

S O U N D C O N S U M E R



Growing a new kind of cafeteria food

By Georgie Smith, guest contributor
Photos by Jamie Conners

The Coupeville School District's mac and cheese isn't your standard cafeteria fare of mushy pasta and over-processed cheese. It's cauliflower mac and cheese, made by blending cauliflower grown by the farm school with cream and three (sometimes four) different cheeses. The sauce is poured over separately prepared pasta, and the whole thing is topped with toasted crumbs made from locally baked wood-fired bread and something green—typically green onions or parsley, depending on what is in season.

And that's just one daily offering (albeit my own daughter's favorite) at the 962-student district on Whidbey Island, a prime

example of the farm-to-school programs robustly growing across Washington state. It's an evolution of legislation passed in 2008, seen then as a "leverage point for change" on several crucial and intersecting issues—children's health, agricultural vitality, farmland preservation, environmental protection, and poverty alleviation, according to the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Borscht made from locally-sourced beets? Check. Italian sandwich with pesto made from school-farm-grown basil? Yum. Spaghetti with meatballs and a dessert of strawberry shortcake, with the hamburger and berries sourced from local heritage farms? Definitely. A salad bar stocked with broccoli raab, salad turnips, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, spinach and baby carrots grown from the school farm? Always a popular choice. Such programs require a complicated blend of ingredients, both literal and figurative. But the rewards can be as great and as far-reaching as the challenge. In Coupeville the idea began in 2013, with the Coupeville Farm to School group forming to build on-school gardens and support garden and food education learning opportunities. In 2019 the district stepped up to the farm-to-school plate, connecting the dots between the now-established school garden and education program with the cafeteria. With administration and school board support, Coupeville schools canceled their industrial food service contract, hired a long-time local chef as a food services

director, and gave him the go-ahead to create a whole new school menu of scratch-cooked meals, made as much as possible from locally sourced ingredients. Since then, student participation in the district's food program has shot up from just 20% to 75 to 80%, behavior has improved, and afternoon attendance rates have increased, says Steve King, superintendent of the Coupeville School District. Instead of heading off campus to a nearby grocery store to grab processed snack foods, more of Coupeville's secondary students are staying in the cafeteria for a healthy lunch, increasing the district's afternoon attendance rates—and, King believes, improving student behavior in the process. Well-nourished students are more likely to succeed. Coupeville's numbers are a huge win for a school food services program and chronic health issues. U.S. children ages 2 to 19 consume 67% (a new high) of their daily calories from ultra-processed foods known for their poor nutrient quality, likely a significant contributing factor to U.S. childhood obesity rates more than doubling in children and tripling in adolescents over the past three decades. **Farm to school** Coupeville has successfully navigated the "three legs" of a farm-to-school program, says Annette Slonim, WSDA's farm-to-school lead.

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PCC grants support creative, essential food programs

We depend on farmworkers for healthful, nutritious foods. But who meets the same needs for those workers and their families? One remarkable local answer comes from Cooperativa Tierra y Libertad, an agricultural worker cooperative. The 65-acre organic farm on land in Skagit and Whatcom counties, owned and operated by immigrant farmworkers, provides organic, culturally relevant fruits and vegetables to farmworkers, among other programs. It's one of 11 organizations awarded a PCC Food Access Grant for work that furthers PCC's mission to ensure that good food nourishes the communities we serve while cultivating vibrant, local, organic food systems. From schoolchildren to elders, innovative new farmers markets to treasured old community centers, the ten grants in 2022 totaling \$67,500 will help nonprofit organizations around the region provide nutritious food to those who need it. The selection committee prioritized organizations run by, for and in historically marginalized communities. The program expands last year's pilot grants to organizations serving downtown Seattle, which stemmed from feedback PCC received from the community before opening its downtown store. The maximum grant for each organization totals \$7,500. These food access grants are generously funded by members and shoppers through the PCC Food Bank Program, where 100% of donations go toward bringing healthy food to the community. "PCC is honored to steward this investment in our local food systems, and sharing resources like this is part of our purpose as a co-op," said Susan Livingston, vice president of marketing and purpose. "Food is simply not optional for any of us..." she said, and the pandemic made it more clear than ever how important it is for us to work together to support our neighbors. "If you can work through food, you can transform communities." It's amazing to see the impact this funding will have, added Rachel Tefft, PCC's community nutrition program manager. "I hope (members and shoppers) feel excited and proud about the impact of their donations. We're grateful for every one." The 2022 recipients are: **African Community Housing Development** Local asparagus. A dozen eggs. Small-batch strawberry jam. Peanuts. That's the sort of fresh, quality gro-

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11615 NE 4th St.
Bellevue, WA 98004

BOTHELL

22621 Bothell Everett Highway
Bothell, WA 98021

BURIEN

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Burien, WA 98148

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1320 4th Ave.
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FUTURE STORES

MADISON VALLEY

Visit pccmarkets.com for current store hours and more information.

[LETTERS to the editor]

Letters must be 250 words or less and include a name and hometown. Submission of letter grants automatic approval of publication to PCC, including name, in print and online. Submission does not guarantee publication. PCC reserves the right to edit content of submissions. Please email letters to editor@pccmarkets.com.

MORE EINKORN FLOUR

People need more education about Einkorn wheat. Although it is sold at PCC (in products like Jovial brand white and whole wheat flours, and whole wheat pastas), I think it is not in your fresh bakery and deli products. I know it is not suited to delicate pastries, but it would be great for scones and crusts for items like quiche and pot pies. I would pay more for these healthier options. There is more information on Einkorn on the Jovial Foods website, jovialfoods.com.
— Ana

PCC replies: Thank you for your suggestions on including more products using Einkorn wheat, which the Whole Grains Council says is “generally thought to be the most ancient of wheat varieties available today,” higher in protein, phosphorus, potassium and beta-carotene than most modern wheats. We agree and are actively looking for more wholesome grain options to use in our bakery products and for more ways to include such products in our prepared foods.

PLASTIC FILM RECYCLING

Regarding your May-June *Sound Consumer* article on a pilot plastic film recycling program that recently ended at the Bothell and Edmonds PCC stores, all King County residents can recycle this same plastic film for free at the Bow Lake Recycling Center/Transfer Station. Ridwell, the service that your article suggests as another option for Puget Sound residents, is not free and presents a barrier to some people, including myself. Our family has been recycling this film at Bow Lake ever since we learned of this option some years back.

PCC replies: Thank you for writing in with this information and providing more great resources for community recycling. While Ridwell is a fee-based service and we understand the barriers that can pose, PCC members do receive 10% off Ridwell's membership fee—see pccmarkets.com/r/6226 for details on that partnership. Note that King County requires customers at Bow Lake Recycling Center to show proof they live or do business within King County's 37-city and unincorporated service area, which excludes the cities of Seattle and Milton. Again, thank you for providing information on more recycling resources.

NUTRITIONAL YEAST AND MSG

I have heard that nutritional yeast contains MSG. I wanted to see if this was true. I'm also wondering about labeling; can this be labeled in store so that customers are made aware of it?

PCC replies: Thank you for asking about monosodium glutamate (MSG) in Nutritional Yeast. To respond briefly, MSG is not an added ingredient in PCC's nutritional yeast offerings, therefore you will not find it listed on the ingredient label. However, individuals who are sensitive to glutamate products may opt to avoid nutritional yeast due to the inevitable presence of glutamic acid.

For a broader look at the issue and its background, nutritional yeast has gained significant popularity among vegan and plant-based diets, because, as the name suggests, it has nutritional value. It also serves as a good replacement for cheese, because it contains naturally occurring glutamate, an amino acid that gives cheese and other foods, their umami flavor. MSG is the salt form of glutamate and used to give foods without natural glutamate additional flavor and depth. While nutritional yeast does contain sodium as well as glutamate, it will not have MSG identified as an ingredient unless it is intentionally added to the final product.

MSG was discovered in the early 1900s by a Japanese biochemist who sought to understand where the savory, or umami flavor, came from in certain foods. The concern around MSG in America stems from a letter submitted by a doctor to the New England Journal of Medicine in 1968, who described feelings of weakness, numbness, and heart palpitations after eating at a Chinese restaurant (leading to the term “Chinese Restaurant Syndrome”). During the 1970s and 1980s a number of studies were conducted on MSG, many of which have now been discredited as scientifically flawed. MSG is now recognized as safe among national and international health agencies; however, xenophobia and discrimination have contributed to the perpetuation of the myth that MSG, associated with Asian foods, is unsafe or unhealthy. Some individuals may have a mild reaction to MSG, or glutamate, but studies have found these symptoms only present at extremely high doses and without any other food.

PCC allows MSG in food products, as long as it is either organic or non-GMO verified, since it is widely recognized as safe for the majority of individuals. We always recommend that our shoppers choose the products they feel comfortable eating and to consult a doctor for health advice.

We appreciate your question and the opportunity to share this information.

REAL CHOCOLATE?

When I purchased a chocolate chip cookie at the Ballard PCC, it was just delicious, especially when the chocolate chips melted a little in the car. Encouraged, I purchased another chocolate chip cookie, this time at the Green Lake branch. It was in the afternoon of our first 90-degree day, so I expected it to melt a little. But it didn't. I got home and it still hadn't melted at all. I broke off a third of the cookie and microwaved it for 20 seconds, and it STILL did not even begin to melt the chocolate. What gives? Is it not real chocolate? Very disappointed.

PCC responds: Thank you for writing in with your question about the chocolate chips in PCC's cookies. We have used high-grade Guittard brand chocolate chips for decades, with no change over that span of time. These are most certainly made of real chocolate. Recently, due to supply chain issues, our supplier has substituted a smaller chip (about half the size of our usual chip). However, the formula for the chips is exactly the same.

We are not certain what may have caused that different reaction when melting the chips, but can assure you that if you try our cookies again you will be enjoying high-quality real chocolate chips.

HOMEMADE YOGURT

I make my own yogurt using an Instant Pot, usually using Organic Valley Milk or A2 Milk, and Fage whole fat yogurt as the starter. It is smooth and creamy. I've tried

twice with PCC brand organic milk but the result is separated whey and goeey milk “solids” that don't blend well.

Can you tell me why this might be happening with your milk? Any recommendations?

PCC replies: Thanks for writing in with your questions about the PCC milk being used to make yogurt. PCC milk is the same as Organic Valley's milk. We have a partnership where Organic Valley packages their milk in our private label cartons, so we were surprised to hear that you saw differences between the two. It's possible that you used the PCC milk at a seasonally transitional time when the milk composition didn't respond to the culture in the yogurt in the same way. Milk is actually quite a seasonal product, changing significantly with the temperature and with which foods are available to the cows.

When looking at the A2 milk, assuming the brand is Alexandre's, the difference there could be that the A2 milk is vat-pasteurized, while the milk in the Organic Valley and PCC cartons is HTST (High Temp Short Term) pasteurized. The vat-pasteurizing technique is the gentlest form of pasteurization which may have positive effects on the yogurt making process. We hope this information proves helpful; please let us know if you have any other questions.

EGG CARTON RECYCLING

Are PCC-branded egg cartons compostable for the City of Seattle pickup? They have paper labels glued on, so I'm not sure if they should be recycled or composted.

PCC replies: Thank you for writing about how best to dispose of PCC egg cartons.

The City of Seattle recommends composting paper egg cartons because they “are not a highly valuable recyclable,” according to its website. It advises that it is OK to leave paper stickers on compostable food packaging, but plastic stickers or labels must be removed before the packaging goes in the compost cart.

For future reference, the disposal guide for all our PCC packaging will give you some good direction, at pccmarkets.com/r/6227. Thank you for taking care to dispose of packaging properly!

AVOIDING IDLING

Dear PCC shoppers,

Several volunteers with Sustainable Ballard have launched a new initiative called “Idle Free Ballard” to help raise awareness about unnecessary vehicle idling. Idling wastes gas, worsens climate change and harms air quality, impacting vulnerable populations—and not just in Ballard. Not-so-fun fact: 16 million gallons of fuel is wasted by unnecessary idling in the U.S. every day.

We can all can save money and health by turning off our engines...whether you're a Seattle commuter waiting for a bridge to open, a parent waiting outside school or watching your kids' sports, or a PCC shopper checking your phone in the parking lot before heading out. Recognize yourself in any of those scenarios? Most of us do. Simple things can make a big difference: check your phone before you turn on your car.

