rising food costs and supply chain disruptions.

This can help people feel less helpless and help grow PFC membership as we share that message. Statewide and locally, there is a desire to fill gaps left by federal cuts to the USDA's local food purchase programs. Rising to these challenges presents opportunities.

Liz Gamble

1. Reason for Running

I am motivated to continue serving the PFC community. I've served on the PFC board for the past three years and am excited to continue furthering the mission of our co-op.



I am excited about food and good ingredients. In 2020, I left my corporate marketing job and completed my culinary arts training in Switzerland. This experience has made me appreciate quality ingredients and the farmers and producers who help bring those to our table.

I love the shopping experience at PFC. My family and I truly enjoy shopping at PFC and visit the store every week. I like the store layout, the product selection, and am continually impressed with the staff!

2. Relevant Skills

Inclusive Team Player: I enjoy being part of a team and working with others towards a common goal. I am a good listener and always strive to include everyone in the conversation to be sure that all voices are heard. I also love representing PFC at community events and greeting customers at the store open houses.

Business Background: I have an MBA from NYU with a specialization in Marketing Strategy and International Business. I feel comfortable reading and interpreting financial statements, and currently serve on the Owner Engagement Committee.

Culinary Skills & Interest: I attended culinary school in Switzerland in 2020 and have a deep appreciation for local foods and fresh ingredients.

Creative & Positive: I am enthusiastic by nature and like to express my creativity in many ways – mostly through my writing. In fact, I worked with the PFC marketing and kitchen teams to produce the PFC 50th Anniversary cookbook in 2024.

Local with a Global View: I have local roots but have lived in several places throughout the world. I am originally from Rochester, but I have lived in Shanghai, New York, and Zurich. Living as an expat as well as in large cities has given me a different perspective and has certainly changed the way I view grocery shopping!

3. Relevant Experience

I have served on the PFC board of directors since 2022, and look forward to continuing to serve our co-op community. I have also served as a board member and Co-Chair of the St. Olaf Alumni Board, NYC Chapter. My professional background is in marketing, and I worked in NYC for 11 years in the financial services industry. I also earned my MBA from NYU Stern School of Business.

4. Upcoming Challenges

Profitability: Over the past several years, PFC has

struggled with profitability issues stemming from high operational costs, increasing competition and low margins. Getting these areas under control will allow us to focus on our mission, our customers and our local producers.

Competitive landscape: Competition from online and larger grocery groups will likely still pose a significant challenge to PFC in the coming years. With the economy slowing down, shoppers will undoubtedly seek ways to save and optimize their grocery shopping – perhaps by purchasing more cost-effective individual items or by shopping at large warehouse/ bulk stores.

Supply chain issues: Many businesses are impacted by the recent supply chain issues, and the grocery industry is not immune. Changes in supply of products and other operational materials could lead to cost and price increases across the board, impacting the bottom line of the business.

5. Opportunities for PFC

Capitalizing on location: I think that PFC should continue working closely with other downtown organizations, and making use of the excellent location in Rochester. Downtown Rochester is continuing to be revitalized and PFC could capitalize on that by being a destination for the lunch crowd, as a stop-off on the way home after work, and as a leader in the local food space.

Facilitating quick stops with self-checkouts: To encourage shoppers to stop in for a quick bite for lunch or for the “grab and go” items, I think we need to streamline the checkout process and offer a self-checkout line for 10 items or fewer.

Developing a robust events calendar: The past year, PFC has done an excellent job of offering consistent classes, open houses and several community events. I think we need to continue engaging customers in these settings and spreading our mission.

Engaging families: I believe it is especially important to attract a larger, diverse customer base with a

special focus on families. Engaging a younger audience not only helps our growth potential but creates a ripple effect in the community with children and young adults who are knowledgeable about sustainability and local food production.

Working with local hospitality figures: Lastly, I think the co-op has done a tremendous job of highlighting and partnering with local, diverse suppliers. To continue to develop these types of relationships, PFC could consider teaming up with a nearby restaurant, hospitality group, or an up-and-coming chef for a pop-up charity event.

Mia Simone Davis

1. Reason for Running

As a small business owner and frequent co-op shopper, I am passionate about strengthening connections between local food, sustainability, and community.



I believe PFC plays a vital role in making healthy, local food accessible to all, and I want to support that mission. Serving on the board is also a way for me to give back, contribute fresh perspectives, and help ensure the co-op continues to grow and thrive for years to come.

