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Just a Couple of Nuts

By Laura Coffee, Storekeeper, Graphics and Branding Coordinator, Co-op Owner

In 1844 the Rochdale Society, possibly the first ever successful Cooperative venture, was founded to provide affordable food to local craftspeople in Rochdale, England. It became a popular and widespread business model. One hundred and twenty-six years later a buying club was started at a small meeting, convened by a CMU student, in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

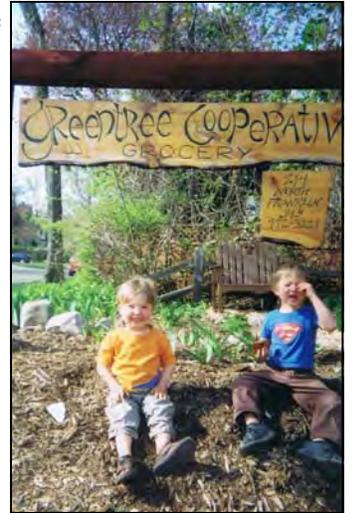
It was a collaborative effort and at first the only items ordered were vegetables, which were purchased from the Grand Rapids Farmer's Market. After an exciting mishap involving late night partying and a misplaced coat, the group decided they needed to make things more official and the Mt. Pleasant People's Food Co-op was formed. Later a small distribution space was found on Adams St and bulk items became available.

The space wasn't suitable in the long run though, mainly because it lacked heat. The Co-op then experimented with neighborhood based distribution, and a student organized concert was held to benefit the Co-op. It not only provided the Co-op with some much needed capital, but led to the formation of the Wheatland Music Organization!

It wasn't until 1977 that we, then the Mt. Pleasant Food Co-op, moved into our current space. (The name wasn't changed to GreenTree until 1991.) At that time the front half of the building was an apartment, and the only entrance to the Co-op was on the right side, where the greenhouse is today. It would be another 15 years before we could expand to fill the entire building. And now after 40 years of new spaces, name changes, and reorganization, we're still going strong. Who knew you could build a business and a community out of veggies, granola, and a couple of nuts?

The last 10 years have been big ones for GreenTree; a greenhouse was built, a walk-in refrigerator added, lots of remodeling was done, and most recently, we acquired a new freezer and produce cooler, and lighting for the new sign out front. In 2009, for the first time in the Co-op's history, we had over \$1,000,000 in sales in a single year! And when you consider changes in the Staff, the Board, and the Ownership, it's amazing that things run as smoothly as they do around here! But if you take a look at the Co-op model things start to make a little more sense...

The goal of a Co-op, any Co-op, is to provide its owners with what they need, whether that's food, loans, medical care, or access to farmland. A Co-op does this through direct ownership; an organization that is owned by its customers cannot help but have their best interests in mind! This responsiveness to the needs of our owners is why, even after 40 years, GreenTree is still committed to providing healthy and sustainable alternatives to conventionally made products and foods.



A couple of our favorite little nuts, circa 2005.

...Continued on page 3

GreenTree Staff

MANAGEMENT/ BUYING TEAM:

Sarah Christensen
General Manager

Stacy Saul
Grocery Buyer/
Merchandising Manager

Angie Pohlman
Storekeeper Team
Leader/
Wellness Buyer

Liz Busch
Produce Buyer/ Outreach
& Events Coordinator

STOREKEEPERS:

Erin Bialik

Laura Coffee
Graphics & Branding
Coordinator

Christian Colombini
Produce Assistant

Sydne Conant
Welcome to the team!

Josh Johnson

Molly Kampf
Produce Assistant

Katelynn McDonald
Welcome to the team!

Mari Potter
Owner Services
Coordinator/ Owner
Worker Coordinator

Grace Rollins
Greenhouse Keeper



The Co-op Scoop

Sarah Christensen,
General Manager, GreenTree Co-op Owner



You may or may not remember that last year we put a call out to area residents interested in growing food in and for our community. Initially, the idea sprang from a desire to better use our greenhouse space, to connect kids with the process of growing food and to be a part of creating a food secure community. We held several meetings and generated a lot of wonderful ideas from a diverse group of community members. We called ourselves the Mt. Pleasant Food Project.