Want to help? Sustainable Ballard has “idle free” cards and posters to get the word out to neighbors, schools and businesses. Visit sustainableballard.org/idle-free-ballard to learn more or to help. Remember, idling gets you nowhere!
— Polly Freeman

PCC replies: Thank you for sharing this information and providing ways that individuals can make a difference.

S’Klallam Connections Garden grows at Heronswood

By Naomi Tomky, guest contributor
Photos by Karen Ducey

When she got home from planting vivid purple lupine, native onion bulbs, and small Sitka spruces back in April, Debby Purser saw a bald eagle swoop just 20 feet overhead.

The plants began the S’Klallam Connections Garden at Heronswood Garden in Kingston, a world-renowned nursery that had fallen into disrepair. The new garden is part of an overall renaissance led by members of the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe (like Purser), planted on land historically occupied and currently owned by the tribe, for the purpose of linking members with the traditional uses of plants.

“I literally got a tear in my eye,” Purser said of seeing the bird above her. “It was like I was doing the right thing.”

Thirty-five years ago, a pair of passionate collectors opened Heronswood to display plants collected from around the world, drawing visitors and praise for its rare compilation. Then, in 2000, a seed company bought the 15-acre property shortly before going bankrupt, leaving Heronswood unmaintained for years. The S’Klallam purchased the property at auction in 2012, spending the last 10 years restoring its glorious global collection. But, says Purser, who works at the garden as volunteer coordinator, “As much as they’ve done to preserve it, we really felt that we should be in the forefront, that our culture should be shared here.”

More specifically, she wants it to be shared with the S’Klallam themselves.

“With boarding schools and all the colonization,” says Purser, many elders were trained to hold tightly to tribal knowledge and hold it closely as secrets. “Now that it’s more acceptable and we’re getting our voices back and getting to get our culture back, it doesn’t feel right to them to tell.”

She worked with Heronswood Garden Director Dr. Ross Bayton to design the S’Klallam Connections Garden and with the tribe’s Cultural Department to identify and collect appropriate plants. As with the plants in the nearby Traveler’s Garden, which represent Chile, Vietnam, and the U.S., it showcases the significant plants to the S’Klallam, but with the added benefit of a gathering space and hands-on learning area for the tribe—including pits for fires, salmon, and clambakes. “A lot of our culture has been lost,” says Purser. “We’re really hoping that this will be a way to help everybody get that connection again.”

That started with Purser herself, who called the process “A crash course in my culture and gardening.” She picked soapberries in hopes of propagating her own plant and joined people from tribes around the region to learn how to harvest camas, an edible root and staple of Pacific Northwest Indigenous cuisine.

In front of the Connections Garden sits the meadow, with yarrow, chocolate lily and camas. Tribes traditionally managed camas meadows by burning them. “We want to do that here,” says Bayton. “But we will have to negotiate with our neighbors.” Fire prevents tree seedlings from encroaching and turning meadow into forest, while also reducing the vigor of the grasses, encouraging other plants, like wildflowers, more opportunity and creating a more diverse landscape. The ash then feeds the soil, encouraging new shoots to grow, enticing deer and elk to nibble and create a fertile hunting ground. “If I do my job and do it right, we’re going to



(Top) Debby Purser leans against a cedar tree. Bottom (r) Purser and Ross Bayton observe a geum plant. Bottom (l) Lupine in the S’Klallam Connections Garden.

get deer,” Purser says. Though they’d never had deer come to the garden before, within months of starting the Connections Garden, they saw tracks and nibbled bushes.

Bayton was less enthusiastic about other traditional methods of the S’Klallam. “It’s making me itch not to pull it out,” says Bayton, spying what he normally would consider a weed. “As gardeners, our instinct is just ‘reduce, reduce, reduce.’” However, while they don’t want the garden overrun, plants such as young dandelions and cleavers feed and heal the S’Klallam, and thus deserve a place in the garden. The cleavers, a European plant that the tribe incorporated over many years for relieving nettle stings, also demonstrates that the garden centers on the S’Klallam’s use of plants and nothing else. It’s not a native plant garden, though many of the plants they use, naturally, are from the region. Nor is it a “first foods” garden. It has medicinal plants like devil’s club and ones like cattails, that are used for weaving, part of the overall impetus to connect S’Klallam to as much of their culture as possible.

The weeds helped fill in the garden in the early stages, because Heronswood made

a conscious decision to open the garden immediately, rather than wait until it was more polished. “We wanted [visitors] to go on the journey with us,” says Bayton. The idea for the garden came last September; the first plants only went into the ground in April. By the end of this year, they plan to have the clam, salmon, and fire pits ready, and in the next few years a complete building with event space. “It would be great to be able to see the grandmas and great aunts and uncles here with babies,” Purser says. Meanwhile they are hosting classes for tribal members, like a four-part one on mountain goat hair weaving.

Purser’s excitement about the project shows the most in the educational aspect of the garden. Practicing their traditions had been legally and culturally prevented for so long that she and many S’Klallam feel they barely know their own culture. Before they can share it more widely, they want to make sure their own people know it first, so she looked for ways to signal exactly for whom the garden was designed.

She points out a cedar tree with a fresh cut, a rectangle that comes to a point at

the top. “We really don’t want it to be signs everywhere and have it be Disneyland,” says Purser. But while she knew that they needed some signs for the public, she and the Cultural Department used traditional methods to strip this piece of bark and will use it to create cedar roses as gifts for events, something people often give out at pow wows, funerals, or other ceremonies, she explains. The raw patch eventually heals, but for years to come, it will serve as a subtle but powerful symbol to the S’Klallam: in this garden grows their culture and a renewed connection to it.

Naomi Tomky (naomitomky.com), author of “The Pacific Northwest Seafood Cookbook,” writes about food and travel.

See the gardens

For more information or to arrange a visit see heronswoodgarden.org.

A conversation with EarthGen

PCC’s mission is to ensure that good food nourishes the communities it serves, while cultivating vibrant, local, organic food systems. We’re proud to partner with organizations throughout the region and share their stories. Sound Consumer contributor Tara Austen Weaver recently visited a program supported by EarthGen, formerly Washington Green Schools, which emphasizes youth-centered, collective solutions for a healthy planet. At PCC, 100% of proceeds from our “Farm-to-School” bagged Fuji apples supports EarthGen and other local organizations focused on food systems education.

It’s a sunny day at Rising Star Elementary School on Beacon Hill, as Lisa Sandroek’s first grade class files out of the building and heads to the raised bed garden area next to the playground. “How big do you think these carrots are going to be?” Sandroek asks, as students gather excitedly around a garden bed. Planted in early spring, the rows of carrots have grown and put out feathery green foliage. “Do you know how to pull carrots out of the ground?” she asks, as small hands reach forward. In response, one of the students proclaims, “I love radishes!”

Later in the afternoon, third and fourth grade students walk through the woodlands behind the school. Formerly overgrown, the area is accessible now thanks to a volunteer weekend of brush clearing and trail building. The students report on the wildlife that inhabits these urban woodlands: red-tailed hawks, big toe salamanders, hairy woodpeckers, black-capped chickadees, and coyotes. Inside the school, hallways are decorated with student-made posters that analyze energy use and show how switching to more efficient sources can conserve resources and impact climate change.

20 YEARS AGO IN
SOUND CONSUMER

“Organic standards go national”
October 2002: PCC’s Board, management and staff take seriously our role as “gatekeepers” for all our members and other shoppers. That means we always have accepted the responsibility of providing you, the consumer, with organic products of the very highest standards, labeled truthfully. We therefore view the long-awaited official implementation of the USDA National Organic Standards on October 21 of this year as a significant milestone in a long journey.



All these projects are the tangible results of EarthGen’s innovative program to help equip students and teachers with the science knowledge and skills necessary for taking action toward improving their community.

EarthGen’s programs are varied, but all seek to tackle the twin issues of climate change and social injustice. They range from building rain gardens that reduce pollution in waterways to helping minimize food waste in school lunch service. Initially begun as an environmental certification program for Washington schools, with a grant from the state Department of Ecology, EarthGen now reaches nearly 40,000 students in 392 schools across Washington.

We spoke with Laura Collins, EarthGen’s director of advancement.

Q: *How did EarthGen get started?*

A: We started in 2010, as a project to introduce an environmental school certification program for the state of Washington (the program was originally called Washington Green Schools). As the organization has evolved, we’ve grown our relationships with the schools and communities we work with and our programming has been responsive to their needs. There are 295 different school districts in the state, so we really customize our programs to meet the communities where they are. When we are in Tonasket (in north-central Washington), we’re talking about agriculture—we’re not talking about saving the orcas, because they don’t have orcas there.

Q: *How has the program evolved?*

The organization is really about making sure that every student across Washington is equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to be a leader for the environment.

When we are in Tonasket, we’re talking about agriculture—we’re not talking about saving the orcas, because they don’t have orcas there.

A: We began as a certification program—to identify an environmental problem to solve in your community—but that model really requires a champion, either a parent or teacher to lead it. And if the teacher moves to another school, the program wasn’t necessarily kept up. At the same time, students are coming to school with anxiety or apathy about climate change—feeling like it’s too late and there’s nothing we can do. The teachers told us: we want to have these conversations, we know how important it is, and we need your help to get it right. Students need scientific information as a baseline to be able to talk about climate change.

We talk about the social/emotional part of it as well, that’s really important. But we’re focused on action and solutions: Let’s talk about what we can do, how we can support them in taking action for change. It’s a very positive way of approaching it.

The fact that we are creating content that is tailored for the communities we work in [and offered in both English and Spanish] really makes a difference. We hear from educators that this helps students lean in and engage with science in a way they never have before.

Q: *How did the pandemic impact the work EarthGen does?*

A: We moved our training online—the demand for science-based curriculum that could be taught remotely was really high.

We were actually able to reach a lot of teachers we wouldn’t have been able to otherwise—some teachers live in areas where they would have to drive long distances if they want to take our trainings. So, we were able to be “present” in communities we hadn’t reached before, which was great. And we were able to connect educators in districts that are similar—who might not live close together but are dealing with many of the same issues. But it is important for us to be physically present as well, so we’re now looking at taking what we learned during the pandemic to develop a hybrid model.

Q: *What are the biggest challenges you face?*

A: There is such a demand for this work—and our limiting factor is funding. The organization is growing. Right now, all our staff is in the Seattle area, but we’re looking at opening a regional hub in Yakima. We have a great board and we talk a lot about balancing breadth vs. depth—to grow, but make sure we are continuing to provide quality programming.

Q: *How can people best support the work that EarthGen is doing?*

A: Financially investing in this work is important, of course. But also, giving space for students and recognizing the amazing ways they can make change and supporting them. And for educators, we have a calendar of events on our website. Our trainings are all free and educators can sign up.

Learn more

For more information on EarthGen visit earthngenwa.org. “Farm to School” organic bagged apples are available at all PCC stores.

Tips for baking the best “Everyday Cake”

By Rebekah Denn

When Polina Chesnakova thinks about bundt cakes, they’re associated with coffees and brunches and old-fashioned gatherings like her mother’s church fellowship group. They’re less intimidating than layer cakes and “great for feeding a crowd.”

Loaf cakes are for casual, keep-it-simple options like a friend stopping by for tea. Square? Ideal for after-school snacking or packing up for a picnic. Sheet cakes are great for parties.

All are delightful in Chesnakova’s new book, “Everyday Cake” (Sasquatch Books, \$22.95), an ode to cakes for every mood and taste that’s organized by pan shape and informed by years of experience.

A professional baker, cooking teacher, and the culinary director of Seattle’s Book Larder cookbook store, Chesnakova spent the first part of the COVID-19 pandemic developing and testing cake recipes.

She wanted cakes that were straightforward and simple but also enticing and fun, “a little bit more elevated, more exciting” than just one-bowl dumps (though there are some of those too).

“I wanted to make sure there were a lot of classics and a lot of cakes that people were familiar with. But I feel like my style of baking is that I like to add a little something extra, or a little twist.”

That means playing with textures, types and ways of infusing tastes, whether a lemon loaf gently perfumed with lavender, a touch of rye flour in the Turkish coffee cake, or a tropical coconut-rum sauce covering her English sticky toffee loaf.

Baking was Chesnakova’s first passion when she became interested in cooking as a high school student in Rhode Island. Her early jobs were at bakeries, and she devoured writers like Dorie Greenspan: “I would take out cookbooks from the library and just read them back-to-back.” She worked with breads, wedding cakes and pastries, rustic pies and cakes, but a car crash in 2016 badly injured one hand and rerouted her career.

