



BLOOMINGFOODS
CO-OP MARKET

BLOOMINGNEWS

SPRING 2020



TAKING CARE OF EACH OTHER

a special edition newsletter



BLOOMINGFOODS
CO-OP MARKET

BloomingNews is a quarterly publication providing up-to-date information on Bloomingfoods, the cooperative movement, healthful food, nutrition, and local community. Sign up to receive a copy in your inbox at www.bloomingfoods.coop!

LEADERSHIP TEAM

GENERAL MANAGER TEAM

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Phil Phillippy

EAST
STORE MANAGER
Nancy Flynn-Hert

NEAR WEST
STORE MANAGER
Phil Phillippy

IVY TECH
STORE MANAGER
LS Weyers

CONTRIBUTORS

Jenn Sova
Nicholas Blewett
Our Board of Directors
Jacob Schumacher
Dave Debikey



From your *Board of Directors*



Dear All,

Do you believe this spring? I for one still can't get over how quickly life has changed, including the shape and experience of Bloomingfoods. With reduced hours, lots of sanitizer, social distancing and masks, Bloomingfoods forges on to keep our community healthy and safe.

The people who make the co-op run on a daily basis – staff, suppliers, and board members – have been careful to observe all safety measures, including self-quarantine when necessary. Bloomingfoods has been providing free meals to staff members who need extra help and the community has supported this effort through the round-up donations in April that raised over \$7000. Thank you loyal staff, members and shoppers!

On a personal note, I am relatively new to Bloomington (just over two years), so every day seems like a new experience, and this just continues the surprises! I retired from my position at Williams College in Williamstown, MA, teaching art history and serving as senior curator in the college's art museum. My partner and I decided to retire to Bloomington for family reasons and to enjoy the offerings of this university town. Although I continue my own work as a scholar, I have been using my time during this "shelter in place" period to plant my first vegetable garden. Because—who knows?

I was very supportive of the co-op in Williamstown, Wild Oats, so when the opportunity arose to run for the board of Bloomingfoods, I was eager to serve. Now that I'm a senior citizen, I understand that the American system of food production, distribution, and promotion solely for profit has resulted in generations of Americans with diseases that might have been avoided with proper nutrition. I feel the negative effects of my decades of ingesting pesticides, overly processed ingredients, and addictive substances such as sugar and fat. I am so grateful to Bloomingfoods and other community food co-ops for offering healthy foods, sourced from local farmers and producers, at reasonable prices. As you might imagine, my own mission as a board member is to introduce the benefits of Bloomingfoods to a wider community.

If you have any concerns or feedback you would like me to take to the board, you can email me at nancy.m@bloomingfoods.coop.

Stay safe!
Nancy Mathews

A Note

from the Emergency Response Team

Dear Bloomingfoods,

Friday, May 15th -- I sit here today pausing to reflect back on the past three months. It's a bit shocking to think about how much has changed in such a short period of time.

A mere two and a half months ago, at the beginning of March, the Bloomingfoods Marketing, Communications, and Engagement team was finalizing details on a slew of community based partnerships, activities, and events slated to take place at our stores and around the community. To name just a few, we were coordinating an edibles hike with Sycamore Land Trust, Lemonade Day registrations with the Boys and Girls Club, preparing fruits from around the world for the Lotus Blossoms World Bazaar, and planning a Fair Trade Day event with Global Gifts and an owner-member gathering at Yellowwood State Forest.

Flash forward two weeks later to mid March, and all of our planned partnerships, events, and activities were paused indefinitely or cancelled. Like much of the rest of the world experienced, our plans abruptly changed and we began to quickly adapt to a rapidly changing world.

On March 17th, we formed a small group called the Bloomingfoods Emergency Response Team. The team comprises our GM team and the leaders of our Finance, HR, and Marketing departments. We didn't know what to expect over the upcoming weeks and months, but we knew we needed to quickly come together to form coordinated responses to an ever-changing landscape. Since our first meeting, we have met daily (including weekends when needed) to talk through the latest developments, assess our current needs, and detail action steps that would help keep our staff, customers, and community safe. A positive by-product of this pandemic has been a strengthened bond among this team, Bloomingfoods staff, and the broader Bloomingfoods community.

Yes, our plans changed, but our sense of community has not, nor has our mission and ends statement. Now, possibly more than ever, our community has needed us to deliver on our promise to provide healthy, high quality, sustainable, and environmentally-sound products at a fair price.