In early spring Chris Venegas a CMU student, previous GreenTree employee, and an active member of the Mt. Pleasant Food Project approached CMU with a plan to develop an on campus garden project called Campus Grow. CMU's Facility Management approved the proposal and dedicated a total of 10,000 square feet to the project. Campus Grow became the first venture of the Mt. Pleasant Food Project.

As a group the Mt. Pleasant Food Project discussed incorporation as a 501C3 Non Profit. Personally I wanted to let the idea take its own course, I wanted to be a part of a community project - not necessarily run the show. But it can take awhile to get a project like this off the ground, and in the mean time who is better positioned to deliver a food outreach program to the community than a Co-op with a mission to empower people and celebrate community through food and cooperative principles? Where else can you find an enthusiastic staff of foodies who want to make a difference in their community and are connected with people on a daily basis? After nearly 40 years of business in this community, lets be honest, we've got some skills.

So here we are in year two of the Mt. Pleasant Food Project and we are excited to have another garden space available to us. The property is located in the 400 block of Pine Street and is owned by the Central Michigan Mental Health Facilities Board. It's pretty close to downtown Mt. Pleasant and surrounded by homes. In my opinion it's the perfect location for a community garden.

Our plan is to have a meeting in late March to begin organizing for the 2010 growing season including discussions on how we might connect with local schools and other community organizations. If you're interested in being a part of this exciting new project please contact sarah@greentree.coop or liz@greentree.coop.



Josh Black and Jessica Gibbons working at the original MPFP location.

Lawns to Gardens Tip:

When turning your lawn into a garden the first thing you need to do is get rid of that grass.

*If you want to get started right away just cut out the sod and add a generous layer of compost to kill any remaining grass seed.

*If you can wait until next year to begin planting just cover the area with a layer of newspaper and six inches of compost. In the spring you'll be ready to go.

*Or you could build raised beds (6-12in deep) and then you can ignore the grass completely!

A Word From the Board

By Eric Baerren, Board Chair, Co-op Owner

There's a little piece of local history I've heard over the last few years while working as a journalist covering the Wheatland Music Festival for the Mt. Pleasant Morning Sun. That story is at the root of the festival and the organization that helps to promote it, and it was fully fleshed out for me during a car ride home from the festival in 2008.



The festival, you see, was organized to raise money for GreenTree, (it was actually the Mt. Pleasant Food Co-op back then) to help get the Co-op off the ground. This year, as GreenTree celebrates its 40th anniversary, the Wheatland Music Organization prepares for its 37th festival.

Like two people who grew up as friends and then went off to join different social circles, both have evolved, going off in their own directions. Today, GreenTree is the cooperative grocery you see when you visit the store. The Wheatland Music Festival has become the largest annual fundraiser for an organization whose purpose is to secure a piece of our common heritage by making it easier for musicians and artists skilled in traditional arts to share their gifts.

Although today they are different, they do share a common purpose. Both exist, in their own way, as reminders of the importance in the world right in front of your face. Bigger, faster, and more efficient in the end also results in homogenization of culture and the loss of contact with the natural world that provides us with food. GreenTree does this by participation in the campaign to promote local foods; the Wheatland Music Organization does this by helping to place traditional artists and musicians in elementary schools and other civic centers, and by hosting events on the organization's grounds in Remus.

If you talk to people familiar with the deep history of both, they also share another common thread, a very modest start that has grown into something much bigger. Both have grown, and like healthy trees, are today supported by a strong system of roots that spread out through the larger mid-Michigan community (they share some common roots in people who support both).

