

the COOPERATIVE spirit

JULY | AUGUST | 2020

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A Message from Our Board

Nothing tests the strength of your team quite like a global pandemic. As we continue through the unknown, the staff at SPAC have been putting incredible time and effort into our reopening plan. Some of the most important factors to us were making everyone's favorite items could be safely accessed in the storefront with special consideration to the bulk section and the areas where customers tend to bottleneck. The main concern we wanted to give thought to is the safety and comfort of customers and staff. Every decision was made with great contemplation for the very best way to attend to our community's health.

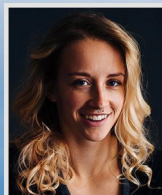
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The work that has been done by staff during curbside has been an incredible display of determination and care for what they do. Maintaining our mission of providing the community and membership with high quality food and products became a bit more challenging over the last few months, but the staff has found a way to do it with grace. I think I can safely speak for the entire Board of Directors, when I say how appreciative we have been to be able to witness and support the journey of the staff and the SPAC since March. We are so thrilled to be able to open our storefront once again and see your smiling eyes!

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-Celia Sweet,
SPAC Board member

UPCOMING EVENTS

07/07 Co-op Reopening

07/28 Board of Directors Meeting - 6pm

08/25 Board of Directors Meeting - 6pm

CONTACT US

715-341-1555

info@spacoop.com

www.spacoop.com

HOURS

Tuesday-Friday
7am-6pm

Saturday-Sunday
7am-6pm

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



@spacoop



/spacoop

The Co-op is Opening to the Public!

That's right, you read it correctly: The Stevens Point Area Co-op will be opening its doors for in store customer shopping on July 7th! It's been a long, strange, stressful couple of months here since the implementation of our alternative Curbside Pickup shopping method. We're so thankful for our members who've stuck with us during these times. Members are truly what make the Stevens Point Area Co-op great; we would be nothing without you folks.

After much discussion, we finally have the initial logistics. **The Stevens Point Area Co-op will be closed on Mondays for in-store shopping or personal shopper phone orders.** Even though we're excited to welcome you back into the store, we also appreciate the feedback from members on how much they've enjoyed our Curbside Pickup Program. We will continue to offer this option for the time being so that members who are not able or comfortable shopping in the storefront can continue to get their groceries. We will be open for order pickup and online order fulfillment and will also be using that time to ensure that our store is well stocked, cleaned and sanitized. For the rest of the week, Tuesday through Sunday, we will be open during the following hours with the following services:

7am-11am: Only curbside pickup and personal shopper phone orders

11am-6pm: Only open storefront and order pick up

A maximum of 10 customers will be allowed in the store at any given time and masks and/or face coverings will also be required. We are increasing the frequency of our cleaning procedures as well as using approved cleaning products. In addition, we will be installing plexi-glass screen guards over each of our registers to ensure safety of both our staff and customers.

What about bulk?

Good news, you will still be able to purchase all of your bulk needs! For everyone's safety, we will be limiting the amount of people in the bulk aisles. You may also bring in your own containers, but they must be clean, meaning that there is no residue from previous purchases.

Opening the store is going to be filled with new obstacles to overcome and we hope you'll be patient with us as we develop a new system to accommodate these difficult times. Keep your eyes peeled for emails and social media posts about our store re-opening. As always, feel free to send your comments or concerns to info@spacoop.com.


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Tomorrow River Community
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trees.org

Become involved in the Co-op

One of the key aspects of a cooperative is that each member has as much of a say as any other member in the decision making processes. This looks different for every cooperative, and for ours it takes the form of Management Circles. Created by the Board of Directors, your Co-op's Management Circles are given the responsibility of managing the business in key ways; right now, we have five management circles that oversee our financials, outreach, human resources, facilities, and flow of goods. These circles are open to every single member of our cooperative to be actively engaged in the management of our Co-op, either by attending, reading minutes, or applying to be a voting member of any of our management circles.

Our Co-op wasn't always structured this way: up until four years ago, all of these powers were put in one or two General Managers who then took on all of the responsibility and decision making of running the Co-op. Members could still engage with the Co-op through the General Membership Meetings and the Board of Directors, but the access to being part of creating the direction of the Co-op was blocked off. Now, it's hard to imagine the Co-op operating any other way.

