



Co-op News - Volume 38

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The Cooperative Principles:

1. Voluntary & Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy & Independence
5. Education, Training & Information
6. Cooperation Among Co-ops
7. Concern for Community

Getting Involved with the Community

By Melanie Bettenhausen,
Outreach Director



From left: Mahina, Melanie, and Kona

Photo by Ben Bettenhausen

As usual, we have lots going on at the Co-op. We have a gargantuan task of running a \$30 million a year grocery store. Add to that our status as a Co-op serving members and our concern for community and the environment, and you've got a total of more than can possibly be done in any 24 hour period, seven days a week, 52 weeks in a year...but we try. Here's how:

Building on our work in the community regarding the local food system, we've got a sustainable art show up at our Eureka location that depicts farmers and the nature of food systems. There are no words to describe just how impactful these prints are to the viewer. We hope you'll just come in and check it out. Dates and locations are on page 3.

Just after we go to press, Mark Kastel will be giving a speech on protecting organic integrity. You've read about his work at the Cornucopia Institute in the *Co-op News*. They are a watchdog organization working at the policy level to create a legal environment that supports small, organic farmers. They also work to enforce accountability for the policies that are already in place. As a certified organic grocer, we take organic integrity seriously, which is one of the reasons why we decided to host the event.

Along with organic integrity is the topic of GMOs. As many of you have been following in the news, Genetically Modified Organisms are starting to show up in supposedly GMO-free crops. Without labeling and testing, consumers will not know when they are consuming GMOs. That's why the Co-op supports the work of the local chapter of Label GMOs campaign. Their volunteers are working to inform the community about the California Right to Know Genetically Engineered Food Act. A petition to get the act on the 2012 ballot will begin circulating in mid-February. Watch the *Co-op News* for details and look for petitioners in front of our stores.

The Co-op also supports the national campaign to label GMOs, called Just Label It. These two efforts work in concert. *Both must be supported.* The Just Label It campaign has been so successful at gathering comments to the FDA that it has attracted the attention of celebrities. Robert Kenner, Director of Food Inc, made a short film called "Labels Matter" to promote the work of Just Label It. The video can be seen on their website. It is the perfect thing to share with friends and family members who might be new to the need for GMOs to be labeled. Share this video and post your comment to the FDA; it's easy to do online now.

If that long list isn't enough for you, we are also working on the bathroom access issue in Arcata. We reported last time that our bathroom situation has been resolved, but the city's hasn't. We are still looking for members of the Co-op who want to get involved in a bathroom campaign that will serve to fuel the renewed interest and initiative for public bathrooms in Arcata. Students at HSU will be working on this issue as well.

Last, but not least, is the desire to

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make shopping easy and affordable. We still need Co-op members to volunteer to create low cost recipes out of our sale items. We know months in advance which of our national products will be on sale, and we know a few weeks in advance what our local specials will be. The missing piece is produce, but at least we know what's in season and what is local. The goal is to convene a group of Co-op members each month to brainstorm recipes, test them, cost them and include them in the *Co-op News* to share with all other members. If this is something you are interested in doing, please let us know. Once we have a few

volunteers, we can determine the best time and place to make this happen.

While much of what we do occurs at the staff level, our work is always guided by our members, represented by our Board of Directors. Now we need members to be directly involved in the work we do. Please take the time to send your comment to the FDA regarding the need for GMOs to be labeled. Take the time to sign the petition for the California ballot initiative. Take the time to share your shopping tips with other members. When possible, vote local with your dollars. We thank you for your time...and your dollars!

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