

First member meeting for Grassroots Grocery to be held on Nov 5th

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Open enrollment to join the new community co-op that offers healthy, affordable, and locally grown food and natural home products



ALTON - Existing and prospective members of Grassroots Grocery are invited to gather for an informational meeting to learn details on operations of the cooperative store, which opened in August and focuses on nutritious, locally-produced food and

natural home products. The meeting will take place on Thursday, November 5th from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the auditorium at the Simmons Hanly Conroy Law Firm — located at #1 Court Street in Alton, IL.

The meeting will provide an open space to learn about your local cooperative grocery, meet fellow members, hear updates regarding current store programs, and receive information regarding the democratic process behind the co-op and how you can help the grocery continue its good work serving the community.

Membership is open to anyone at any time; anyone who wishes to join may simply show up to the meeting, visit www.GrassrootsGrocery.org, or stop by the store at 415 Ridge Street to pay their annual dues. The store is open to the general public, but members enjoy additional benefits. A membership to the grocery costs \$100 per household, which entitles the family to a 10% discount at the store. If a family spends \$100 of their existing monthly food budget at Grassroots Grocery, then the membership will more than pay for itself over the course of a year. Membership also gives access to educational programming as well as a voice in the democratic process of the store. Grassroots Grocery will be governed by an Advisory Council elected by the members.

A compelling short video can be found on the website, in which those involved explain the need for such an endeavor and the benefits it will have in our community. “Alton’s Hunterstown neighborhood is no longer considered a food desert due to the hard work and dedication of hundreds of volunteers who have poured their energy into the project thus far,” said co-founder Sara McGibany, “Interest in healthy food and non-toxic products is growing, and Grassroots Grocery is a catalyst that’s providing a network for community members to meet others who value this culture.”

Through store’s charitable policy, many residents who face food insecurity will qualify for the same 10% discount given to members. Qualifications include: households on public assistance (receiving SNAP, WIC, Medicare/Medicaid, free or reduced lunch program, or unemployment benefits), low income households earning up to 125% of the Illinois poverty level (threshold for a family of 4 is earning less than \$29,812.50), and residents of low-income senior assisted living facilities.

“Grassroots Grocery will give folks the opportunity to buy fresh, healthy food from people who are their neighbors. Instead of sending local money to giant multi-national corporations in far away places, we have the opportunity to provide people with affordable nourishment, while keeping that money circulating in the local economy where it can do the most good,” said Christine Favilla, Vice President of the Community Cultivators – the 501c3 organization which oversees the project.

Additional goals of Grassroots Grocery are to strengthen our region's network of local farmers, engage a diverse community in improving health and self-sufficiency, and contribute to a sustainable local economy.

“We are pursuing \$100 cooperative membership dues in order to drive the unit price of the products down so that anyone can afford to shop there,” said Dr. Jackie Burns, Professor of Sociology at Principia College, “Growing the economy and bringing people to the neighborhood will foster additional economic growth and job creation.”

Additionally, businesses are able to purchase a corporate membership for their staff, to enhance their employee wellness program. Full details can be found at www.GrassrootsGrocery.org.

To stay up-to-date on store announcements, please like Grassroots Grocery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GrassrootsGrocery.