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Outpost Natural Foods Co-op grants \$55K to local organizations

[Milwaukee, WI] Acting on their vision for a healthy, diverse and sustainable community, Outpost Natural Foods Cooperative recognized three local organizations with grants totaling \$55K.

On October 1, a \$30K grant was presented to Walnut Way Conservation Corp at their Annual Harvest Festival. Outpost and Walnut Way partner together on projects that focus on creating healthy communities with access to healthy foods. The grant goes towards Walnut Way's proposed Wellness Commons project, a mixed-use common meeting place developed by and for community members to celebrate neighborhood history, and the rebirth of neighbor health and wellness.

(www.walnutway.org)

Outpost presented a \$20K grant to Local First Milwaukee on November 1. Local First Milwaukee is a business alliance that advocates for locally owned, independent businesses and non-profit organizations. The move is designed to further the education initiatives of metro Milwaukee's fast growing local first movement. The presentation happened at the alliance's monthly member networking meeting, shortly after the organization revealed to its members its new logo. *(www.localfirstmilwaukee.com)*

On the heels of that exciting evening, on November 3, Outpost presented a \$5,000 grant to Downtown Montessori Academy to fund seven full school lunches, made with organic ingredients, along with locally sourced organic milk. The lunches will be available to all full-day students beginning the Fall 2012 school year.

Downtown Montessori Academy is a culturally diverse Milwaukee charter school located in the Bay View community. Circumstances there do not allow the school access to a standard subsidized hot lunch program. Two years ago the school contacted Outpost to help develop a healthy hot lunch pilot program. The result brought in one lunch a month. Response from kids, school personnel and parents was enthusiastic. Still, some parents were unable to cover the nominal cost for the lunches. Outpost's grant will ameliorate that situation.

A vibrant community is integral to a co-op's success. In fact, according to Outpost general manager, Pam Mehnert, it is the lifeblood of a co-op and the right thing to do is to give back when times are good. "Outpost's mission to create healthy, diverse, and sustainable communities is exemplified by our ability to fund these important projects at times when our business has had great success." Concern for Community is one of seven International Cooperative Principles, benchmarks all co-ops are guided by. *(www.go.coop)*

Serving the greater Milwaukee area since 1970, Outpost Natural Foods Cooperative operates three successful locations at 100 East Capitol Drive, Milwaukee, 7000 West State Street, Wauwatosa, and 2826 South Kinnickinnic Avenue, Milwaukee. Co-owned by over 16,000 individuals from Southeastern Wisconsin, it employs nearly 300 people, as well as publishes a food and dining magazine (GRAZE). Outpost is the fourth largest cooperatively owned natural foods grocer in the country by sales volume. It is a founding organization and proud member of the National Cooperative Grocers Association and Local First Milwaukee. www.outpost.coop

High-resolution images and photographs are available upon request

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