Today, four decades after the seeds for GreenTree sprouted, it's worth remembering that stores aren't just places where you buy things. They represent ideas, and that when you patronize the Co-op - either by purchasing items there, or in some other capacity - you are helping that idea to evolve and grow. This, in turn, suggests that sometimes if you look back far enough, you'll see that those ideas are shared by other people and organizations close at hand.

GreenTree's Current Board Members are:

Eric Baerren: Chair, Michael Brockman: Vice Chair, Secretary, Ryan Doran-Fisher: Treasurer, Wilma Blackman, Julie Stevens, Chris Wiesman, Penny Lew

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Just a Couple of Nuts, continued from page 1

Looking at all the chaos through a Cooperative lens it's easy to see why there have been so many changes over the years. When GreenTree has the chance to better serve the community we jump on it! That's why we're so excited about the Co-op's 40th Anniversary; it's a great opportunity to increase awareness of who we are and what we do. And of course, it's also the perfect time to have a party.



On March 20th and March 21st GreenTree will be having a party to celebrate our 40th anniversary. There will be food, including cake from The Flour Uprising, a **drawing for a new bike** from Motorless Motion, special discounts, and a display of images from GreenTree's past. So come on down and celebrate with us, after all, it's your Co-op too!

The Co-op History 40th Anniversary Newsletter Centerfold!

I've spent a lot of time over the past few months scanning photos, asking questions, and reading old newsletters. You'll notice that some of the images on these pages are dated in very general terms, or lack the names of the people in them. This is because as an organization made up of individuals the Co-op lacks one central "history". But while names and dates may be misplaced or forgotten, their contributions are not. The true history of GreenTree is more like a quilt than a timeline; it's made up of people and stories assembled with care by thousands of hands. Some of the patches are bright and new, others have been around since the beginning helping to hold the whole glorious mess together. And it keeps getting bigger and more beautiful all the time.

So whether you remember GreenTree's past, want to be a part of its future, or both, I hope you enjoy this little peek at the quilt that is GreenTree Cooperative Grocery.

~Laura Coffee, Storekeeper, Graphics and Branding Coordinator, Co-op Owner



This photo shows the original side entrance to the Mt. Pleasant Food Co-op.



Mmmm, spicy. (Late 1980's ?)



Bulk is looking good. (Late 1980's ?)



These two images showcase some of the many unique signs GreenTree has sported over the years.



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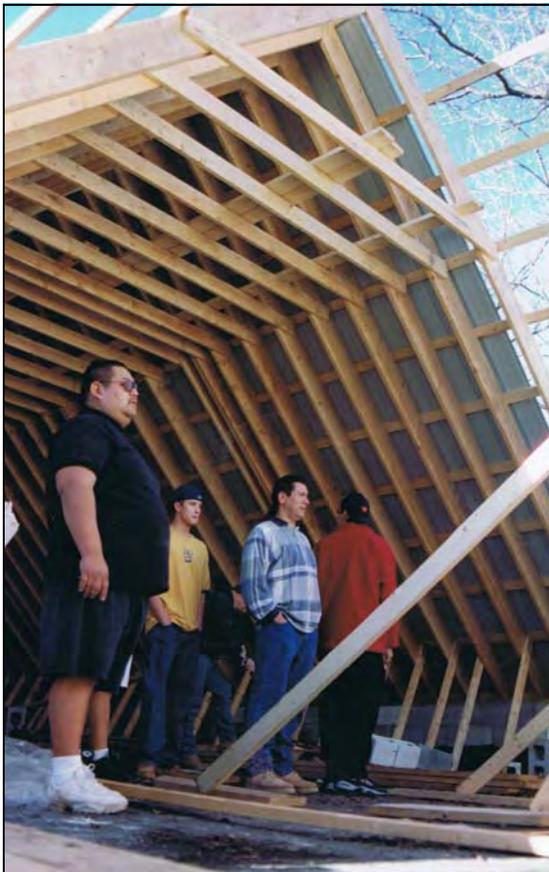


Our freezer space used to be a bit more limited. (1980's ?)

