

the Localist

CHICO NATURAL FOODS COOPERATIVE / QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

BABA FRESH FARM LIVING WAGE ROUND UP CO-OP MONTH & MORE



FALL
— 2017 —
ISSUE 2

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CHICO NATURAL
FOODS COOPERATIVE**

FALL IS BACK!



Liza Tedesco
GM

Summer can be a slow time in Chico. College students head home for the season, folks who remain in town seem to move more lackadaisically, and those who are able to escape the heat do so in the mountains or at the coast. In fact, my daughter and I embarked on an amazing journey ourselves. With the enormous support of our Board of Directors and store employees, I was able to take a sabbatical and backpack through seven countries in eight weeks. It was nothing short of miraculous, and I am overwhelmed with gratitude to share in this amazing experience with my daughter.

The Co-op has been keeping busy during Chico's slow season. If you've been in the store in the last month, you'll have noticed that the sales floor has been reset and rearranged. Bulk food has been moved up front, most of our "dinner items" have been clustered near the back, and we've opened up a spot near the cheese and meats to stack full cases of products on sale. While it may take a couple of visits to regain your bearings, we are confident that this new layout is more intuitive, better utilizes the Co-op's space, and provides a superior shopping experience for everyone.

The Co-op is now renting office space across the street! We have an administrative office at 829 Main Street, which will house our Marketing, Human Resources, Accounting, and Sustainability employees (not to mention yours truly). Renting out a new office has freed up space in the back of the store for additional product and equipment storage, and allowed us to move our employee break room into the store's (air-conditioned) upstairs. I am personally very excited for the opportunities that this new arrangement will allow for the Co-op.

We've also been hard at work on preparing this, our new quarterly newsletter. Inside, you'll find lovely pictures from a visit to F.R.E.S.H. Farms, exciting news about our community giving programs, glimpses into the inner workings and decision making processes of the Co-op, and so much more. I hope you enjoy reading the newsletter as much as we enjoyed putting it together, and I hope you love shopping at the Co-op as much as we love working here.

All the best,

-Liza.

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LIVING WAGE PROGRAM

One of the key components of our Co-op's mission is to ensure fair wages, provide opportunities for all employees to improve skills and abilities, promote equal opportunities, and provide a safe and healthy workplace.

Toward that end, the Co-op has implemented a **Living Wage Program** on January 1, 2017, which outlines strategic adjustments to support the staff and the Co-op's continued growth and prosperity.

We made these changes because:

1. CNFC builds healthy communities. The people who choose to work at the Co-op constitute a vital community; one without which the Co-op would not remain operational. It is important to invest in the people who work here to keep that community thriving and financially healthy, through benefits and discounts, and by creating a generous yet accountable culture.
2. Seeking to keep ahead of the Chico market. Our wage scale was in line with the Chico market for our entry level positions. It is our goal to pay more than the market and more than minimum wage, making the Co-op a financially attractive place to work.
3. Our entry level wage needed to be better. For the past five years, the Co-op has been able to offer an entry-level wage \$.25 - \$.50 higher than



the California minimum wage. However, \$.25 - \$.50 above minimum wage is still lower than Chico's current living wage (\$11.35 per hour based on the National Cooperative Grocer's Living Wage Calculator).

4. Personnel costs are rising. With the minimum wage being adjusted annually over the next five years from \$10 to \$15 per hour; a 50% cost increase for entry level wages. The wage scale will need to increase annually to keep in line with those changes and we want to be methodical, fair, ahead of the market, and transparent.

5. We want to be one of the best places to work in Chico!

We also regrouped our organization chart, creating a strategic leadership team concentrated on the Co-op's growth and development and created an Operations Director position to focus on department support and storewide efficiencies. Finally, we changed the annual review system to include a more positive and engaging process.

We intend to create a stronger workplace culture as a result of these changes. We want all staff to come to work well trained, excited to meet the challenges of each day, inspired to learn, do, and contribute, and go home fulfilled by the work they do and the wages they earn.