Through a long recovery she interned for Culture (a magazine about cheese), moved to Seattle with her now-husband, wrote her first book, “Hot Cheese,” then focused on cake. She also frequently writes about and teaches cooking classes centered on her own Russian-Georgian heritage, with an occasional nod in the cake book, like an Apple Sharlotka tea cake and a Russian Napoleon of puff pastry and custard cream.

Some recipes took significant work to develop, like the golden milk Tres Leches cake based on memories from a high school favorite. “I was trying to develop the right sort of sponge cake that would soak up all the milk but still hold its own so that it wasn’t soggy, and wouldn’t collapse under the weight of the milk. I tested that cake over 30 times...Tres leches has so much flavor and it’s a beautiful cake. And then anytime I serve it to anyone, they are like ‘Oh my goodness, I am obsessed with this cake.’”

With months of nonstop cake-baking behind her, and perspective on both professional and home kitchens, we asked Chesnakova for cake advice for home cooks. She suggests:

- Sufficiently preheat your oven—get it to the recommended temperature at least a half-hour early.
- Get a scale (top-rated kitchen versions run around \$25). “I think that’s the number one thing you can do to really up your game and make sure you have consistent results. The way I measure up a cup of flour is different from the way you might measure flour, and multiplying that by every ingredient can add up to set you up for success or failure.”



Photos by Charity Burgraaf

- Properly cream butter and sugar. “That is the basis of so many cakes, getting that light, airy texture.” Many people stop creaming before it becomes fluffy.
- Scrape the bowl frequently—sides, bottom and even beaters—so the batter is thoroughly aerated and mixed.
- Make sure all ingredients are at room temperature to help them properly emulsify.
- Recognize room temperature butter, which should give way when you press down a finger, but not too much. “You don’t want your finger to go right through the butter, (but) if you press on it and can’t really make an indent it’s too cold.”
- While visual cues like “It has a nice golden-brown color” are important for knowing when a cake is done, thermometers can provide an extra layer of assurance. Expect most cakes to be done baking around 200 to 210 degrees.

Golden-Milk Tres Leches Cake

This Latin American dessert consists of a sponge cake soaked through with tres leches (Spanish for “three milks”) and then topped with whipped cream. For a twist, the tres leches here begins as golden milk—a traditional Indian drink that has its roots in Ayurveda. Infused with turmeric, ginger, cinnamon and other spices, this electric-yellow tres leches marries two vibrant cuisines into one irresistible cake. Don’t skimp on the whipped cream—it helps cut the sweetness and makes each bite extra creamy.

Makes 12 to 16 servings

6 eggs, at room temperature (*see note*)
1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 ½ cups (175 g) all-purpose flour
3 tbsp cornstarch
1 ½ tsp baking powder
¾ tsp kosher salt
3 tbsp neutral oil, such as canola or safflower



For the tres leches

1 (13.5-ounce) can light coconut milk
1 ½ cups (355 ml) whole milk
2 tsp vanilla bean paste or extract
1 ½ tsp ground turmeric
1 ½ tsp ground ginger
½ tsp lightly packed freshly grated nutmeg
½ tsp kosher salt
4 to 5 whole black peppercorns
3 cardamom pods, crushed, or ½ tsp ground cardamom
1 cinnamon stick, or ½ tsp ground cinnamon
1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk

For the whipped cream

2 cups (475 ml) cold heavy cream
2 tbsp honey or granulated sugar
Ground cinnamon, for dusting

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line the bottom of a 9-by-13-inch glass or ceramic baking dish with parchment paper. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat the eggs and sugar on medium-high speed until thick ribbons form, about 10 minutes. Add the vanilla and mix to combine. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, sift together the flour, cornstarch, baking powder, and salt. Use a silicone spatula to gently but confidently fold one-third of the flour mixture into the egg mixture by hand. Repeat with the

rest of the flour mixture in two batches—be careful not to overmix! Drizzle in the oil and fold to thoroughly combine. Gently scrape the batter into the prepared dish and gently smooth out the top. Bake the cake until it springs back when pressed and a tester inserted into the center comes out clean, 30 to 35 minutes. Transfer the pan to a wire rack and allow the cake to cool completely.

Meanwhile, make the tres leches. In a medium saucepan, whisk together all the ingredients except for the sweetened condensed milk. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat and gently simmer for 3 minutes. Remove from the heat, cover, and let steep for 1 hour, or until the cake has cooled. Remove the cinnamon stick and whisk in the sweetened condensed milk. At this point, I like to transfer the tres leches to a large liquid measuring cup or small pitcher for easy pouring. Once the cake is cool, run a knife around the edges of the pan and invert it onto a cutting board. Remove the parchment from the cake and flip it over again. Use a serrated knife to cut off the cake’s browned top—you may be able to simply peel it off. This extra step ensures that the cake will be evenly soaked through.

Nestle the cake (cut side up) back into the baking dish. Gradually pour the tres leches evenly over the top. Remove any cardamom shells or peppercorns that have fallen onto the cake. Allow to sit at room temperature for 30 minutes, then cover and refrigerate for at least 6 hours and ideally overnight. Up to a few hours before serving, make the whipped cream. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip the heavy cream and honey on medium-high speed until it holds stiff peaks. Spread it evenly over the top of the cake and lightly dust with cinnamon. Serve immediately or refrigerate until ready to serve. This cake keeps well in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

NOTE: For best results, use exactly 300 g whole eggs. Weigh your eggs in the mixing bowl, whisk them together, and then pour out any excess if needed.

©2022 by Polina Chesnakova. Excerpted from “Everyday Cake” by permission of Sasquatch Books.



LET’S BAKE CAKES

Polina Chesnakova will teach a PCC Cooking class on baking everyday cakes in October. The hands-on class will include recipes for Napoleon Cake, layers of puff pastry with whipped pastry cream, and for Apple Sharlotka, a fluffy Eastern European sponge cake studded with apples. Sign up at pccmarkets.com/r/6240.

PCC grants support creative, essential food programs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ceries available in free “grab-and-go” bags at the Delridge Farmers Market, a community market launched by the African Community Housing Development to address historic food access challenges in the neighborhood.

“(D)esigned by Black youth, the market prioritizes culturally relevant food for immigrant and refugee communities in the neighborhood, which is a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-designated “food desert.” The market brings a diverse array of food directly into the neighborhood and makes that food as affordable and accessible as possible,” the grant application said. In an innovative economic development tool, the agency buys all leftover produce at the end of the market at full price, benefiting the Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers and vendors who serve the market, then “distributes it directly to community elders and food-insecure families who were unable to access the market due to mobility or transportation barriers” as well as to other local food access organizations.

The program’s scope and frequency continues to increase, and “Abundance is one of the market’s core values—we aim to ensure everyone has as much fresh, high-quality food as they wish,” the application said.

The PCC grant will purchase organic produce from local farms for the prepacked “grab and go” bags.

“We know that stigma and shame around food insecurity is very real, and these free bags ensure that families are able to access healthy, nutrient-dense food without having to speak to anyone or “out” themselves as food insecure,” the application said. The funds will also help buy leftover produce from market farmers to distribute to other community members.

See an earlier *Sound Consumer* article on the market at pccmarkets.com/r/6228.

Clean Greens

In 1989 a nonprofit named the Black Dollar Days Task Force (BDDTF) began providing educational opportunities and training in the Seattle area. In 2007, that took the form of the 20-acre Clean Green Farm in Duvall growing organic produce.

It provides affordable “chemical-free” vegetables to the community through a food stand in the Central Area and a CSA program, with the goal of decreasing disparities in health and in food education in the African-American community. A youth program helps students learn hands-on skills, teamwork and leadership. This year Clean Greens also expanded its summer program through a “Clean Greens Rainbow Youth Farm” with weekly work parties.

Primarily run by volunteers, Clean Greens is “on a mission to solve the problem of limited access to healthy foods & produce in low income urban neighborhoods!,” as its website puts it.

The PCC grant will help Clean Greens Farm distribute free vegetables to low-income residents and provide healthy snacks for its youth program and volunteers.

See an earlier *Sound Consumer* article on the legacy of Clean Greens founder Lottie Cross at pccmarkets.com/r/6229.

The Common Acre

The Common Acre connects people with the land. Those partnerships take many forms, whether through growing food, distributing food, or supporting pollinators that are essential for plant life.

The PCC grant will help the nonprofit reach its goal to host 50 free community meals per week, and to allow community members to bring home produce, plant starts and garden utensils to help them grow food on their own. Food is grown through the nonprofit’s Alleycat Acres Urban Farm Network, a program operating on four farm sites in Seattle.



African Community Housing Development’s Associate Director Bilan Aden and Executive Director Hamdi Abdulle (photo courtesy ACHD).

“We primarily serve community members living or working near our farm sites. We serve a majority of low-income, BIPOC individuals and families, and we are intentional about offering services that support their participation—such as translation or growing culturally appropriate foods that they are likely to need for traditional recipes...” the organization said in a grant application.

“We are aware that health is a systemic issue for many communities and we are deeply concerned about the increased risks that low-income and BIPOC communities will face due to the pandemic and economic crisis we find ourselves facing. It is more important than ever to provide free-of-cost solutions so that everyone can eat something healthy every day.”

Cooperativa Tierra Y Libertad

Founded in 2013, the co-op’s purpose is “to empower farmworker communities to control their own destinies through democratic, participatory and collective ownership over their labor, bodies, sources of income, daily activities and the land where they live and work,” according to its grant application. Operated by immigrant farmworkers who are majority Mixteco and Triqui, its food access work includes providing produce and eggs at low or no cost to Birchwood Food Desert Fighters in Bellingham serving a working class, multi-racial community. It also provides produce to food banks.

The PCC grant will be used to buy and distribute produce from Tierra y Libertad to farmworker communities in Skagit and Whatcom counties, working with its sister organizations, Community to Community Development (C2C) Promotoras, and farmworker union Familias Unidas por la Justicia (FUJ) to distribute blueberries, nopalitos and chilacayotes (squash).

As the co-op noted in its application, as many as 65% of farmworkers around the U.S. experience food insecurity.

“At the same time, farmworkers are an integral part of the food system; without farmworkers, food doesn’t get planted, cared for, grown, picked or packed for distribution. It is cruelly ironic that those who provide

the labor that makes food production possible in the United States are exploited to such an extent that over half are denied access to the same food they produce.”

Resources meant to address food insecurity are often not available to farmworkers or are intimidating for them to access, issues that the co-op and its partners are well equipped to address. And the grant will provide welcome support for the fledgling co-op, which lost its entire raspberry crop in the record heat wave of 2021 and then faced floods and other weather-related setbacks.

Cultivate South Park

At El Mercadito, the first farmers market in the South Park neighborhood, residents of all income levels mingle and enjoy fresh produce and a sense of community. Families facing food insecurity typically receive food for free, while those with higher incomes pay market rates. The hybrid approach, wrote organizing agency Cultivate South Park in its grant application, “neutralizes the shame some families experience when visiting a food bank” while creating a relevant, accessible public space to people from different income levels and walks of life. The market, with its food, arts and opportunities, creates a sense of belonging that food banks cannot, organizers wrote, and increases access to economic opportunity as well as fresh food.

Cultivate South Park guarantees weekly sales for BIPOC farmers at the El Mercadito market, providing free food to market visitors in need: “Our farmers benefit and our customers benefit.” Additionally, the organization stocks a food pantry, Casa Orilla, during the market’s off season, including culturally relevant staples that are often hard to find in traditional food banks.

The PCC grant will go to purchase fresh produce directly from farm vendors at El Mercadito for distribution at the free booth or supplies for Casa Orilla. It will also support other Black, Indigenous and other farmers of color who don’t sell at the market through direct purchases of produce that will be packed in boxes and delivered to neighborhood homes in need, in a community with a large percentage of low-income and ethnically diverse residents.

The Southwest Seattle community is “rich with cultural identity and strong connections to food and agriculture spanning the globe...(yet) disproportionately lacks access to healthy food, clean air, clean water, and financial resources when compared to other areas of Seattle,” the application said.

Asked how the project will impact the communities the organization serves, Cultivate South Park’s organizers replied, in part, “Cultivate South Park is composed solely of community members. The main way that we partner with our community is that we are a part of the community.”

See an earlier *Sound Consumer* article on the market at pccmarkets.com/r/6228.

FareStart

For 30 years, FareStart has provided community meals, job training programs and other services to people who are “furthest from opportunity and most affected by poverty, homelessness and hunger.”