Are you interested in being part of the management of your Co-op? Join any of the Circles at their next scheduled meeting to learn more about what they're working on and if you'd like to be involved! For the most up-to-date meeting information and to get an application for the management circles head to spacoop.com/management-circles.

Communications - Every 2nd Monday at 4:30 PM

The Communications Circle is the connective force between the Co-op and the community. This Circle does the work of promotions, member engagement, sponsorships and donations, and The Cooperative Spirit, our Co-op's newsletter.

Movement - Every Wednesday at 4:00 PM

The Movement Circle is tasked with managing the flow of goods through the store, from ordering and delivery all the way to being put into your basket and reusable shopping bag. They are also coordinating the creation of our new warehouse in the Central City Market.

Numbers - Every 3rd Tuesday @ 4:00 pm

The Numbers Circle is the Co-op's hub for financial reporting and analysis, business systems management, and financial education. In order to thrive as a cooperative business we need to understand and diligently manage our finances.

Physical - Every 2nd Wednesday @ 4:30 pm

The Physical Circle is responsible for our building, equipment, contracts, and IT hardware. We have a beautiful building that has been cared for and improved by our staff and members over the decades, and this circle is charged with maintaining everything that makes our building special.

We the People - Every 1st and 3rd Monday @ 4:30 pm

The We the People (WtP) Circle works to maintain the heart of the Co-op by facilitating support for staff, maintaining optimum staffing, developing conflict resolution processes, and developing a working member program.

We'd like to thank our kind friends at Pisarski Funeral Home for being thoughtful, generous neighbors for many years!



*Pisarski Funeral
Homes & Cremation Center*

Website: www.pisarskifuneralhome.com

Email: pdfh703@charter.net

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A Fair World Begins at Home

Our goal at the Stevens Point Area Co-op is to promote nutritional food options and a sound economic lifestyle through education and selling food and other goods for people, not for profit. This idea is at the heart of everything we do, especially when it comes to buying products to stock our shelves: we follow a product selection guideline created by members, staff, and the Board to determine if a new product is good enough to bring in the store. Sometimes we have to do a lot of research before determining if something meets our high standards, but there are others that we feel comfortable bringing in with very little of our own research because we know and trust the company to have already done it. Enter, Equal Exchange.

Equal Exchange is a worker-owned Co-op located in Massachusetts that began its work in 1986. Before this, the founders worked at a grocery co-op where they recognized that the corrupt nature of international food distribution was perpetuated by creating too many degrees of separation from us and the growers and producers of the food we eat. They wanted to create a food chain that worked with farmers across the world to purchase their goods directly from them with the goal of changing the global food trade to increase incomes and stabilize the economic situations of farmers. They began their work with one farmer co-op in Nicaragua and have since grown to over 40 different farm partners in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the United States.

To be honest with you, when I was the bulk and packaged grocery buyer it wasn't always easy to feel great about buying some of the products I did: simple Google searches of the company names pulled up controversies; ingredients were very intransparent; and I could tell when a business was in it for profits first, people and the Earth second. It's a goal of the Co-op's to carry more products that we can feel good about selling and it's been a long process. It's different with Equal Exchange and some of our other fave distributors, where we work closely with our sales representatives to stay on top of the newest trends of fair global and national trade and do our part to support the creation of an authentic fair trade system.

AUTHENTIC FAIR TRADE

Chances are you've heard the term Fair Trade at some point—hopefully while you're shopping at the Co-op—and have thought to yourself, “sounds great!” And it is! The idea of a system that directly supports producers so they can create a sound economy in their own community, whether in the U.S. or abroad, can really make one's heart sing. Here's another term to throw at you: Greenwashing. Greenwashing more specifically refers to giving a false impression of how environmentally sound a company is, but we'll use it in this case to also discuss fair trade certifications. If you're reading this in your kitchen, put your newsletter down and grab a random box from your pantry. No really, go do it, it's not as powerful if you don't. Count how many different labels you see on the box professing the products quality: I picked up a box of toaster pastries and counted four: an organic certification, a non-GMO verified label, another organic certification, and a fair trade logo.

Again, we could see these and think to ourselves, “sounds great!” But have you asked yourself what exactly these mean, who's doing the verification, and what the criteria are? We'll go deeper into all of these labels in a future newsletter, but let's hone in on what it means to be certified fair trade now.