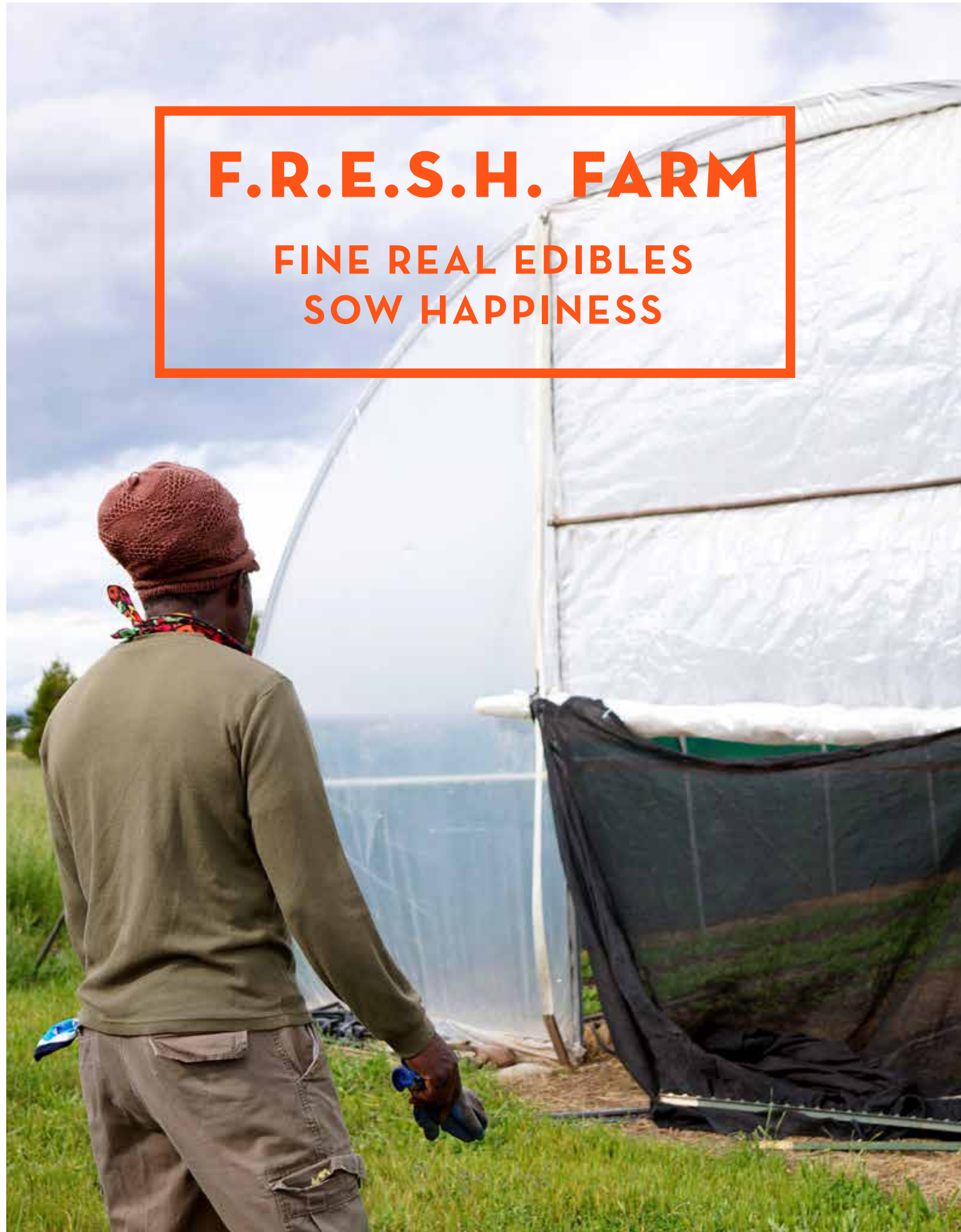
As a first step in the plan, we adjusted the wage scale, increasing our entry level positions to meet the \$11.35 per hour living wage after the 90 introductory period. We also increased all pay groups across the board!



Holly Riggs
H.R. Director

F.R.E.S.H. FARM

FINE REAL EDIBLES
SOW HAPPINESS



Baba and Mharia Ross-Walcott, owners of **FRESH Farm**, know that that eating local, organic food is one of the keys to an amazing existence. Their dedication to growing fine, whole food manifests itself in undeniably delicious and nutritious produce that can support and sustain the lucky souls that get to experience it. The land, too, is preserved by the conscientious practices of these dedicated local producers. Health and happiness abounds from every corner of FRESH Farm.

Baba Ross-Walcott has a life-long attachment to farming, having grown up watching his grandfather work the fertile hills of western Jamaica—growing yams, bananas, and plantains. Baba has a passion for the simple good life, and he wants to share it. The Ross-Walcotts have turned their acre of land off Eaton Road into a prospering farm where they grow a variety of items, from Scotch Bonnet peppers to their healing and relaxing Holy Basil tea. Once you try anything grown at FRESH, you'll understand the meaning behind its name: Fine Real Edibles Sow Happiness.



**“F.R.E.S.H. IS HOW
I GIVE BACK TO
MY COMMUNITY”**

-BABA ROSS-WALCOTT



A photograph of a man and a woman sitting at a table outdoors during sunset. The man, on the right, is wearing a cap and glasses, and is feeding a piece of cake to the woman on the left with a fork. On the table is a large cake, a bottle of wine, and two glasses. Bicycles are parked in the background. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of the setting sun.

#TBT

The cooler weather reminds us of that time Karen Goodwin and Peter Hollingsworth enjoyed a bike picnic for two catered by the Co-op. The Chico streets can sure look sweet.

STORE → → → → ← ← ← ← RESET



August was a month of big changes at the Co-op. We began renting a new office space across the street, which now houses several of our administrative employees. The new addition enabled us to rearrange our breakroom and equipment storage, freeing up quite a bit of space in the back of the store. The extra back stock will allow us to receive larger orders and offer even more great deals and lower prices on select products.