The nonprofit’s PCC grant will be used to buy organic foods for a pilot Community Market program. The mobile market began in 2021, distributing free, fresh produce and other foods in subsidized housing communities and other locations that would reach people who are food insecure and historically marginalized.

At the markets, families can choose their own groceries, averaging 10 to 17 pounds per household. FareStart plans to host 87 mobile market events by the end of 2022.

FareStart is working to buy produce for the program through local farms, with a particular focus on BIPOC producers.

Plant-Based Food Share

From soil to table, this program helps make organic, plant-based foods more accessible to underserved communities. The nonprofit’s Free Food Box program distributes 200 to 300 boxes weekly of “produce, pantry essentials, dairy-free milk, pots, soil, edible plant starts, seeds and some prepared foods from various cuisines and cultures, along with recipes and cooking tips, and virtual cooking classes,” according to the grant application.

Boxes are distributed to south and central Seattle and South King County with a focus on underserved BIPOC recipients,



(l) Vegetable starts displayed at Clean Greens, which runs a farm in Duvall and the Clean Greens Rainbow Youth Farm in the South Shore area (photo courtesy of Clean Greens), (top r) Volunteer and community care coordinator Sandy Centeno selects food from the Rainier Valley Food Bank for families of students at Beacon Hill Elementary (2020 file photo by Meryl Schenker), (bottom r) David Kiesel (center) shares a laugh with others during a trivia game during a community lunch at the Sno-Valley Senior Center (photo by Karen Ducey).

as well as those with vulnerable medical conditions. The contents are sourced from BIPOC farmers and chefs as well, and the organization partners “with local BIPOC nutritionists, nutrition professors, doulas and herbalists to support our work within the community and with the families we serve, to make sure food boxes can meet the nutritional and dietary needs of our recipients.”

A complementary “Garden Share” program helps box recipients garden, and connects those without access to land with volunteers willing to host garden space and classes.

“Structural racism, environmental injustice and other factors have contributed to the present moment in which low income and people of color in urban areas have extremely limited access to open space, specifically where they are able to plant and grow their own food,” the application said.

“We will help our community build their relationship to nature in one of the most powerful ways possible, the reciprocal activity of gardening and producing food.”

The food boxes are assembled by and distributed to community members in south and central Seattle and South King County. Plant-Based Food Share will use the PCC grant to continue and expand the box program, helping “build the community that will advance food, environmental and racial justice.”

Rainier Valley Food Bank

The Rainier Valley Food Bank is Seattle’s busiest food bank, serving an estimated 25% of all individuals seeking food assistance in the city. Unlike many other food banks, it is open to all, not restricted to clients who live in a particular geographic area.

The food bank’s programs offer “a justice-based approach to food distribution,” the application said, buying fresh foods, purchasing from local farmers to support the community and reduce their carbon footprint, and participating in grocery rescue and gleanings programs to redistribute food that would otherwise be wasted.

The PCC grant will help provide fresh, culturally relevant foods in an “ever-growing and diverse” community.

“Seattle is one of the most expensive cities to live in in the nation, and the obstacles to affordability are only exacerbated in the Rainier Valley—home to many people of color, immigrants, and refugees who regularly face systemic obstacles to living wage employment, affordable housing and food security,” the application said. Nearly 75% of clients are people of color and first-generation immigrants, the application noted. The poverty rate in the food bank’s main service area has a far higher percentage than the city average of people living in poverty and who are food insecure.

The food bank seeks to provide more culturally significant foods “not only to those who have made specific requests, but to those in our community that can benefit from foods that they are familiar with,” the application said.

“Being able to provide culturally relevant foods during periods like Chinese New Year, Hanukkah, Christmas, or even just an average Thursday helps us to support our community at a deeper level than just by feeding them. Many people in our community require specialized diets for cultural and/or medical reasons, and every person deserves access to foods that are important to them culturally.”

See an earlier *Sound Consumer* article featuring the food bank at pccmarkets.com/r/6230.

Sno-Valley Senior Center

A community dining center serving this rural Eastside region provides hot, nutritious, made-from-scratch meals to older adults every weekday. More than an affordable meal (it’s donation-based, with no one turned away), it’s also a chance to socialize and stay active and engaged, a particular benefit for those who live alone.

“I love our lunch. I’m not depressed anymore with the great company,” was one participant’s feedback.

The Carnation center is reaching out to encourage more Hispanic senior citizens in the majority-white region to benefit from the program. It’s partnered with SeaMar, a community health center, for culturally relevant outreach, including an interpreter



and help finding Spanish-speaking volunteers and advocates for the elders’ needs. “Already, we have seen a jump in participation of Spanish speaking elders from six to 22 people thanks to the outreach done this year,” the grant application said. The center is also reaching out to LGBTQ elders and those of Indian descent.

The PCC grant will be used to buy organic produce from Snoqualmie Valley farmers for the lunches, helping both stabilize the farms with guaranteed orders but also get “quality, fresh organic produce” to senior citizens who might not otherwise have access to it.

“In general, the Snoqualmie Valley has low access to fresh, organic produce although we are surrounded by farms that sell at Pike Place Market and local restaurants,” the application said. “The price is a challenge for some as well as lack of access to purchase nearby. This grant would increase the opportunity for fresh food for all older adults especially those of marginalized populations.”

Solid Ground

At Lowell Elementary School, a recently opened food pantry will help students focus on learning, playing and healthy development. Nonprofit agency Solid Ground, whose motto is that it believes “poverty is solvable,” will use a PCC grant to buy organic food for the pantry, which serves a disproportionate number of students facing food insecurity.

As of September 2021, 72 students (roughly a quarter of the school’s enrollment) qualified for the federal McKinney-Vento program assisting families that did not have permanent housing. More than half the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

The school and its “amazing staff members” are working in several ways to help nourish students, including a school garden and a nutrition education program that Solid Ground also supports.

“We continue to look for ways to help Lowell find sustained funding for their food pantry, knowing that the food insecurity many of their students experience is not a one-time event,” the organization wrote in its grant application. But the PCC grant will help build a solid footing, letting students establish “the foundations for long-term stability, health, and well-being.”

South Seattle College Food Pantry

In 2017 student leaders at South Seattle College established a campus food pantry to support an increasing number of students experiencing homelessness—operated by students and for students. Hunger is a significant issue on many college campuses: Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, just over half of South Seattle College respondents in a student survey reported being food insecure in the past 30 days.

“Many of our students have to choose between paying college expenses and putting food on the table. Not having reliable access to sufficient, nutritious and culturally relevant food makes it stressful to study and challenging to be academically successful. Many of our students are the first in their family to attend college and have been deeply impacted by the pandemic,” the college wrote in a grant application.

(The pantry shifted to online orders and other forms of assistance during the pandemic; it expects to re-open the physical pantry this year.)

With ever-rising needs and costs colliding with college budget cuts, though, the pantry was only funded for “minimum” staples this year in the form of packaged foods.

The PCC grant will allow the pantry to add fresh and organic foods to their options.

Nearly two-thirds of the students work, and more than a fifth have children or other dependents, so having the pantry on campus gives them one less errand and burden, helping “keep them in school and on track to graduate,” the application said.

“Fall quarter is always a busy, exciting period for us with new students and new dreams,” the application said. The pantry allows more of them to focus on those dreams, with student feedback that the service is “a life saver” and “there are times when I would have been so hungry without it.”

How to help

Donations to the PCC Food Bank Program can be made at pccmarkets.com/r/6231.

Growing a new kind of a cafeteria food

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“You can have school gardens with no procurement. You can have procurement without school gardens. You can have each of those without the education component. But when you have all three together, they’re mutually reinforcing,” Slonim says.

It’s been a slow process since Washington’s farm-to-school legislation passed in 2008. With limited funding and most school kitchens only able to accommodate pre-packaged, ready-to-warm foods purchased from national food service companies, the transition to more local food sourcing had been sluggish. How could the school serve locally grown potatoes when they didn’t even have a way to clean, peel or chop them?

But Washington’s farm-to-school participation has been slowly increasing and really began to take off in 2021 when state lawmakers dedicated \$5 million in federal coronavirus relief funds to fund farm-to-school purchasing. That led to \$1.5 million awarded for purchasing grants and another \$3 million left for the 2022-23 school year. WSDA expects this funding to come out of state funds once the federal funding runs out, Slonim says.

Participation amongst Washington schools is proliferating (even if that’s only the occasional local food purchase); 53% of 152 school food authorities representing 1,098 individual schools started their farm-to-school involvement in the last three years, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm-to-school census.

Large and small districts alike are experimenting. Seattle Public Schools recently initiated an effort to introduce culturally relevant meals made from locally sourced ingredients to SPS’s 50,000-plus students and 106 schools. The new “Taste of SPS” program offers a monthly menu item prepared in small batches and rotated through 10 schools at a time.

But even with better funding for sourcing, local food programs face challenges. Schools are required to meet federal school nutritional standards. That’s easy when all the food comes pre-packaged and nutritionally formulated but is more complicated in a scratch-cooking scenario.

Coupeville solved that problem by hiring a chef as the food services director and a registered dietitian as his assistant.

Andreas Wurzrainer traded in the kitchen at Christopher’s, his longtime Coupeville restaurant, for the food services director job, bringing a chef mentality to the school kitchen. He does things like pickling hundreds of pounds of cucumbers for a bumper farm school harvest (using a garbage can) and introducing locally sourced seafood to school menus. The latter move led to a menu item of mussel chowder made from locally harvested Penn Cove shellfish. Wurzrainer wasn’t surprised when it garnered a following after student taste-tests, he is a



Photos by Jamie Connors

All it takes... is a willingness for a community, district and school board to agree their children deserve something better than the typical cafeteria fare

five-time winner of the annual Coupeville Mussel Fest chowder competition.

“We’re on an island, we need to push seafood more. But nobody ever offers seafood in school. A lot of people think kids don’t like it, but I feel like it’s our obligation to introduce them to it. They might not love it. But at least they’ve had a chance to taste it,” Wurzrainer says.

If other districts want to follow Coupeville’s lead, they need to be willing to take some chances, Wurzrainer says.

Before he took over the kitchen, “I don’t think there was ever a raw meat that crossed a kitchen counter here. (School districts) look at everything as a liability. It becomes way easier not to do it. But at a certain point, you have to trust the process. We have to trust our training. How else are you ever going to bring local products into this kitchen if you’re worried about the dirt?”

Brave eaters

Coupeville, located in central Whidbey Island, is part of the Ebey’s Landing National

Historic Reserve, formed to celebrate and preserve the region’s deep Pacific Northwest agricultural heritage. It’s a quintessential town for a thriving farm-to-school program.

King recognized that from the get-go. “When I came here, I looked at (Ebey’s) Prairie and all these farms, I thought, how come we can’t get all that food out here to these kids that we say we love so much in this building,” King says. “If we can’t do this in Coupeville, we can’t do this anywhere.”

Historically, crops grown on the fertile natural prairie soils of Ebey’s Prairie just south of the school campus were shipped by steamboat to the growing settlements in Seattle and Olympia.

The same historic farm-to-market road that once took the prairie crops to market goes right past a new one-acre school farm, growing food for Wurzrainer to use and serving as an outdoor learning center. Elementary students traipse through the stand of towering Douglas firs bordering the elementary school campus to access the farm.

On one recent day, it was Sarah Boin’s fourth-grade class.

“Say hi to farmer Kylie. Say hi to farmer Grace!” shouts Zvi Bar-Chaim, the Coupeville Farm-to-School garden coordinator. Bar-Chaim has been working with Coupeville elementary students since

2015 by teaching hands-on, experiential gardening and cooking lessons. In 2021 the farm-to-school group expanded its reach with the school farm, hiring local farmer Kylie Neal as the school farm manager.

Neal quickly puts the fourth-graders to work. “Okay, who’s ready to be a human tractor?” she shouts, directing half the class to pull up an old bed of radishes and turnips. One lucky fourth grader pulls up an oversized Japanese salad turnip. She cleverly names the gleaming white, softball-size globe “Bald Ross,” a play on painter Bob Ross.

Bar-Chaim leads the other half of the class on a farm tour, pointing out bean plants (only slightly slug-damaged), developing buds on sunflower plants, and a row of thick green, knee-high grass.

“What kind of grass is this? In cooking, we’ve been talking about cereal grains. You can use this to make flour,” Bar-Chaim hints. The kids quickly catch on; they’re looking at a patch of young wheat plants.

Combining experiential learning, participating in the growing process and learning about cooking and nutrition turns kids that normally would have refused to touch these vegetables—like salad turnips—into “brave eaters,” Boin says. That’s part of the farm-to-school strategy as well, using

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Growing a new kind of a cafeteria food

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language that encourages students to try new foods and deflates peer pressure.