The full process goes into much more detail and is an exhaustive certification, but these are the typical base criteria a business must pass to be certified as Fair Trade: the producers should be small-scale, rather than plantation style farms; direct trade relationships and long term contracts with importers and producers; higher than conventional market prices; adherence to the policies of the International Labor Organization, especially those concerning child and forced labor and the right to collective bargaining; and external monitoring, auditing, and certification of these practices by independent third-parties.

There are many different Fair Trade certifying organizations, and each has their own requirements for a business to be verified as a “Fair Trade” business. Once a business pays the organization to audit them and passes, it can then put an official Fair Trade label on its products. A typical consumer will see one of these logos and, again, think “sounds great!” We want you to be an atypical consumer and think “what does this label actually tell me?” While good intentioned—at least at the outset—many Fair Trade advocates believe that some Fair Trade certifying organizations have relaxed their standards too far and certify businesses that are utilizing business practices that end up hurting the farmers and communities they work with while benefiting themselves.

Equal Exchange has a page on their website that goes into exactly why we need a more authentic fair trade system, and I encourage you to go read it (equalexchange.coop/fair-trade). Summed up, it expresses that a true fair trade system has to start at the farmers, always, and build from there. In the world of businesses for profit, however, the priority has shifted: companies have recognized that the idea of “Fair Trade” is a draw for consumers and have worked to lower the standards of fair trade organizations so they can be certified while actually thinking about profits first, not the farmers and producers.



There are many organizations and companies besides Equal Exchange working for this authentic fair trade, and there's no one correct answer on how we can best get there. However, we at the Co-op are confident in saying that one good answer is to support the work Equal Exchange is doing. We sell a variety of their products, including bananas and avocados, baking cocoa and chocolate chips, chocolate bars, and a long list of teas. When you purchase any of these, rather than conventional counterparts known for their history of killing labor organizers (seriously, look up the history of Dole and Chiquita), you are supporting a network of farmers, producers, and distributors looking to make a difference in our food system.

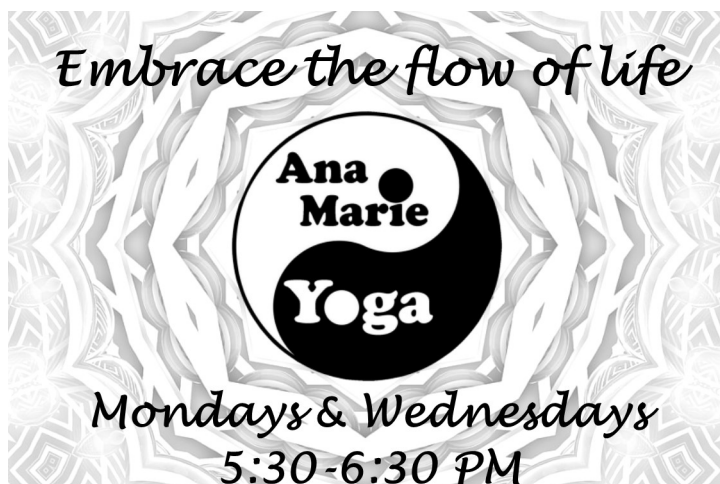
It's up to you and us, the consumers and the small, independent businesses, to do what we can to make a difference in this world. We know what we need to do: purchase products that we feel good about selling to you; create relationships directly with producers, or with distributors who are able to do so; and push for more transparency in the national and global trade markets. The question is, what can you do? A great first step is choosing to shop at businesses that value Fair Trade, local, and environmentally sound food production, like us! Another is to take the time to better understand what you're buying, and the effect your purchase has.

Do you have any suggestions on how to make a difference that you would like to share with other members of the Co-op? Please email us at newsletter@spacoop.com and we'll share some of the best responses we get!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Jessica Lawson 9 years
 Kami Albright-Loomis 6 years-
 Melissa Haack 4 years
 Lyn Ciarro 4 years
 April Annechiarico 3 years
 Annette DesRosiers 2 years
 Michelle Nieuwenhuis 2 years
 Tara Burns 2 years
 Andrew Breitenstein 2 years

**Congratulations and we're
 happy to have you here!
 If you see any of these folks bop-
 ping around the Co-op be sure to
 tell them happy anniversary!**



Featured Products

Jamnation: Jamnation is based out of Northern California. Their products use fruit from farms within 200 miles from their production plant. All products also use Fair Trade sugar and up to 50% more fruits and up to 50% less added sugar, and no added preservatives. You'll also be excited to know that a portion of proceeds from each jar goes to Fairtrade America. On top of all of that they are delicious! We carry 4 flavors on our shelves: Plum and Get it, Can you Fig it, Razzle Bazzle, and To Peach His Own. Find them hanging out with all the other jams and jellies in our storefront.



Liberation Farmers: We are so lucky to have the opportunity to carry some very special, directly traded, coffee from Liberation Farmers. Did you know that John and Holly of Liberation Farmers have long-term relationships with the coffee farmers they work with? The coffee we carry on our shelves Elvia and Tomas (dark roast) and Matthew Mugo (medium roast) are conveniently named after the host farmers that they stay with in Oaxaca, Mexico and Kirinyaga, Kenya, respectively. They are proud to say that they pay a high price for their coffee as they ask the farmers to set the prices and they pay that price directly to them. Having this relationship provides security for the farmers to make long-term investments in their farm that will continue to increase the health of their forests and quality of their coffee harvest. As if you needed any more reason to support the amazing people that our Co-op supports!

Dr. Bronner's: Dr. Bronner's has been making soaps the traditional way since 1948! Their ethical sourcing of fair trade products makes their bar soap, liquid castile soap, lip balms and other products, build equitable supply chains across the globe. They are proud financial supporters of causes that are dear to our collective co-op heart including regenerative agriculture, fair trade, animal advocacy, and living wages to name a few. Their unique labels spread founder Emanuel Bronner's message that we must unite across religious and ethnic divides or perish "We Are All-One or None!" <https://www.drbronner.com/>



Frontier Natural Products: We've carried products from Frontier for a very long time. They are just about as old as we are (SPAC is 4 years older!) having been founded in 1976. They take up most of the space in our Bulk herbs, spices, and teas section and were the first to introduce Fair Trade Certified spices to the U.S. market in 2009. On our shelves we carry the following Fair Trade Certified products from Frontier: ceylon cinnamon, cloves (whole and powder), black pepper (medium grind and whole peppercorns), powdered ginger, turmeric, and many teas (ceylon, english breakfast, darjeeling, china green, to name a few).

Alaffia: Looking for another option for fair trade, clean and green products for body, face and hair while supporting a great cause? Try our products from Alaffia! The Alaffia foundation's mission is to empower African communities through the advancement of education, while striving to alleviate poverty and advance gender equality through it's fair trade of indigenous resources and community empowerment projects! Awesome! <https://www.alaffia.com/>

Q: Where Does (3 X 3) + a great way to get involved = 25%?

3 hours per week, 3 weeks of your choice per month earns you 25% off your Co-op purchases, plus other Co-op perks.

A: Stevens Point Area Co-op Working Member Program

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Have a suggestion? Have an idea? Feel free to email one of our board members with your thoughts!

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Bulk Up to Reduce Waste

Looking to reduce plastic in your life? Then bulk up, buddy! The Co-op has the best bulk foods section in town. Get the spices you need in quantities appropriate for your household. Purchase nuts, pasta, and flour in the amounts that work for you. With a little planning ahead, you can stock your cabinets with things you need at amounts you use without the excess package. Because of the pandemic, we are unable to accept containers and bags brought from home but there are other ways you can reduce your waste. Ask your personal shopper to put your bulk items in paper bags instead of plastic ones. Those bags can be reused around your household or recycled in your recycling bin.

We also want to highlight the option of ordering in bulk! Do you really like Fair Trade Chocolate Chips from Equal Exchange? Ask your personal shopper to fill out a special order form and buy a case. You'll save money buying in bulk as well as receive an additional 10% off for ordering a case.

August is the perfect month to commit to reducing waste in your life because the Co-op has selected Recycling Connections as their local organization for 1% Fridays. That means 1% of the sales every Friday in August will go to supporting Recycling Connections, as well as the donated bag and jar credits. You can help us further our mission with just a simple five or ten cents.

For nearly 40 years Recycling Connections has helped residents and businesses find ways to reduce waste, recycle right, and compost more. Make your waste reduction commitment today, and we will see you in the bulk foods aisle! For more waste reduction tips and ideas, "like" Recycling Connections at www.facebook.com/RecyclingConnections or visit our website at www.RecyclingConnections.org.

-Article written by Susan Schuller





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