2. Relevant Skills

As a 19-year-old business owner since the age of 15, I bring a unique perspective and entrepreneurial spirit. I've developed strong leadership and collaboration skills by working with diverse groups toward shared goals. My deep ties to the community help me amplify member needs, and my background in social media and outreach allows me to creatively engage people. Together, these skills will help strengthen support for the co-op's mission and long-

term success

3. Relevant Experience

I currently serve on the La Crosse Soup Board, where I help guide community-centered initiatives that uplift local voices. I also work as a facilitator of two youth support groups at the nonprofit Hope Restores, where I create safe spaces for connection, growth, and empowerment. Along with running my own business since the age of 15, these experiences have strengthened my leadership, collaboration, and organizational skills, which I would bring to the PFC Board.

4. Upcoming Challenges

I think some of the biggest challenges for PFC in the next few years will be keeping food affordable while still supporting fair wages and local producers. Another challenge is growing membership and revenue while adjusting to leadership changes. On top of that, supply chain and climate pressures can make things tough for local farmers and vendors. Even with these challenges, I see opportunities for PFC to grow stronger and deepen community connections.

5. Opportunities for PFC

I see opportunities for PFC to build stronger connections with diverse groups in our community. Expanding into areas like the North Side of La Crosse, where access to fresh food is limited, could make a real difference.

Hosting more community events and building partnerships with local nonprofits and programs would also help strengthen relationships, increase accessibility, and highlight that PFC is more than a grocery store, it's a place for community and belonging.

Thomas Halada

1. Reason for Running

I believe in the cooperative model as a powerful tool to create sustainable, people-centered economies.

Supporting access to healthy, local, and ethically sourced food aligns with my personal and professional values. I want to continue advocating for equity, transparency, and long-term financial viability at PFC.

I bring continuity and collaboration as someone who has served on the board and worked with community partners.

2. Relevant Skills

Strategic Leadership: My work in healthcare leadership involves guiding complex teams and balancing mission with sustainability.

Governance Knowledge: I have experience in policy development, compliance, and effective nonprofit board participation.

Communication: I prioritize transparency, collaborative dialogue, and community input in all decision-making.

Equity Lens: I approach decisions with a focus on accessibility, inclusion, and representation.

Problem Solving: I'm adept at systems thinking and applying creative, long-term solutions to complex issues.

3. Relevant Experience

I am a current People's Food Co-op board member serving in the President role. I bring professional experience in managing people and programs, grounded in an advanced degree in nursing leadership and management.

4. Upcoming Challenges

Achieving profitability while maintaining our unique



identity and community mission.

Growing ownership engagement and participation in governance and decision-making.

Balancing operational efficiency with sustainability and equity goals.

Navigating inflation and supply chain disruptions while keeping food affordable and fair transparency in sourcing.

5. Opportunities for PFC

Positioning PFC as a regional leader in ethical, local, and cooperative business practices. Strengthening education programs to empower owners and promote food sovereignty. Deepening partnerships with local producers and minority-owned farms. Expanding online and delivery services to meet shifting consumer needs.

Adapting to evolving dietary preferences and expectations for transparency in sourcing.

former business owner, I have 25 years' experience in the petroleum wholesale and retail business. I have worked extensively as an executive analyzing, consulting and directing businesses.

With experience in managing operations, contracting, marketing, budgeting, construction and sales along with experiences in creating a start-up company and company restructuring have provided me with the skills necessary to be a successful Board member.

3. Relevant Experience

I have analyzed balance sheets, profit and loss statements, and prepared budgets for the last 15 years of my career. I have used this information to analyze and make decisions effecting the business units that I manage.

I have a passion for working with business units to solve challenges, streamlining business functions through improved business practices and open communication while increasing profitability.

4. Upcoming Challenges

Staying relevant in the community, expanding the cooperative's market share, growing it's customer base, and being profitable

5. Opportunities for PFC

A long-term strategy is to stay relevant in the market while competing with the larger competitors. We need to do this by being inclusive and marketing to a broader group of customers

Travis Mashak

1. Reason for Running

I am passionate about cooperatives. Living and in the La Crosse area we want to see and need to have the PFC succeed.



I have 25 plus years working with cooperatives. I hope my experience can help the cooperative be successful and help build on this great organization to be around to serve the community in the future. The local co-op provides a valuable service for the community that I would be honored to be part of.

2. Relevant Skills

As a career professional, CEO/General Manager and

2025
BOARD
ELECTION

Vote

Real Food. Real Flavor. Real Memorable.



Co-op's
Own™

Co-op's Own™ means every dish begins with a promise: no shortcuts, no compromises—just real food, crafted with care. From artisan cheese and meat trays to decadent desserts, we bring heart to the table—so you can focus on what matters most: enjoying the moment.

Platters/Trays: choose from fruit and cheese, smoked salmon, olive and antipasto, taco dip, and more. These trays will bring the wow!