We've been able to stay true to our mission and ends because of the tremendous outpouring of support from our community. Because of your continued support and trust in the co-op, we've been able to extend several avenues of support to our dedicated staff during this challenging time. We are thankful for the continued support from our owner-members and customers who have continued to shop with us during this time, the substantial support we received through the April Positive Change Roundup program, and anonymous donations from owner-members including donations of recent stimulus checks. All of these contributions have enabled us to supply staff with:

- **An increased staff discount raised from 20% to 30%**
- **1 free hot meal each day for the months of April and May (whether staff are working that day or not)**
- **2 rounds of gifts cards for all of our part-time and full-time staff**

Additionally, thanks to the support from our community, we were able to quickly provide access to face coverings, masks, and shields for all of our staff.

Lastly, I'd like to highlight contributions from an anonymous donor to the Bloomingfoods Employee Emergency Relief fund. This fund is set aside to support our staff during times of crises.

What is listed above is only a partial list of the amazing acts of kindness and support that we have received during this time. This outpouring of support has been vital to the health of the co-op and our ability to continue to fulfill our mission and ends statement.

Because of you, we are able to continue supporting our local farmer's markets, place more products from local restaurants (e.g., Hive, Nick's English Hut, and Osteria Rago) and vendors in our stores, and coordinate with various community partners like Stone Belt to help ensure access to healthy meals.

We truly thank you for your continued support of your co-op. Because of your support and taking care of Bloomingfoods, Bloomingfoods is able to take care of others.

Best,
Nicholas Blewett
Manager of Marketing,
Communications, and
Engagement



Not All Heroes Wear Capes:

Letters of Gratitude from the Board of Directors



Guthrie Taylor //

"Guthrie Taylor checking in. I've been working at the East store, full-time, since this all started. I have no reason to lie to anyone; it's been challenging, sometimes it's been difficult, and the whole experience has been surreal. But what I keep coming back to, and what I realized I wanted to share with you, is how appreciative the Bloomingfoods members have been to our staff. I speak to hundreds of you every week, and what I constantly hear is "Thank you. Thanks for working. Thanks for being open." I'm humbled and proud to be part of a place that, now more than ever, is truly a community resource. The deeper relationships I've formed with so many of you over the past few months are examples of the unexpected blessings that can come out of strange times."

Michelle Robison //

"While I work-from-home and continue to shelter-in-place with my family, I rely on grocery stores to remain open and remain well stocked so that I can feed my family. Thank you to our Bloomingfoods staff who are putting themselves on the front lines so that our community can continue to buy food each week. Thank you for continuing to come to work while the rest of us stay home, despite the risks, to stock shelves, sanitize carts and baskets, and run cash registers, so that we can continue to feed our families. And, a special thank you to the employee working the cash register when I roll up, who puts up with my overstuffed basket and extra chit-chat, because I am so desperate for people interaction. "

Corbin Baird //

"In this chaotic and stressful time, my family and I count on Bloomingfoods now more than ever. Every time I am in the stores (trying to only come once a week!) I am greeted by a team of committed, focused, and proud staff whose caring and focus is palpable. I try to speak with as many staff as I can and ask how they are doing. They always are curious as to how I and my loved ones are, and that reciprocity and compassion for others is the reason Bloomingfoods is so amazing. Keep your heads held high Bloomingfoods team! Your commitment, enthusiasm, compassion, and empathy are what we need in these times and I feel is the model for how we want our world to be post-COVID-19."

Bobbi Boos //

"As a farmer of 20 years in Bloomington, I've seen incredible growth in the number of producers and variety of products in the region. I have seen some creativity in the way we reach our customers, but mostly a little expansion of the same old models. We are lucky in Bloomington to have a supportive community. In many areas, small family farmers are treated like commodities to be bought and sold, without appreciation or security. This year is especially difficult for these farmers, with an unpredictable supply and demand chain, closing of schools and restaurants, and lack of safety nets.

Yet, here in Bloomington, I see increased creativity and collaboration of many individuals to distribute our local goods to our local community. I am especially grateful for our co-op, the GM team, and all the staff. Not only do their smiles and thoughtfulness continue to make shopping a positive experience, they are sharing time and resources to directly support farmers. Thanks for letting vendors use the parking lot. Thanks for sharing carts, boxes, and pallets to make everything smoother. Thanks for buying more from local vendors. Thanks for creating an atmosphere of support throughout the store. Thanks for rebuilding the co-op spirit and giving meaning to the Ends statements. Thank you for being part of our local food community."