This ad appeared in the Isabella County Herald on March 30th, 1992.



These pictures show the front of the store in 1997.



In 2002-3 GreenTree got a new roof.



In 2000 we put in a new walkway.

If you know who any of the people shown here are, can tell us when these pictures were taken, or have photos of your own that you would like to share, please send that information on to laura@greentree.coop.

We are hoping to create a History Gallery on the Co-op webpage where these images, and others like them, can be preserved and viewed at any time.

Veggie Savers



Two score and a few days ago, our forefathers and foremothers set forth in this great county a new grocery store, conceived in the cooperative spirit, and dedicated to the notion that good food be available to all. That being said, we acknowledge that sometimes good food can be costly! Especially in the winter when all the kale in the county is sleeping under the snow and the last of our local apples are dwindling off the shelf.

In these lean months at the end of winter when Organic Produce availability is limited to California, Mexico and a sprinkling of other locations, its time to get creative about ways to stretch your produce budget.

Here in no particular order is a compilation of some ideas you may not have heard before:

Freeze overripe fruits and veggies for later use in smoothies, desserts, and juicing. Peel and chop the fruits before freezing to make them easier to use later. GreenTree sells discount organic bananas when we have rapidly ripening ones in the store. Take advantage of this when you see them. Frozen bananas are a great way to boost your fruit intake in winter.

Save the seeds from winter squash for roasting. Carve out the seeds from squash and float in them in a bowl of water to remove the pulp. Roast the squash seeds with a little oil, salt and pepper, or other seasonings for 45 minutes at 300°, stirring occasionally. A great snack after a great squash meal!

Create a meal plan for the week that uses similar fruits and vegetables, prepared in different ways. Make the most out of the produce that you buy. See leftovers as an opportunity to experiment!

Homemade soup is a healthy and tasty way to use vegetables. Make a big batch and freeze leftovers in small lunch-size containers.

Save carrot tops, onion and garlic peels, broccoli peelings, celery bits, parsley stems and other vegetable scraps in a container in the freezer. These will make great soup stock later. When you need them, cook down with purified water in a large pot for 30 minutes or more (a higher vegetable to water ratio will yield a stronger broth as will increased cooking times). If you don't use vegetable broth often make a batch and freeze in individual ice-cube trays for recipes that call for small amounts.

When fresh herbs are available pack them in water or oil and freeze in ice cube trays for individual serving size additions to recipes. This is also a great way to store overripe fruit for smoothies and desserts.

Citrus peels. There are so many uses for those fresh-makers! Grind and dry peels for flavorful addition to everything from salads to tea. When chewed but not swallowed they make a great bad breath fighter or digest them in small amount to relieve certain stomach ailments. Lemon peels can be used in bath water to help fade dark spots on skin. Any peels can make bath time a treat. Drop a piece of peel in the sink disposal before running it to freshen up your kitchen.

I'm sure there are many ideas out there that I missed. Feel free to share them with me at liz@greentree.coop and I will pass them on to our e-news and Facebook fans. Remember throughout the long Michigan winter GreenTree is committed to bringing you the freshest Organic produce in town. So until next time, ¡Viva la Veggie!

-By Liz Busch, Produce Buyer, Outreach Coordinator, and Co-op Owner



Owner Only Coupon

SAVE \$1

On either great Cooperatively written cookbook:

From Asparagus to Zucchini



The Co-op Cookbook



From Asparagus to Zucchini or The Co-op Cookbook

Mt. Pleasant Discovery Museum

Build a Museum! Capital Campaign



Make a Donation or check us out at www.mpdiscoverymuseum.org

Visit our introductory exhibit
The Magnetic Field
Grand Opening April 10, 2010,
1-5pm, Public Welcome
Located at Museum of Cultural and Natural History at CMU

Gardening Tips:

- *To help **tomatoes** through periods of drought, find some flat rocks and place one next to each plant. The rocks pull up water from under the ground and keep it from evaporating into the atmosphere.
- *Start **(bell) pepper** seeds three to a pot, and thin out the weakest seedling. Let the remaining two pepper plants spend their entire lives together as one plant. The leaves of two plants help protect peppers against sunscald, and the yield is often twice as good as two segregated plants.