Instead of yelling “yuck!” when they don’t like something, Coupeville elementary students are taught to say, “this isn’t for me.”

But the best part is “when they get to see the stuff they grew in the cafeteria,” Boin says, which will happen in about an hour, when her class goes for lunch. Served on today’s salad bar? Fresh, whole salad turnips.

Eating what they grow

At the cafeteria, the students are greeted with a large “Welcome!” sign listing the day’s hot lunch special. (It’s mac and cheese day, my daughter is thrilled!) Educational notes pepper the salad bar. Did you know that bananas share 50% of their DNA with humans? I didn’t.

It’s a full-circle, synergistic solution, not just bringing healthy food into the school but teaching kids that the cafeteria food can be good for them and tasty too. That’s a huge shift in student mentality, says Laura Luginbill, Coupeville’s assistant food services director.

“I’ve got kids that come through the (daily lunch) line, and they just say to me, ‘You know,’” Luginbill says with a laugh. These kids have become “regulars” of the daily lunch offering. “There are kids that just trust us now.”

Nobody is resting on their laurels. King would like to introduce a breakfast program (the district currently doesn’t have one). Wurzrainer wants to extend the culinary education and cooking lessons that Bar-Chaim has perfected at the elementary



The best part is ‘when they get to see the stuff they grow in the cafeteria’

level into middle and high school. The farm garden is rapidly expanding, with more crops and (hopefully soon) a hoop house area to extend the growing season.

King doesn’t buy into the sentiment that, compared to Coupeville, other districts are too big, or too far removed from local agriculture to do what they have done.

Coupeville purchases from local farmers all over the state, not just neighboring farms. All it takes, King says, is a willingness for a community, district and school board to agree their children deserve something better than the typical cafeteria fare.

“If you have guests over and you served them frozen pizza and a canned vegetable item, what does that say to your guests? If you make a home-cooked scratch meal you’re saying another thing to your guests,” King says, challenging his fellow districts to take up the mantle of farm-to-school and scratch cooking. “This shows you love your kids.”

Georgie Smith is a fourth-generation farmer on Whidbey Island. She writes about food and farming.

21 YEARS AGO IN SOUND CONSUMER

“Toxic wastes have no place in fertilizer”

October 2001: The release of (Duff Wilson’s book) *Fateful Harvest* should be the beginning of a movement to demand better regulation of fertilizers with full product labeling and a reporting and tracking system. PCC members, with a keen interest in organic farming and farmlands preservation, could be at the forefront of this movement.

PCC CUSTOMER SERVICE STARS



LEO MUNOZ
Produce Clerk, View Ridge PCC

After 23 years as a produce clerk, Leo is an expert in making customers feel welcome and at home while keeping the produce wet rack looking great. Leo values being able to provide healthy and delicious food to the neighborhood and is proud to support Black Lives Matter because it prioritizes how neighbors and communities should support one another. Outside of work, you could find Leo painting and drawing in a variety of media, taking walks, or enjoying Rainier cherries or a strawberry rhubarb pie when they are in season. When he comes to work, he views the produce department as his canvas, and wants to make it a beautiful work of art by the time he leaves. He loves that PCC has options that support his overall well-being, like the “whole-meal” protein powder he drinks each morning, fresh fruits, veggies and legumes. Thank you for being a pillar of our View Ridge store, Leo! Your friendly and welcoming demeanor allows our customers to feel at home at PCC.



JARED COHEN
Health and Body Care Clerk, Issaquah PCC

Jared has been in the role of HBC Clerk at the Issaquah store since the end of last year. Working at the co-op has allowed him to go back to school and to feel proud of his work, knowing that PCC provides so much attention to the ingredients offered in our products. Jared is passionate about reducing the use of plastic and really appreciates the vendors we carry that use cardboard, plant-based or other creative packaging. Jared's focus on service is obvious—he wants every customer to leave with some degree of satisfaction, no matter how much time it takes. Outside of work and school, Jared enjoys taking his dog to the dog park with his girlfriend and does wood working projects like cutting boards and coasters. Tapping into his Southern California roots, you may also find him making a salsa with fun fruits like mango or kiwi. It's obvious that Jared cares about the work he does and finds the positive side of every situation. We are so thankful Jared is a part of our PCC team—thank you for the help you provide to our customers every day, Jared!

[PUBLIC POLICY REPORT]

PCC presentation to United Nations Summer Academy

PCC is a Northwest institution, but its work and goals are relevant around the globe.

Aimee Simpson, the co-op's senior director of advocacy and environmental, social and governance (ESG), discussed “how to learn from the past to feed the future through sustainable cooperative markets” in a recent talk with the United Nations Summer Academy. Participants in the intense five-day education on sustainable transformation pathways focused on “global trends, powerful forces and changing patterns in our world.”

The co-op's story was significant to the discussion, moderator Paulyn Duman told the virtual audience targeted at UN staff, government representatives and others, because PCC is “accountable to ordinary citizens and not to investors,” with different accompanying priorities. “This is something that is so interesting, and so powerful because this is something different from what we are used to when it comes to markets.”

Simpson recounted how PCC was founded in a garage in 1953 as a buying club for 15 families. Key founder John Affolter was inspired by the cooperative movement and its Rochdale Principles, with their ideals of democratic member control, education, and sustainability. The co-op was guided by those principles and quickly evolved to support natural and organic foods—and the greater community it served.

Once the organization reached a larger size, Simpson noted, governance became more centralized and some issues became trickier, e.g., figuring out how to buy from local farmers who might just be able to supply a few PCC stores rather than all its current 16 branches. But its larger size also

meant more power to fuel changes, a larger and broader manifestation of the pooled resources of the original 15 families.

The principles backing the co-op meant PCC was committed to “driving and supporting other concepts and ideas outside our organization,” Simpson said. That's meant endeavors like founding the PCC Farmland Trust to conserve local and organic farmland (now the Washington Farmland Trust), helping found Seattle's P-Patch community garden program, advocating for state and national organic certification standards, and partnering with the Monterey Bay Aquarium when it first developed its seafood standards.

How do you find that balance?

“We, as a local co-op, can't be inspecting all the places where all our food comes from and making sure they're meeting our standards. So these labels are really important, but we do on occasion try to say, OK, where's this gap? We want it to go further.” For instance, she noted, existing national seafood standards didn't address regional issues with the Chinook salmon run and orcas, so PCC developed its own Chinook salmon standard (see pccmarkets.com/r/6233).

“We wanted to support local fishermen and tribes and everybody else who relied on and cared for this resource, but we wanted to make sure it was being done right.”

Participants asked about issues like the tradeoffs involved in increasing a business' scale, how to prioritize issues like animal welfare and sustainability, and how to draw in the community.

One practical path, Simpson said, is products like PCC's private label foods,

which hold to the quality and standards that the co-op wants to associate with its name. Another is advocating for issues members and shoppers care about and committing to hard decisions: “How do we impact that on an external scale, whether it's global, national or local?...”

“Those are things we really have to think through and say, ok, it costs money to transition this stuff but we are willing to do it, because we want to be leaders on that front.”

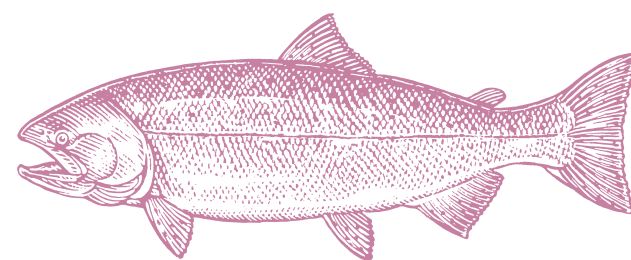
At any size, she noted, businesses face balances and tradeoffs. The co-op hasn't expanded beyond the Puget Sound region, and even at more than 100,000 members, “sometimes we're not big enough to have the impact that our members want us to have” when it comes to national and global issues. And yet its commitment to local producers and supply chains was a huge benefit in its ability to serve the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attendees asked about keeping on track with goals. The pandemic, for instance, interrupted the supply chain for polylactic acid (PLA) compostable containers, a setback in goals to make the PCC deli completely free of petroleum-based plastics by 2023. And PCC's long-term efforts to allow reusable containers in stores were also interrupted by the pandemic. But the work continues and the paths are on a new route. When such disruptions hit it's important to say “We're going to not let that setback keep us from being who we want to be going into the future,” she said.

The fundamental rules include: “How do you find that balance and make sure that you are continuing to listen to staff, to your members, to your communities, and really finding that engagement that works. (Show) you are open to listening and that you're open to making those choices and making sure that you are doing what you set out to do.”

[MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS]

PCC began as a food-buying club with 15 families. Now, it's exceeded 100,000 members. To celebrate that milestone, we're spotlighting several members this year who help make the co-op thrive. If you have a membership story to share in our letters page, let us know at editor@pccmarkets.com.



MEMBER JULIE

Meet longtime PCC member, Julie! Since 1984, she's called View Ridge PCC her home store and remembers shopping at its original location where Third Place Books is today. She even volunteered at the co-op, supporting member relations. Julie recalls the wonderful conversations between staff and shoppers—PCC was always a place that welcomed people from all backgrounds and abilities. Back then, Julie attended nutrition tours led by beloved staff member Goldie as she shared her evidence-based advice on food and nutrition. These tours were the jumping off point for PCC's cooking class program. Julie appreciates the connections she gets to make with staff and that PCC puts effort into intentionally sourcing products. Thank you for your decades of dedication, Julie!

Students hope Arctic art—and a museum exhibit—helps the planet

A local teacher's trip to the Arctic Circle has led to global inspiration on conservation—and art.

When Jennie Warmouth went on an Arctic expedition in 2019 as a National Geographic Grosvenor Teacher, her students at Spruce Elementary School in Lynnwood followed her travels and learned about the region's spectacular ecosystem and the impacts it faced from pollution. Inspired to get involved, the students switched from disposable to reusable silverware in their lunchroom as the first move. The next year Warmouth led a student arctic-inspired art contest focused on conservation. This year the project expanded and became a part of history on its own, as The Ar(c)t(ic) Design Exhibition, a virtual art exhibit at the National Nordic Museum in Seattle.

Warmouth's second-grade class judged more than 100 entries from students aged 5-18 from around the country, with the help of a panel of National Geographic fellows and artists. (The grand prize was a night at Great Wolf Lodge.)

As Warmouth (now a 2022-23 National Geographic Explorer) wrote, the students were aware of the serious stakes and the rewards.

“There has never been a more important time to teach our children about the intricately interconnected systems of the planet that we are living together on. These early conversations, explorations and creative expressions will lay the groundwork that they will need to actively engage with scientific issues that will affect them throughout their lives...” she said. “The beauty of this project is that children are encouraged to gain knowledge about and imagine solutions for an aspect of the Arctic ecosystem that resonates with them and their families.”

The Nordic museum began working with local students during the COVID-19 pandemic to create exhibits that complemented its holdings, though it started with high school students, said Leslie Anne Anderson, the museum's director of collections, exhibitions and programs. The Arctic art project had a geographic link to the museum's focus, of course. But it also connected with the museum's core values, one of which is a connection to nature and sustainability, she said.

“The museum really wants to support and encourage artists of all ages, focusing on issues that are critical to us all.”

Mike Libeck, a judge and a National Geographic Adventurer of the Year, said in a statement that the project is the sort of global teamwork, “through the power of art and communication,” needed to change the world.

In a new approach, the second graders and teacher curated the online collection, including a message for visitors.

The introduction from the second-graders: “We hope that people will slow down and take responsibility because each and every decision counts for our planet. We want people to notice their impact on Earth. Some animals are endangered and at risk of becoming extinct...because of OUR choices! You might just think that one little piece of trash is meaningless but it all matters! With this collection, we intend to show civilization the importance of healing and protecting the Arctic ecosystem. We envision a balanced and thriving world in the future.”

Visit pccmarkets.com/r/6232 to see the online exhibit.



Pictured: Arctic Animals by Felicity Silvers, age 12 (top), Box of Pollution by Omar Young, age 8 (middle left, winner of the Great Wolf Lodge Prize), “The Earth Was Created for All Life...Not Just Human Life” by Jewelina Alex, age 7 (middle right, second place winner), “The Migration of the Tern” by Henry Jones, age 6 (bottom left, first place winner), and “Sleeping Fox” by Angel Marroquin-Salazar, age 11 (bottom right, tied for third place). “The Hope of Little Bear” by Daphne McDowell, age 11 (see online) was tied for third place.