Pam Weaver //

"When I go into Bloomingfoods I feel like everything is normal." That's a comment I recently heard from a friend, and I have to agree. It's not quite normal, of course, since Bloomingfoods is usually a social experience, but the stores weren't ever overrun with hundreds of people the way local supermarkets can be. So, with fewer people shopping and with familiar, friendly staff, you can fool yourself – in Bloomingfoods – that things are normal.

That goes for food selection as well. Bloomingfoods is always focused on local foods, so the faltering agri-business supply chains that are obvious in big box stores haven't had a noticeable negative effect at Bloomingfoods. This, too, makes life feel more normal.

Feeding us; having friendly interactions with the fabulous staff; helping us feel normal when the world is acting a bit weird. That's a gift. Thanks to all of you!"



Angela Babb //

"Thank you, Bloomingfoods staff, for continuing to show up every day for our community. As an owner-member, I continue to feel safe in our stores and grateful for the ability to keep food in my fridge and pantry. The staff are always calm and friendly, the stores are clean and welcoming, and the shelves remain stocked with a great variety of foods. While I hear horror stories about other groceries and have anxiety every time I need to leave my house these days, I feel endlessly grateful for Bloomingfoods. The wonderful staff still greet me with hellos and smiling eyes, and they continue to upkeep a safe and welcoming place to get groceries amidst all the chaos. Thank you, Bloomingfoods staff, for continuing to feed our community. Thank you for facing great risk everyday and doing it with such grace and humility."

Notes from Home

Kind Words from our Community

"Thank you so much for still supporting the community like this. We appreciate everything you do." -Tori

"We love our Bfoods. Thanks to all the staff for holding things together." -Carrie

"I love Bloomingfoods and their wonderful, amazing staff!! It's just been a couple of days since I decided to stay at home and avoid all stores, etc. But I truly miss seeing the bfoods staff daily as I pick up a breakfast pastry, or lunch, or stock up on groceries. You are awesome and I love you all!" -Sandi

"Many, many, thanks. In this crisis you are all really "first responders" and the work you do is much appreciated." -David

"I'm not sure I have the words for the stability Bfoods continually provides during times of challenge." -Primally Inspired Eats

"I've been making some kitchen staples from scratch like hummus and granola! They have been a yummy reminder that being home can be healing. Taking care of myself and others by wearing a mask when I leave my house and checking in on friends and family near and far." -Jennifer

"When I was checking out the other day a staff member asked me how I'm being affected by all this. He was so sincere it warmed my heart. I'm a nurse so I'm working and then working some more!" -Sarah

"When I was checking out the other day a staff member asked me how I'm being affected by all this. He was so sincere it warmed my heart. I'm a nurse so I'm working and then working some more!" -Sarah

Why Local is More Important Than Ever

by Jacob Schumacher, Board Secretary



I remember as a kid eating tomatoes from the garden still warm from the sun. I remember enjoying the first full meals and wines produced on farms and vineyards I worked on. I'm fortunate enough now to enjoy produce

from several local farms as well as my own small garden. I love that we have a local food system that allows me to avoid 'anonymous food' as much as possible.

In uncertain and trying times more than ever, it's so important that we take care of ourselves and our communities, and this includes our local food systems. There are a lot of local growers, producers, and small businesses suffering right now. There are also a lot of ways to support these growers, producers, and businesses - through online markets and ordering, through CSAs, by buying locally through the co-op, farmstops, or directly, and others- too many to name here. Seek them out if you're able!

As we get through this, it's important to remember that if we want a robust local food system, we need to support those growers, producers, and businesses in lean times as well as in times of plenty! I feel fortunate to live in a community where people take care of each other. Please continue to take care of yourselves and our community!



Supporting Local *One Meal at a Time*

Supporting local producers is at the core of what we do, but during a global pandemic that leaves so many businesses with closed doors we feel that it's more vital than ever! Check out these new items on our shelves:

Janie's Mill Flours from Ashkum, Illinois

Organic flours from a 5 generation family farm that are perfect for pizza dough, cookies, and that homemade bread you've been wanting to make.



Osteria Rago from Bloomington, IN

Fresh made pastas that will make a weekday dinner into an Italian feast.

Hive Wheat Bread from Bloomington, IN

This delicious local bread is the kitchen staple you didn't know you needed.



Nick's BBQ & Hoosier Hot Sauces from Bloomington, IN

Summer is around the corner and you will need these local condiments to reach full Bloomington summer potential!