(Tips were found at the Old Farmers Almanac: www.almanac.com .)

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Tales of the Strange but Edible



Have you ever seen something like this growing in your garden? We've all seen them, strange looking vegetables with bumps and lumps, sometimes they even look like people or animals. Well the next time you see one get out the camera! This growing season when you step into the garden and find that some of your produce is oddly shaped, strangely colored, gargantuan or tiny take a picture of the bizarre beet or strange squash and send it to laura@greentree.coop. It may be featured in a future newsletter or e-news!

And yes, that thing really is a tomato.

What's the Deal with Phthalates?

Here at the Co-op we get a lot of questions about ingredients in body care products, and one ingredient that has gotten some press lately is phthalates. The U.S. Congress passed legislation banning some phthalates from children's toys in 2008, but the FDA "does not have compelling evidence that phthalates, as used in cosmetics, pose a safety risk." Consumers groups (such as the Organic Consumers Association) have been pushing for legislation to ban phthalates and



advising consumers to avoid products that contain them whenever possible. I thought phthalates were worthy of a closer look and I was curious whether products that we carry contain phthalates.

A study... has linked phthalates to ADHD in children

A Consumers Dictionary of Cosmetic Ingredients (2005 edition) defines phthalates as: "A large group of chemical compounds used in the production of plastics, household articles, packages, cosmetics, and plant pesticides. Recent observations indicate some may be mutagenic, cancer-causing, and adversely affect human male sperm. DEHP and Dibutyl phthalate are on the California potential cancer-causing agents list and in 2004 the EU banned them in nail polish. The FDA said in 2004 that phthalates are safe for humans in the amounts to which they are exposed."

A study published in the November 2009 issue of *Biological Psychiatry* has linked phthalates to ADHD in children. Phthalates, which are byproducts found in synthetic fragrances, cosmetics, and other skin care products, are currently banned in children's toys in the US, but are not banned in skin care products. Phthalates are considered highly toxic and linked to birth defects and serious health problems.

In an article from *Natural Foods Merchandiser* in December of 2009:

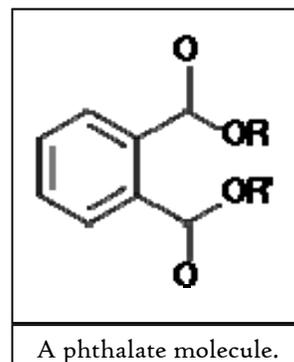
"These data represent the first documented association between phthalate exposure and ADHD symptoms in school-aged children," Yun-Chul Hong, MD, PhD, senior author of the study, said in a statement. He and his colleagues came to their conclusions after measuring urine phthalate concentrations and evaluating ADHD symptoms in 261 Korean children, age 8 to 11 years. They found that the higher the concentration of phthalate metabolites in the urine, the worse the ADHD symptoms.

The Skin Deep Database is an excellent resource for folks concerned with cosmetic ingredients. It lists phthalates as one of its top products not to buy.

"Pronounced 'tha'-lates," these little plasticizer chemicals pack a punch to male sex organs. Whether it's sperm damage, feminization of baby boys, or infertility, a growing number of studies link phthalates to problems in men and boys. Pregnant women should avoid it in nail polish ("dibutyl phthalate") and everyone should avoid products with "fragrance" on the label, chemical mixtures where phthalates often hide."

Skin Deep has a list of some of the cryptic ingredients that are hiding phthalates. Turns out many of the brands that GreenTree carries are free from many of those ingredients, and the only nail products we carry -- No Miss Nail Care -- are free from phthalates, but one of the hidden ingredients found in other products could be "fragrance." Some major brands that GreenTree carries -- such as Burt's Bees and Nature's Gate -- have fragrance as an ingredient, but there are many brands -- such as Aubrey -- who have fragrance free options, or use essential oils to scent their product. If you are concerned about phthalates or other ingredients you should read labels carefully.