The more obvious changes made this summer were on our sales floor. Our Operations staff, with support from National Cooperative Grocers and UNFI (our primary distributor), totally restructured the layout of the store. Bulk bins were moved to the front, body care and supplements were moved away from the hot bar, and cold drinks paired with prepared food in our Grab and Go cases. Almost everything in the store that wasn't physically attached to the building (freezers, produce cases, etc.) was moved during our big reset.

All the changes were made very purposefully. The new product placement has improved the flow of the store. We've put products that "go together" closer together in the store, making for an intuitive, convenient experience for all our shoppers. We've also opened up more floor space to stack whole cases of product, making it even easier for you to take advantage of the special discounts we offer on any whole case bought at the Co-op!

Your Co-op's staff put a lot of thought, planning, and hard work into making this new layout a reality, and we are immensely proud of the result. We know that it can be temporarily disorienting to adjust to a seemingly new store, and we encourage you to ask an employee if you have any questions at all about where your favorite products may have moved to. Also, don't hesitate to give us feedback on the new layout through our customer comment cards in-store or via our website at www.chiconaturalfoods.coop.

CHICO NATURAL FOODS COOPERATIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

DATES CHANGED

The Board of Directors recently changed the time of year for our annual membership meetings and Board of Directors election. The time of year specified for annual membership meetings and elections has changed from the 4th quarter to the 2nd quarter.

The next annual ownership meeting will take place as planned on Friday, October 6, 2017 beginning 5:30 at the Park Tower Pavilion (2040 Park Ave). The following annual ownership meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 6, 2018. The Co-op is making this change so that year-end financial reporting at the annual ownership meeting is shared earlier in the year.

Changing the time when the elections are conducted will facilitate an adjustment of the month elected directors begin their terms. The term of a newly elected director will no longer begin in January,

which is a month when there are often revisions to the Co-op's annual budget projections drafted by management and provided for the Board's review. The routine transition of directors will now occur during spring, a time when there is no Board review of time-sensitive budget information on the schedule.

Please visit our website to read the full legal statement.



Scott Richman
Board Treasurer



ROUNDUP

DONATIONS PROGRAM

The Co-op is so immensely proud of our Round Up program. We hope you'll consider supporting these wonderful organizations in the upcoming months:

So far this year, our shoppers have donated over \$20,000 to support local organizations!

Our September Partner:

CHICO PEACE AND JUSTICE CENTER

The Chico Peace & Justice Center is a 503c nonprofit dedicated to "Building a more peaceful and equitable society by educating for peace and social justice, motivating for sustained commitment, and mobilizing for peace and justice" in an effort to bring an end to violent conflict among nations and individuals. The CPJC is community-driven organization that's run largely by volunteers. Round Up funds will be directed towards the Career Builders, Peace Gardening 101, and Wheel of Integral Non-Violence programs.

Our October Partner:

CO-OP COMMUNITY FUND

The Cooperative Community Fund is a permanent endowment established and directed by the Chico Natural Foods Cooperative which awards grants to support projects and the work of community organizations in Butte County. Through collaborative grant making, the Cooperative Community Fund seeks to strengthen the community by emphasizing projects and activities that promote sustainable agriculture, food nutrition and education, and food security. All funds raised this month will go towards growing our Community Fund.



STAFF PICK STEPH TERHUNE COOL HAUS ICE CREAM SANDWICHES



OCTOBER IS CO-OP MONTH



Lauren Kennedy
Board Member

Since 1930, October has been National Cooperative month, a time for cooperative supporters to come together and celebrate in solidarity. According to the National Cooperative Business Association, there are approximately 40,000 cooperative businesses in the United States, collectively generating \$514 billion dollars in revenue and \$25 billion in wages.

The theme of this year's Co-op Month is "Co-ops Commit." At Chico Natural Foods Co-op, we commit to a lot: supporting local producers, giving back to the community, offering employees rewarding and sustainable work. We have committed these efforts into our very policies and governing documents. Our Board of Directors is committed to a healthy governance that ensures the co-op can serve its community for a long time to come.

"Commit" can also mean to "perpetrate," and this also has relevance when we consider our history. Our co-op grew out of the Bay Area "Food Conspiracy." This movement, begun in the late 60's, was so-named to both make-fun of and take power back from those in political power who labeled anyone organizing to protect the rights of people and planet as part of a vast leftist conspiracy.

What people were really doing was taking direct control of something at the heart of their own lives, the quality and type of food they were sourcing. It was democracy in action. This remains, in my opinion, the strongest commitment of co-ops today.

So happy National Cooperative Month! Thanks for committing to be part of a legacy that takes direct ownership of the things we care for and count on the most!

The Co-op's Annual **OWNER MEETING**

FRIDAY
OCT 6TH

Chico
ARC
PAVILION
2040 Park Ave

ADMISSION *Free!*

6-9 PM



DINNER PRESENTATIONS COMMUNITY

Gather with fellow owners, Co-op staff, and the Board of Directors for an evening of Co-op celebration! During the meeting we will review our annual report and discuss the future of YOUR store. Call the store for more information (530) 891-1713.





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**CHICO NATURAL FOODS
COOPERATIVE**

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