We're excited to share that Bloomingfoods has recently partnered with Global Gifts, a local non-profit business that specializes in fair-trade goods! This partnership is a natural fit with similar missions in fair, equitable, and ethical support of farmers and makers no matter if they share our same zip code or the same planet. We have deep roots with one another as well, sharing many stories, staff, and community members over the years. **With this partnership comes a new 10% discount to Bloomingfoods Member-Owners at Global Gifts as well as the upcoming exhibition featuring globally crafted goods at Gallery B (inside Bloomingfoods Near West).** Please enjoy this interview with Global Gift's Manager Dave Debikey to learn more about their wonderful work, history, and values.

What is Global Gifts and how long has it been in Bloomington?

Global Gifts is an independent non-profit fair trade organization, supporting marginalized communities and relieving poverty through fair opportunities instead of charity.

We are part of a global movement, following the guidelines of the World Fair

Trade Organization (global) and the Fair Trade Federation (in the US), to promote trade principles centered around long-term relationships, living wages, environmental sustainability, equity for women, the rights of children, and respecting cultural traditions.

How did you become involved with Global Gifts?

After 15 years of working for Bloomingfoods, I was looking for something as meaningful but outside of grocery. I stumbled across Global Gifts, originally based out of Indianapolis, opening a fair trade store downtown. Of course, I understood what fair trade was from my time at the co-op and applied for the manager position. That was the summer of 2009 and we celebrated 10 years in Bloomington last year.

How do you think Global Gifts' and Bloomingfoods' missions relate to each other?

Both organizations promote conscientious consumerism. Bloomingfoods is our community champion for supporting local farmers and businesses and keeping more money within the community. Since Equal Exchange introduced fair trade coffee to the states in 1984, Bloomingfoods has also promoted fair trade commodities that support marginalized farmers around the globe.

Both our missions support natural alternatives and environmentally responsible practices. The cooperative model is also very common in the fair trade world where most farmers and artisans form producer cooperatives to build stronger communities and to better compete within the conventional market.

Also, we're both organizations that believe in giving back to our local community. We donate products to many local non-profits for fundraising auctions and offer our Community Shopping Nights each fall to give proceeds to partner organizations. Bloomingfoods, of course, makes a massive local impact with the Positive Change Program.

What is Fair Trade and why is it important?

Fair trade is an alternative form of trade that promotes the welfare of people and planet over profits. Much of global trade is based on exploitation. Large companies demand low prices from producers or purchase product produced by sweat shops, or in some cases, outright slavery. This allows large corporations to bring in large profits for their shareholders while producers live in extreme poverty. Fair trade, on the other hand, works with the most marginalized populations



who would otherwise not have access to the marketplace or the means to support their families and provides opportunities through trade relations that respect the producers and their needs. Rather than working through charity, fair trade empowers communities to run their own businesses and support themselves by following the fair trade principles. Check out fairtradefederation.org to learn more about the fair trade movement.

What are some of your favorite items from the shelves of Global Gifts and where do they come from?

That is always a hard question to answer!

I love the Haitian drum art. This is an art form very specific to Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere, where they collect old 55 gallon oil drums, bang them out flat, and cut out beautiful wall art.

One of my favorite groups is Mr. Ellie Pooh in Sri Lanka. They make paper from 50% post consumer paper pulp and 50% elephant dung which we sell in the form of greeting cards and journals. This extraordinary group is not only providing important income to families in Sri Lanka but helping to protect the endangered Sri Lankan elephants.

Besides those from Mr. Ellie Pooh, I also love the greeting

cards we carry from Rwanda, the Philippines, and the quilling cards from Vietnam. We've become quite the greeting card destination downtown, although people also know us as a great place for jewelry, bags, and accessories too.

Would you tell us a bit about the staff at Global Gifts?

We have a small staff at Global Gifts. We have two full-time positions, myself as the manager, and Melissa Adkins as our volunteer coordinator. We typically have three part-time staff: Amanda, Olivia and Sophia, (and Patty who helps us seasonally). However, we usually have anywhere from 40 to 50 active volunteers who help us run the store. Without our volunteer support we would not be able to support so many artisan groups and keep up with the vast array of merchandise you see in our store. The staff and volunteers are a mixture of students from IU and local high schools, and various other community members from young professionals to retirees who believe in a better, more fair world.

Global Gifts is located at 122 N. Walnut St. on the square and their website is <https://www.globalgiftsft.com>.

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