Make your own *Five Marys* beeswax wraps

At Five Marys Farms in Northern California, Mary and Brian Heffernan raise cattle, sheep and hogs—along with raising a family. With four daughters, life is full of chores and responsibilities on the 1,800-acre ranch, but there’s also plenty of joy and fun. The “Five Marys Family Style” cookbook (Sasquatch Books, \$40), by Mary Heffernan and Seattle author Jess Thomson, shares their hearty homey recipes, seasonal stories and traditions, plus cool DIY projects. These beeswax wraps from the book are a great way to cut down on plastics use for back-to-school lunchboxes, or get started on homemade holiday gifts.

THERE’S NOT A LOT OF IRONING done around the ranch, but when I do use something besides a branding iron, it’s because I’m making beeswax wraps, which are reusable covers for leftovers, sandwiches, and whatever else might need plastic bags or wrap. Made by painting a mixture of beeswax, pine resin and jojoba oil onto cotton fabric, then ironing it in so that the fabric soaks up the mixture, the wraps become waterproof and tacky enough to stick to themselves. They’re a fun family project, and when you have them on hand, you use a lot less plastic and aluminum foil. I make big rounds (about 2 inches larger in diameter than my dinner plates) for storing leftovers, 13-inch squares for wrapping sandwiches, and other various sizes for topping that half-eaten bowl of yogurt, storing the hunk of onion I didn’t use, or covering the leftover sauce I can’t bear to throw out.

This project makes enough wraps for two kitchens—which means it’s perfect if you have a gift to give or if you want to tackle the process with a friend. Start by choosing your fabric, which must be 100 percent cotton to soak up the wax properly, then source the remaining ingredients online. Note that anything that touches the wax, including the bowl you put the wax in and whatever you use to stir the wax mixture, shouldn’t be precious, because the mixture is extremely difficult to remove once it dries.

To use the wraps, simply fold them over the top of a plate or bowl, or around a sandwich (they’re great for catching drips as you eat!), and the heat from your hands makes the layers of the wrap stick together. But since they need to be washed with cold water so the wax doesn’t melt, it’s best not to use them to store raw meat.

Note that the combination of wrap sizes below can be cut from two 1-yard pieces of fabric, but if you use smaller fabric pieces, you may not be able to get all 18 wraps out of them. Either plan your cuts first to be most efficient or buy a little extra fabric just in case. Or only make the sizes that appeal to you most.



Makes at least 18 assorted-size wraps: four 8-inch squares; four 9-inch squares; four 13-inch squares; two 8-inch rounds; two 12-inch rounds; two 11-by-15-inch rectangles.

- 2 cups beeswax pellets
- ¼ cup pine resin powder or crushed pine resin chunks
- 2 teaspoons jojoba oil
- Old mixing bowl
- Medium saucepan
- Old rubber spatula or wooden spoon
- Parchment paper
- Old towel
- Iron
- Trivet or pot holder
- About 2 yards 36-inch-wide assorted 100 percent cotton fabric, washed and dried, trimmed, and cut into desired sizes
- New 2-inch paintbrush (a wooden “chip brush” is fine)
- Olive oil and paper towel, for cleaning
- Scissors

(PCC stocks beeswax pellets and jojoba oil, while pine resin powder is available online.)

First, make the beeswax mixture: Put the pellets, pine resin and jojoba oil in a medium mixing bowl set over a medium saucepan with an inch or so of water in the bottom; the base of the bowl should hover above the water. Place this makeshift double boiler over medium-low heat and cook, stirring frequently with a spatula you don’t mind forever donating to this type of project, until the beeswax and resin have melted completely and the mixture is clear, 15 to 20 minutes, adjusting the heat as needed so the water maintains a bare simmer. (You’ll notice the wax melts before the resin; keep cooking until the resin has melted completely and no longer forms swirls in the beeswax.) Note that you’ll need to either leave the spoon in the bowl as you go or set it on a piece of parchment paper; you don’t want to put the hot wax mixture directly on your kitchen counter.

While the mixture melts, set up the waxing station: Fold an old towel in halves or quarters so it covers a stretch of counter (or better yet, a craft table) about 3 feet by 2 feet. Tear off two 2-footlong pieces of parchment paper and place them on the towel, then tear off four more similar sheets. Place two of the sheets aside, then place two of the sheets on another flat surface, like the counter or the floor, if your kitchen is filling up. (This is where the wax wraps will dry.) Empty the iron of any water, turn off the steam function, and heat to the “high” or “cotton” setting.

Once the wax mixture has melted completely, carefully transfer the double boiler to a trivet or pot holder beside the towel. (The hot water below will keep the wax nice and runny as you work.) Set one of the smaller fabric pieces on top of one of the pieces of parchment on the towel. Dip a clean paintbrush in the wax mixture and paint a thin layer over the entire surface of the fabric, taking care to get the wax all the way to the edges. Top with the second piece of parchment, aligning the layers so no wax creeps out of the parchment (and onto your iron!), and iron thoroughly until you see that the moisture of the wax has melted into the fabric. Carefully remove the top piece of parchment and set it aside, sticky side up, then carefully peel the fabric off the bottom piece of parchment. Wave the fabric around for a moment to cool, then transfer the wax wrap to one of the reserved pieces of parchment to dry. Repeat with the remaining fabric and wax, replacing the top piece of parchment with one of the extras partway through the process if it gets wax on the top side. (You don’t want any wax touching the iron.) Starting with smaller fabric pieces and working up toward larger pieces allows the extra wax on the parchment to be incorporated into new pieces as you go. While you work, you can stack the cooled dry wax wraps somewhere else to make room for new hot wraps on the drying area.

You may wind up with a little of the wax mixture on your fingertips—it comes off easily, but not with water. To remove it, try moistening a paper towel with olive oil and

use it to rub off the wax. The same works with any accidental spills!

Once all the wraps are dry, trim away any wayward strings with scissors. The wraps look best as gifts when they’re still flat, folded neatly, or rolled together in little bundles and tied with string, but to activate the wax in the wraps and make them effectively tacky, you’ll need to scrunch and unscrunch each wrap a few times before using—the heat of your hands will allow them to become sticky like plastic wrap.

Tips and tricks

- The wax will tint your fabrics a slightly darker shade, so pick colors and patterns that will look good a bit darker.
- If you notice the wax mixture seems to be thickening over time, return the double boiler to low heat and bring the water back to a simmer, then stir for a few minutes, until the mixture thins, and resume your work. (You can also stop mid-project and allow the wax to cool in the bowl, then simply reheat it until liquefied when you’re ready to start again.)
- If there are a few wax wraps that seem particularly thick or sticky, transfer some of their wax to another (new) wrap: First, place a fresh piece of fabric between two completed wax wraps. Arrange the fabric sandwich between two pieces of parchment paper, without brushing on additional wax, and iron. The extra wax will transfer to the new fabric. This time, transfer the top and bottom wraps to parchment to dry, and check to make sure the middle layer is completely waxed (and doesn’t show any dry spots). Transfer to parchment to cool, or brush any dry spots with additional wax (or rearrange the fabrics and repeat), re-iron, and let dry. Wax wraps work with a lot less wax than you might think, so following this method will allow you to make more wraps.
- If you want to make wax wraps with pieces of fabric larger than your parchment, fold them in half and iron them folded—the wax still seeps through all of the layers. Make sure there are no dry spots at the fold when you open the wraps.
- Store the wraps at room temperature.
- Wash the wraps in cool or room temperature water with a sponge and regular dish soap, and hang to dry. Always wash your wraps with cold water; hot water will melt or deform the wax.
- As the wraps age with use, you might find their stickiness fades. To renew them, simply layer between parchment, re-iron and cool as instructed, and they’ll be good as new!



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A new legacy for Grand Central Bakery

By Gosia Wozniacka, guest contributor

Grand Central Bakery’s shelves are laden with rustic artisan bread loaves, fragrant cinnamon rolls and its famous jam-mers, all handmade with local ingredients. And the Pacific Northwest company wants it to stay that way forever.

Earlier this year, Grand Central announced it would transition from being a privately held company to a Perpetual Purpose Trust, a type of ownership that would preserve its independence and unique character in perpetuity. As a non-charitable trust, the bakery can never be sold, and it’s run based on values, not profit. The transition will be complete by fall.

Grand Central is one of just a handful of mission-driven food businesses that are pioneering new ownership models as the basis of their succession plans. In addition to the non-charitable trust structure, a few food companies have also transitioned to employee stock ownership programs.

“We explored multiple options, from outright sale to employee ownership, but we found that a Perpetual Purpose Trust would be the least disruptive and allow us to preserve what we’ve put a lot of time and effort into building,” said Ben Davis, Grand Central Bakery’s president and the son of the company’s founder, Gwen Bassetti.

A baking revolution

Grand Central’s origins are baked into Northwest food history. Officially founded in 1989 in Seattle, its roots go back into the early ‘70s when Bassetti launched a sandwich shop with friends in Seattle’s Pioneer Square Building. She later relaunched as a bakery, inspired by Italian baker Carol Field, with Grand Central featuring European-style breads and rustic pastries. Everything served at the bakery was made from scratch with locally sourced ingredients—revolutionary for a time when sliced “bread” in plastic bags was the norm.

“It was so popular, they had to give out ration cards for the bread,” said current CEO Claire Randall.

Within a year, Bassetti opened a wholesale production facility south of downtown Seattle and, when her son moved to Portland in 1993, the first bakery in Portland. Today, Grand Central operates seven bakery-cafes in Portland and four in Seattle, employing 370 people. The company plans to open a new bakery next year in Hillsboro, Ore. Its loaves are carried at all PCC markets.

The small chain is known for its focus on sustainability and the regional food system. In 2018, it became a Certified B Corporation, meaning that it measures its impact on employees, the community and the environment—including the amount of waste diverted from landfills, the percentage of purchases from local vendors, and the percent of employees who move into higher paid positions.

Choosing a legacy

Given the mission-driven focus, it’s no surprise Grand Central owners fretted over their succession plan. Most businesses are sold or inherited, but they didn’t want to go that route because an outright sale could lead to new owners drastically changing course, pushing for rapid growth at the expense of quality, and reselling the bakery again—creating disruption for employees, vendors and the community, said Randall.

“We really wanted to preserve our mission and our way of doing business,” she said.

The Perpetual Purpose Trust, it turns out, would do just that. The trust holds all the voting shares and profits are reinvested in the company and used to further its



mission. The non-charitable trust structure does not provide a tax advantage—it’s established to benefit the company’s mission rather than a person.

Companies owned by such a trust establish a legally binding purpose and objectives—a kind of Constitution—to guide operations and decision making long after the original owners have retired or moved on.

Grand Central’s objectives include operating the company for the benefit of its stakeholders and community (customers, vendors, employees, investors, and non-profit partners), maintaining quality, craft, and delicious food, providing employees with fair compensation and benefits, fostering equity and diversity and strengthening the regional supply chain.

The trust will be overseen by an independent board charged with ensuring that the company stays on track and fulfills these objectives. Randall will continue as CEO. This summer, the bakery chain planned to launch a fundraiser in hopes of attracting impact investors for its future initiatives. They will earn dividends but won’t get a seat on the board or a say in how the company is run.

Maximizing mission

The ability to transition to a trust has existed for over 100 years, though not many companies in the U.S. have taken advantage of it. The model is more common in Europe,

said Sarah Joannides, managing director of Alternative Ownership Advisors, a consulting group and subsidiary of Organically Grown Company helping businesses around the country transition to trust ownership.

Few companies have used it in the U.S., said Joannides, because most business owners are concerned with maximizing wealth, then selling the business and taking the wealth with them.

On the other hand, “Mission driven leaders who have put their blood, sweat and equity into the business might be concerned about selling to somebody who may have a very different vision. They...are thinking more about their legacy,” Joannides said.

There are a few challenges of becoming a trust, she said. It’s complicated and few lawyers are familiar with how to set up the trust. Unlike in a traditional sale, the owners don’t see a quick payout. (In the case of Grand Central, the owners are keeping about half of the non-voting shares and those will be paid out over time, said Randall.) Also, just a few dozen companies have used the trust ownership structure, so it’s unclear if any other challenges will come up.

Randall, the bakery’s CEO, also said the trust structure won’t mitigate the disruptions caused by the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, including skyrocketing ingredient costs and staffing shortages. But, she added, “I’m hoping [transitioning to a trust] will

provide some hope and a sense of relief to our employees and the community.”