Salads and Dips: from the famous garlic lover's pasta to our classic hummus, we have options to satisfy every palate.

Sweets and Treats: a selection of our house-made delectable cookies and bars.

Sandwich/Wrap Trays: an assortment of house-made signature sandwiches featuring meat and vegetarian options.

Box Lunches: conveniently packaged with house-made superfood slaw, a delicious cookie, and fresh fruit.



Co-op's Own™ Fruit & Cheese Platter



Co-op's Own™ Olive Tray

Skip the hassle of
holiday hosting!

Savor the celebration instead

Shop
Online

GIVE **WHERE YOU** LIVE

* FALL RECIPIENTS *

October

La Crosse

Rochester

● **People's Food Co-op Community Fund**

The People's Food Co-op Community Fund (PFCCF) provides supplemental or project-specific funding to local, non-profit organizations that have missions consistent with the mission of the People's Food Cooperative.

The granting process is closed for 2025, it'll reopen in May 2026!

Learn more at: <https://www.pfc.coop/community-involvement>

November

● **Hunger Task Force**

The Hunger Task Force is serving over 120 meal sites, food pantries, youth programs, and outreach sites in La Crosse, Vernon, Trempealeau, Crawford, and Monroe Counties in Wisconsin, Houston and Winona Counties in Minnesota, and Allamakee County in Iowa.

● **Saturday Noon Meals**

Every Saturday, they provide hot meals for those in need in our community. This 30-year ministry continued throughout the COVID pandemic and they have continued to provide meals in partnership with other organizations.

December

● **Coulee Region Humane Society**

Coulee Region Humane Society promotes the humane treatment of all animals and fosters positive human-animal relations. They are a valued community resource and go-to destination to learn about animal welfare and ethical treatment.

● **Bolder Options**

Bolder Options provides wellness-based mentoring for middle school youth, age 10-14 years old. Once they identify youth who need support, they match them with volunteer mentors who meet with them every week for a year. They make mentoring fun and meaningful.

View All Recipients at:

<https://www.pfc.coop/community-involvement>

PFCCF WINNERS

LEARN
MORE

La Crosse: The Center: 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection \$1,500

This grant will fund a gender affirming closet: Fresh Out of the Closet, designed to address the pervasive lack of safe/affordable access to gender-affirming apparel for transgender and non-binary folx. This ongoing project ensures people have a safe, nonjudgmental space to shop. They can take as much or little as needed, which is an aspect that is important to The Center. With this \$1,500 grant, The Center will purchase 45 chest binders and 21 shapewear shorts.

Rochester: Operation One More \$1,500

Operation One More feeds 200-225 families who experience food insecurity during the holiday break from school. Families are provided 1-3 bags of groceries along with milk, bread, and a \$25 gift card for a protein of their choice. The food collection and delivery will be completed on Dec. 13, 2025.

Rochester: Friends of the Farmer's Market \$1,000

This project aims to support and strengthen the Rochester Farmers Market Winter Market, which operates from November through April and serves as a critical extension of our year-round food system. The Winter Market ensures continued income for local farmers and producers during the off-season, while providing the community with consistent access to fresh, local food. This grant funding will help make the Winter Market more affordable for vendors—many of whom are small-scale or emerging farmers—and more accessible to customers, especially those relying on food assistance programs or facing seasonal barriers such as transportation, weather, or reduced income.

GWYL NOMINATIONS

Each year we ask our owners to nominate their favorite local non-profits to be recipients of the Give Where You Live register round-up donation. Below is the timeline for this process:

Owners with valid email addresses will receive an email to nominate on **Monday, October 27**

The nomination period runs from October 27 – November 9

Qualified nominations will be put on an online ballot

Owner households may then vote for nominees November 12–19

2026 GWYL recipients will be announced at the end of December



Call for Photography!

**Want to see your photos featured in
The Garlic Press?**

We're looking for stunning shots that showcase the beauty of our community—scenic landscapes, local farms, seasonal moments, and all the little details that make our region special.

Guidelines:

- No people, please!
- High-resolution images preferred
- Send submissions to marketingteam@pfc.coop

**Show us your perspective—we'd love to
feature your work!**

The Garlic Press is published by the People's Food Co-op of La Crosse and Rochester, 315 Fifth Avenue S, La Crosse, WI 54601 and 519 1st Avenue SW, Rochester, MN 55902. The Garlic Press serves to educate shoppers about food issues, community activities and events, co-ops in general, and ownership in PFC. All articles and pictures submitted for publication become property of People's Food Co-op. PFC reserves the right to refuse publication of any article for any reason.

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