For more information checkout the Skin Deep website: www.cosmeticsdatabase.com



-By Angela Pohlman, Wellness Buyer and Storekeeper Team-Leader, Co-op Owner

Pure Fruit Cookies

(From the April 1989 Co-op Newsletter)

Bake at 350 for 20 to 25 minutes.

Makes 2 dozen.



- ◆ 3 medium-size ripe bananas
- ◆ 1/3 cup peanut or safflower oil
- ◆ 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ◆ 1/8 teaspoon salt
- ◆ 1 1/2 cups rolled oats
- ◆ 1/2 cup uncooked oat bran or creamy-style hot cereal*
- ◆ 1 1/2 cups coarsely chopped mixed dried fruits (such as dates, apricots and raisins)
- ◆ 1/2 cup chopped walnuts or almonds

Preheat oven to 350. Grease two large cookie sheets. Mash bananas in large bowl until smooth. (You should have about 1 1/2 cups.) Stir in oil, vanilla and salt. Add oats, oat bran, mixed fruits and nuts: stir well to combine. Drop by rounded measuring tablespoonfuls onto prepared cookie sheets, about 1 inch apart. Flatten out slightly with back of spoon. Bake in oven for 20 to 25 minutes or until bottom and edges of cookies are lightly browned. Transfer cookies onto wire rack to cool completely. Store in refrigerator.

*Note: Be sure to use the finer grain oat bran for a light texture.

Nutrient Value per Cookie: 105 calories, 2g protein, 5g fat, 14g carbohydrate, 14mg sodium, 0mg cholesterol.

The Spa Space

These spa tips come to us out of the not so distant past. These herbal bath tips first appeared in the October 1989 issue of the Co-op's newsletter!

Herbal Baths



Almost everyone enjoys luxuriating in a long bath now and then; the addition of herbs can enhance the experience! There are several methods of adding herbs to the bathwater, and depending on the herbs used, the result may be invigorating, soothing, relaxing, moisturizing...

Method 1:

Make a tea of one cup of herbs and one quart of water. Allow to steep about 15 minutes. Strain and pour the strong tea (or "infusion") into your bathwater.



Method 2:

Fill a mesh tea ball or infuser with herbs and put directly into your bath. If it has a chain with a hook on it, hang it from your tub faucet and allow the water to pour through the herbs.

Method 3:

Use cheesecloth to wrap a handful of herbs. Steep in boiling water for 15 minutes, then add the tea and wrapped herbs to your bath.

Suggested Herbs for Baths (select combinations for desired effects):

Peppermint: Cooling and Astringent

Chamomile: Moisturizing

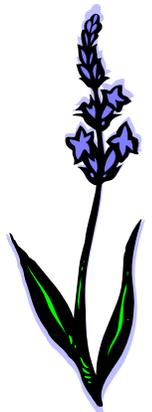
Rosemary: Rejuvenating

Lavender: Stimulating

Linden Flowers: Soothing and Relaxing

Roses: Aromatic, Moisturizing

Orange Blossoms: Aromatic, Moisturizing



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I Remember When...

By Stacy Saul, Merchandising Manager and Grocery Buyer, Co-op Owner



I have to admit that I most likely never would have found the Co-op without my friend Vannie Shurtliff. I was a junk food junkie, she was a healthy raw foodie/vegetarian. I drank Coke, she drank fresh carrot juice and

grew her own sprouts in her bedroom window. How did we find each other? That's a whole other story.

Fact is that we did meet and she took me to the Mt. Pleasant Food Co-op when she did her shopping. Way back in 1989, the Co-op was a rustic, hippie sort of place. Bins filled with grains that I had never seen before, something called tofu in a small dark, refrigerator; what was this place?