New models

Several other food companies are already owned by a Perpetual Purpose Trust. They include the Organically Grown Company, an independent wholesale distributor of organic produce (and PCC supplier) based in Portland, which transitioned to the trust model in 2018. Firebrand, a mission-driven bakery in Oakland, California, and Local Ocean Seafoods, a restaurant and fish market in Newport, Oregon, have also transitioned to being owned by a trust.

Other food companies have sought to turn ownership to their workers. King Arthur Flour, a Vermont company that sells flours, baking supplies and equipment, became 100% employee-owned in 2004. The company’s more than 300 employees are eligible for the Employee Stock Ownership Plan as long as they work for one year and log more than 800 hours on the job. In April 2020, the Oregon-based whole-grain foods manufacturer Bob’s Red Mill went the same route. The companies say the program motivates employees to be more productive since they directly benefit from their company’s success.

Gosia Wozniacka is a senior staff reporter with Civil Eats. She lives in Portland, Oregon.

Is breakfast really the most important meal of the day?

By Erin Cazel, guest contributor

Ahh, fall—crisp air, crunchy leaves, pumpkin-everything—and, for many of us, the return of harried back-to-school schedules. With so much on the to-do list, eating breakfast can seem like just one more thing to stress about. Is eating breakfast really so important? If so, what are some ideal foods for the start of the day, especially for those extra-rushed mornings? And what specific breakfast strategies can best support the little humans living among us, from toddlers to teens?

With what we know about human physiology, it turns out there really is sound science behind those traditional lectures about eating a good breakfast. Fortunately, there are quick and affordable and very appetizing ways to fit it into a morning routine.

Adrenal hormones

Both lifestyle and diet habits make a difference in how the body handles stress, and breakfast is a key player in the process. To set the stage—I mean, table—for breakfast, allow me to first introduce you to your adrenals. These small, triangular-shaped glands sit on top of your kidneys and secrete several hormones that help balance the body's response to stress. When there is a perceived threat, such as a physical or psychological stressor (or perhaps the jarring sound of the morning's alarm), a part of the brain called the hypothalamus initiates the secretion of adrenal hormones. Cortisol is one important adrenal hormone that impacts our energy levels, mental alertness, mood and immune health.

Even without the jolt of the alarm in the morning, cortisol is regulated by the body's circadian rhythm and naturally peaks between 5 a.m. and 6 a.m. Cortisol mobilizes the release of sugar into the blood and channels it toward the brain, contributing to our sense of wakefulness in the morning. Imagine the way a toddler wakes up immediately ready to take on the day—you can thank their well-functioning adrenals for that whirlwind of energy! If, by contrast, you feel like you can't operate without your favorite caffeinated beverage in the morning (caffeine also stimulates cortisol release), this might be a sign that your adrenal glands are working overtime and need some rest and support.

Looking at the typically hectic modern schedule, it's no wonder our adrenals stay so busy. Unfortunately, chronic cortisol secretion has many negative effects throughout the body and is associated with an increased risk for a vast buffet of chronic diseases, including stomach ulcers, GERD, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, immune suppression, thyroid disorders, fertility problems, irritable bowel syndrome and other digestive conditions, depression and anxiety.

Nutrient-dense breakfast

Because our adrenals are the most active at the start of the day, a low-glycemic, nutrient-dense breakfast with high-fiber carbohydrates and protein can go a long way in supporting these busy glands and help restore a balanced stress response. Children especially benefit from a strong, nutritious start to their day. Not only are their bodies growing, but their brains are constantly engaged in discovering the world around them, and they're hard at work adapting to various social situations. Supplying key adrenal nutrients for the children in your life helps them navigate this daily trifecta of physical, mental, and emotional stressors.



Start the school day off right with a quick, nutrient-dense breakfast like these muffin-tin chipotle egg bites or vanilla baked oatmeal (recipes below.) Photo by Suchita Kalele.

To ease up on day-of preparations, consider breaking out your muffin tin and freezing batches of grab-and-go breakfast items packed with some essential adrenal nutrients, such as the chipotle egg bites with black beans and red bell peppers or vanilla baked oatmeal with dates and hemp seeds below. Smoothies are another great way to incorporate many adrenal-supportive foods—throw in a spoonful of your favorite nut butter or Greek yogurt and some chia seeds for a well-rounded smorgasbord of vitamins and minerals.

Because the adrenals are integrated with the brain, they also respond to lifestyle patterns: practicing good sleep hygiene (going to bed early and steering clear of screens before bed), incorporating times of joyful movement, engaging in breathing and mindfulness exercises, and cultivating laughter all do their part in supporting adrenal health. If this all seems daunting, keep in mind that small, consistent steps over time will add up. Take a moment to feel the weight of your body in your chair, breathe deeply and smile: you're on your way, and a sound breakfast helps set the right path.

Chipotle Egg Bites

Preparation time: 30 minutes
Yield: 12 egg bites

- 6 large eggs
- ¼ cup milk of choice
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground chipotle pepper or chili powder blend
- 1 cup shredded cheddar or Mexican blend cheese
- ¼ cup sliced green onion
- 1 cup diced red bell pepper
- ¾ cup cooked black beans (about half a can)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a muffin tin with liners (the “If You Care” parchment paper liners are nonstick lifesavers) or lightly grease with oil. Combine the

green onion, bell pepper and black beans. Evenly distribute into the muffin tins. Whisk together the eggs, milk, salt, chipotle pepper and shredded cheese. Pour over the veggies in the muffin tins. Bake for 20-24 minutes, or until the eggs are just set and the top is golden. The egg bites will puff up while cooking but deflate once they're removed from the oven. Serve with whole grain toast and sliced avocado. Once cooled, egg bites can be refrigerated for 4 days or frozen for 2 months.

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Vanilla Baked Oatmeal with Dates and Hemp Seeds

- 1 ½ cups milk of choice
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup maple syrup
- ¼ cup butter or coconut oil, melted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 ½ cups old-fashioned (thick) rolled oats
- ½ cup hulled hemp seeds
- 1 cup chopped dates
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a muffin tin with liners. Whisk together the milk, eggs, maple syrup and vanilla extract. In a separate bowl, mix together the oats, hemp seeds, dates, baking powder and salt. Stir into the egg mixture until evenly moist. Distribute into the muffin liners and bake for 20 to 30 minutes.

(Note: Alternately, the oatmeal can be baked in a 9x9 pan as shown above.)

Erin Cazel is pursuing a master's in Nutrition at Bastyr University. Radical hospitality is Erin's life passion—she loves gathering community around a table filled with food and conversation, and cares deeply about using foods to nurture the body, heart and mind.

Good sources of essential adrenal nutrients

- Protein: fish, meats, legumes, nuts and seeds, whole grains
- Folate: green leafy vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds, oranges, fortified cereal grains
- Niacin (B3): dairy foods, eggs, nuts and seeds, corn, lean meats and fish
- Pantothenic Acid (B5): cremini and shitake mushrooms, cauliflower, avocado, broccoli, sweet potato, corn and many other vegetables
- Vitamin C: many fruits and vegetables, citrus fruits, bell peppers, strawberries, melons, spinach, cabbage, rose hips
- Magnesium: legumes, green vegetables, quinoa and other whole grains, nuts and seeds

Source: Bastyr Center for Natural Health, Adrenal Support Handout

PCC COOKING CLASSES

Learn more useful recipes with a PCC breakfast cooking class!

FAMILY FALL BREAKFAST
Sign up at pccmarkets.com/r/6234.

KIDS BAKE APPLES FOR BREAKFAST
Sign up at pccmarkets.com/r/6235.



[NEWS BITES]

Beer, yeast and recycling

Brewer's yeast used to make beer is typically discarded once it's no longer needed. Sometimes, though, the leftover yeast is mixed into livestock feed as a source of protein and vitamins. Now, there may be even more reason to continue this practice, according to findings by a team of scientists with the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Warren Wilson College, (WWC) and Asheville Sustainability Research (ASR), LLC of Ashville, North Carolina. Laboratory results the team published in the journal *Frontiers in Animal Science* suggest that using leftover brewer's yeast as a feed additive may benefit the environment by helping cows belch less methane into the air as a greenhouse gas that contributes to global climate change. (ars.usda.gov)

Bluebird Grain honored

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Seattle District 2022 Rural Small Business of the Year is Bluebird Grain Farms in Winthrop, Washington. Founded in 2004 by Brooke and Sam Lucy, Bluebird Grain Farms is a certified organic producer and processor, specializing in ancient grains, fresh-milled flour and whole-grain handcrafted blends. What started as a grassroots business venture to provide organic ancient grains to their local community has expanded well beyond their small rural town to become an award-winning, vertically integrated, value-added business that supports eight employees, a regional network of grain producers, and serves more than 19,000 customers. ([SBA.gov](https://sba.gov))

Parks and plastic

The U.S. Interior Department, which helps oversee the country's national parks, says it is planning to phase out single-use plastics on its land and facilities by 2032. The agency would be tasked with finding alternative materials to disposable plastics, such as cutlery, bags, cups, bottles, straws and food containers, it announced in honor of World Ocean Day. Suggested alternatives include paper, bioplastics, composite, reusable cloth, glass, aluminum, stainless steel, or any other compostable or recyclable materials. ([NPR.org](https://npr.org))

Vashon solar energy

As it becomes more urgent to address the effects of climate change, the Solid Waste Division in King County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks is working to provide recycling and waste disposal services throughout the county while reducing its carbon footprint and overall environmental impacts. At the Vashon Recycling and Transfer Station, a recently completed solar project will help the division reach its climate goals,

providing energy-neutral recycling and garbage service to Vashon Island residents for years to come. This spring, the Solid Waste Division worked with local installer Western Solar to build the new array—a connected network of 348 solar panels—on previously unused land next to the transfer station. This new facility will generate about 172,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per year, the equivalent of 24 single-family homes. ([KingCountyGreen.com](https://kingcountygreen.com))

Juice lead limits

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued draft action levels for lead in single-strength (ready to drink) apple juice and other single-strength juices and juice blends. This action is intended to reduce the potential for negative health effects from dietary exposure to lead, and supports the agency's Closer to Zero action plan that sets forth the FDA's science-based approach to reducing exposure to toxic elements in foods. The FDA estimates that establishing a 10 parts per billion action level could result in as much as a 46% reduction in exposure to lead from apple juice in children. ([FDA.gov](https://fda.gov))

California water woes

Decades of unregulated agricultural pumping combined with a warming climate and prolonged droughts have wrung California dry and left a massive water crisis. A landmark law, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which was passed in 2014 and will be fully implemented over the next 20 years, is supposed to cut groundwater withdrawal and stabilize water levels. But a report recently released indicates that as local agencies try to figure out how to achieve that balance, some of the tools being proposed—including fees, limits on pumping and water trading programs—may harm historically marginalized farmers and small-scale farms. ([Civileats.com](https://civileats.com))

Pesticide battle

A powerful contingent of agricultural and produce grower groups has filed the latest salvo in a years-long battle over the pesticide chlorpyrifos, seeking to reverse a new rule banning the chemical from use in U.S. food production. Calling chlorpyrifos a “pest control tool that is critical” for growing crops, the coalition of 19 state and U.S. food and agricultural groups and one chemical company on May 24 filed their opening brief against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The move comes after health and environmental advocates successfully forced the EPA last year to announce a ban on the use of chlorpyrifos in farming due to scientific evidence showing the chemical damages children's brains. ([TheNewLede.org](https://thenewlede.org))

Canada plastics ban

In an effort to address the growing plastic pollution crisis, the Canadian government announced final rules to phase out plastic grocery bags, cutlery, straws and other single-use products. Under the finalized rules, which were first proposed in October 2020 as part of the government's plan to achieve “zero plastic waste” by 2030, Canadian businesses will have until December of this year to stop producing or importing six categories of single-use plastic: grocery bags, cutlery, straws, dishware, stirrers, and the six-pack rings used to hold together beer cans and other beverages. To give businesses enough time to use up their existing stock and adapt, a ban on the sale of these products will not go into effect until December 2023. ([Grist.org](https://grist.org))

Skagit farms preserved

Skagit County's Farmland Legacy Program protected 772 acres of farmland in 2021 through its voluntary farmland preservation program—now in its 25th year of protecting Skagit County farmland. The Farmland Legacy program compensates agricultural landowners for extinguishing unused residential development rights (Landowners retain ownership and continue farming. Future building is limited to ag-related structures.) Another 173 acres of farmland were protected in 2021 using the Agricultural Lands Preservation code, an option available to landowners looking to separate a homesite from existing farmland. ([SkagitCounty.net](https://skagitcounty.net))