I kept coming back with Vannie to pick up herbs, sprouts, tofu, and yogurt. Over time, I began to eat more meals with less meat, and I even started to like tempeh and tofu. Where else in Mt. Pleasant would I even find these items? The Co-op had begun to "creep" into me. Vannie was now a cashier and Vice President of the Board. After a couple of years, we were volunteering as the bulk herb buyers. We also worked at the Wheatland Music Festival/Co-op food booth with other volunteers serving up hot chocolate, coffee, and snacks.

Over time, we volunteered less because of college and other obligations. But we have continued to shop at Greentree for all these years and are amazed at the changes that have taken place. Slowly, the Co-op has transformed itself from a bulk food store, to a full service grocery. The staff is also the most knowledgeable about natural foods in all of Mid Michigan. So to all who have supported the Co-op, past or present, thank you! Happy 40th Birthday GreenTree!

Ad Rates:

There are two ad sizes available in the Quarterly GreenTree Newsletter.

Small ad: 2.5" wide by 2.0" high: \$45 per issue (\$40 per issue for GreenTree Owner-members)

Large ad: 2.5" wide by 4" high: \$ 85 (\$75 GreenTree Owner-members).

Space in the Summer 2010 newsletter must be reserved by May 14th. Ad spaces are based on a first come first serve basis depending on the layout of each newsletter. Payment must be received with camera-ready or high resolution electronic copy (jpg, pdf, or gif) at the time of reservation.

Meet A Storekeeper

Featuring: Grace Rollins, Storekeeper, Co-op Owner

Where are you from?

Ewa Beach, Hawaii

How did you first find the Co-op?

Back in 2006 I was looking for a Co-op near me online. I joined in June of 2006.

How long have you been working here?

15 months- since November 2008. I was previously a volunteer for 3 months.

What is the best part of your job?

The Greenhouse during the growing season, making produce samples, checking in Select Nutrition.

Do you like to cook?

Yes!

Describe your perfect breakfast.

Actually I love brunch. Omelet's with cheese and veggies are perfect for me, occasionally with sausage. And coffee. Lots and lots of coffee.

What is your favorite GreenTree product ?

Does the whole store count?

Favorite movie?

The Godfather Trilogy

What's your favorite thing to do in Mt. Pleasant?

Walking, which I do a lot.

Tell us something about yourself others might not know.

I joined the Marine Corps when I was 17 (needed both parents signatures), I served from 1983-1989.

Where are some of your favorite travel destinations?

Lake Michigan, Haleiwa Beach (Hawaii), Blissfest, Any part of Northern California, South Carolina.

What are your hobbies?

Yoga, reading, playing chess, Reader's Theatre.

What music is playing in your car, home or head?

None in particular, I pretty much like the sound of quiet.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

I see myself traveling a lot. Maybe joining the Peace Corps!





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WWW.GREENTREE.COOP

Locally Grown

Community Owned

Cooking Workshop Schedule

In collaboration with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, 7th Generation Program and Nimkee Memorial Wellness Center

Wednesday, March 17, 2010, 6-8 p.m.
Vegan World Tour

Wednesday, April 21st, 2010, 6-8 p.m.
Don't Tax Your Budget: Frugal Gourmet

Wednesday, May 19th, 2010, 6-8 p.m.
Not Your Mama's Barbeque

*Classes are free and will be held at the
7th Generation Program's
New Kitchen at*

*7957 East Remus Rd.
in Mt. Pleasant.*

Space is limited.

*Please call GreenTree to
register: 989-772-3221*



Hey Kids? Are you a Green Sprout yet? Membership in the new GreenTree Green Sprouts is free and fun! Sign up today and start getting a free piece of fruit every time you shop in the store.

We also have membership cards, birthday greetings, and a special drop-in activity the third Saturday of the month from 2-5pm. Here Isabell and Zachary show us the Valentine's and Birthday Cards they made out of reclaimed materials.