Pulse export shortages

High demand for pulses and tight supplies combined with supply chain snarls have led to shortages, the leader of the USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council says. “What usually would normally have taken a month to six weeks to get to a destination in Europe and the Indian Subcontinent now is taking three to four months,” Tim McGreevy, council chief executive officer, told the Capital Press. McGreevy expects exports to be off by upward of 40% from an average year; roughly 60% of U.S. peas, 65% of lentils and 50% of dry beans and chickpeas are exported. ([CapitalPress.com](https://capitalpress.com))

Farmworker health care

A health nonprofit in Hood River, Oregon, is bringing medicine straight to farmworkers. This year, One Community Health launched La Clinica, a 35-foot RV that takes health services on the road, including to those who prune and pick cherries and pears in the Columbia Gorge. The clinic on wheels was born out of grants intended to lessen the impact of the coronavirus on communities, but administrators consider it a permanent way to make health care more accessible. ([GoodFruit.com](https://goodfruit.com))

Clif organics grant

Clif Bar & Co. has announced that it will gift a \$1 million endowment to the University of Wisconsin-Madison to further the study and advancement of organic agriculture. The endowment will specifically support the work of Erin Silva, PhD, a professor at the university's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and expert in organic agricultural research. Since 2015, Clif Bar has been making annual endowment gifts to land-grant institutions in an effort to expand organic agriculture research. ([FoodBusinessNews.net](https://foodbusinessnews.net))

Edamame options

Seven new sources of edamame soybeans are now available for use in breeding commercial varieties that can resist insects and disease, according to Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) scientists. Most edamame eaten in the United States is imported frozen from China and other countries in East Asia. However, American consumers' increasing interest in the potential health benefits of eating edamame has prompted some growers to explore producing the vegetable crop domestically, raising the potential for fresh market sales in addition to frozen ones. ([USDA.gov](https://usda.gov))

“Forever chemicals” law

Colorado's Democratic governor, Jared Polis, signed legislation that many are calling the nation's “most comprehensive” state law on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as PFAS or “forever chemicals.” Under the bipartisan bill HB22-1345, manufacturers will have until January 1, 2024 to phase out PFAS from a wide range of products including carpets, furniture, cosmetics, food packaging, and fluids used in oil and gas production. The substances will still be allowed in cookware, but only with a disclosure label that directs consumers to a website explaining why PFAS were intentionally added—usually because of their nonstick and water-repellent properties. ([Grist.org](https://grist.org))

Wastewater treatment

Millions of gallons of wastewater from homes and businesses from Seattle to parts of south Snohomish County are treated at King County's West Point Treatment Plant every day, with the city's combined stormwater/wastewater sewer system also flowing in. Right now, around two dozen major construction projects are underway—part of a series of upgrades totaling more than \$800 million over the next 10 years. The projects will bolster the treatment plant against more frequent, more severe storms forecast to come with climate change. ([King5.com](https://king5.com))

The best fruits & vegetables to buy organic

By Rebekah Denn, Illustration by Jessie Moore

Strawberries, spinach and certain leafy greens top the 2022 “Dirty Dozen” list of conventional fruits and vegetables that showed the highest level of pesticide residues in tests by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The annual list compiled by the nonprofit Environmental Working Group (EWG) is paired with a “Clean Fifteen” list showing the lowest levels of pesticide residues. The 2022 Clean Fifteen list is led by avocados, sweet corn and pineapple.

The Dirty Dozen list is popular but can be controversial, in part because the presence of a pesticide on a sample, or the number of different pesticides found, doesn’t always correlate with how toxic they might be.

Critics note that most pesticide residues found in the federal tests fall within the legal limits allowed by the U.S. government. Advocates counter that legal does not automatically equal safe, especially when it comes to infants and children and accumulated long-term exposures. And nutritionists generally agree that the known benefits of eating fruits and vegetables, even those on the Dirty Dozen list, far outweigh the known drawbacks.

What, then, is the purpose of the information? EWG recommends it as a tool for guidance and encourages seeking out organic versions of the “Dirty Dozen” fruits and vegetables rather than conventional versions if all organic is not possible. Knowing that organic fruits and vegetables often cost more, though, the agency also suggests prioritizing foods from the Clean Fifteen list if organics are not an option. (Washing the produce would not improve the results; the federal tests that EWG compiles are conducted after scrubbing and [if relevant] peeling the samples.)

While organic does prohibit the use of most synthetic pesticides (think glyphosate), organic does not mean pesticide free. USDA organic certification does allow the use of specific pesticides, chiefly ones derived from natural sources (e.g., neem oil). It allows a discrete list of synthetic pesticides only after review and approval by the National Organic Standards Board. The producer must also exhaust preventive management practices before utilizing one of the approved exceptions.

These restrictions translate into a growing body of evidence that, as one journal article put it, “an organic diet may reduce exposure to a range of pesticides in children and adults.”

More than 70% of conventional Dirty Dozen produce tested by USDA and the FDA contained pesticide residues, but less than 30% of the conventional Clean Fifteen produce did, EWG said in a press release.

By nature, the picture is also incomplete, as the tests do not look for residues of all common pesticides.

“For example, glyphosate is the most heavily used pesticide in the U.S., and it can be found in high levels on several grains and beans, such as oats and chickpeas. But the USDA has not analyzed these crops for glyphosate,” according to the EWG report. “This is troubling, because tests commissioned by EWG found almost three-fourths of popular oat-based food samples, including many popular with children, had

pesticide residue levels higher than what EWG scientists consider protective of children’s health.”

The bulk of the new Dirty Dozen and Clean Fifteen lists were unchanged from last year.

Mangoes, watermelon and sweet potatoes joined the Clean Fifteen, replacing eggplant, broccoli and cauliflower. This reflected, in part, a lack of data: The EWG noted in its pesticides report that broccoli, cauliflower and eggplant had not been tested by the USDA “in six, seven and 14 years, respectively.” (Cauliflower ranked just below sweet potatoes on the 2022 list.)

In the largest shakeup in recent years, kale rejoined the Dirty Dozen list in 2019 after a long hiatus. It’s now ranked #3, paired with collards and mustard greens.

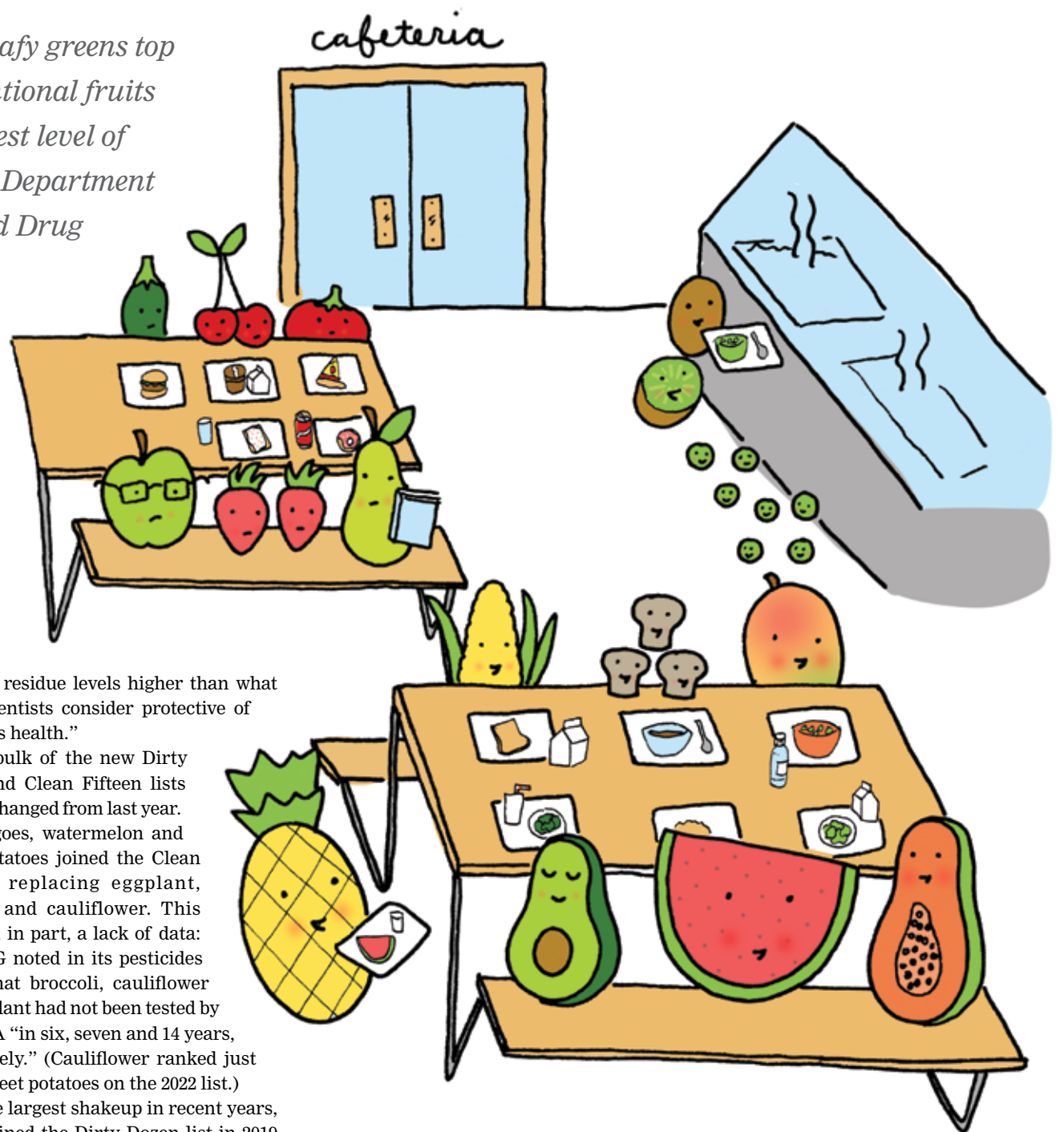
The current list draws from nearly 45,000 samples taken between 2002 and 2020, according to EWG. Future lists will have one important difference: In 2021, after years of advocacy from EWG and many other organizations, the FDA banned the use of chlorpyrifos, a pesticide linked to childhood and prenatal brain damage, on crops grown for food. (It had been a common agricultural pesticide.) PCC supported that ban.

Any chlorpyrifos that shows up on future tests would reflect violations of the ban, according to EWG. But that doesn’t necessarily mean dramatic changes to the list’s order.

“We consider six different metrics in identifying which fruits and vegetables end up on the Dirty Dozen list, including the number of pesticides detected on the crop and the presence of multiple pesticides on a single sample,” EWG toxicologist Alexis Temkin said in an email.

“So while chlorpyrifos is a very toxic pesticide and had previously been found on some items on the dirty dozen, we don’t expect the ban to drive major changes in the list since those fruits and vegetables have many different pesticides detected on them and the USDA does not samples all fruits and vegetables every year.”

The key message from EWG’s standpoint: “Everyone should eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, no matter how they’re grown. But shoppers have the right to know what potentially toxic substances are found on these foods, so they can make the best choices for their families, given budgetary and other concerns.”



Other findings from the EWG report (all refer to conventional produce):

- The pesticide most frequently detected on collards, mustard greens and kale is DCPA—sold under the brand name Dacthal—which is classified by the Environmental Protection Agency as a possible human carcinogen and which was banned by the European Union in 2009.
- More than 90% of samples of strawberries, apples, cherries, spinach,

nectarines and grapes tested positive for residues of two or more pesticides.

- As in previous years, several pepper samples contained concerning levels of pesticides that can harm the nervous system, including oxamyl, acephate and chlorpyrifos: carbamate and organophosphate insecticides banned from use on some U.S. crops and entirely in the European Union.

Choose organics when you can, but if you need to choose keep these EWG guidelines in mind:

THE DIRTY DOZEN

- Strawberries
- Spinach
- Kale, Collard & Mustard greens
- Nectarines
- Apples
- Grapes
- Bell & Hot peppers
- Cherries
- Peaches
- Pears
- Celery
- Tomatoes

THE CLEAN 15

- Avocados
- Sweet corn
- Pineapple
- Onions
- Papaya
- Sweet peas (frozen)
- Asparagus
- Honeydew melon
- Kiwi
- Cabbage
- Mushrooms
- Cantaloupe
- Mangoes
- Watermelon
- Sweet potatoes