



*MFC Positive Change Profile:*

## Rogue Valley Farm to School



Rogue Valley Farm to School educates children about our food system through hands-on farm and garden programs, and by increasing local foods in school meals. They inspire an appreciation of local agriculture that improves the economy and environment of our community and the health of its members. This September, we'll be fundraising for Rogue Valley Farm to School through the [Positive Change](#) program. Learn more about their work below.

**MFC:** Give us a brief overview of Rogue Valley Farm to School's work.

**RVF2S:** [Rogue Valley Farm to School](#) is a nonprofit 501c3 organization that has been working with school children, teachers, farmers and school districts for more than a decade. We work in partnership with schools to build a culture of health that starts from the ground up – providing garden education and nutrition programs and providing children with an opportunity to develop a love for food and healthy eating. We are dedicated to creating a food system that is equitable and inclusive, and honors the diversity of the many people and cultures that come together to create a world of healthy food. A key part of our work is bringing farmers and schools together, so that schools are purchasing more locally grown, healthy food to serve to children in school meals. We also bring children out to local farms, where they have a chance to meet farmers, harvest food from the field, learn how to clean and prep fresh food, and then make a delicious meal together. Our organization is part of a statewide and national movement to improve food in schools and to better connect children to their food system. As part of that network, Rogue Valley Farm to School serves as the Southern Oregon Procurement and Education Hub, bringing together farmers from all over the Rogue Valley to meet with school Food Service Directors, as well as bringing together teachers to look at ways of increasing school garden education programs.

**MFC:** What is the goal of the Digging Deeper School Partnership Program? What does the program include? How many school partners do you have?

**RVF2S:** Rogue Valley Farm to School currently partners with seven schools in our region through our Digging Deeper School Partnership Program – all five elementary schools in Central Point School District, plus Kids Unlimited in Medford and Walker

## 2019 Rogue Valley Farm Tour Recap

by Halle Riddlebarger – Outreach Manager

For the second year in a row, staff from Ashland Food Co-op and Medford Food Co-op collaborated to offer the [Rogue Valley Farm Tour](#). On Sunday, July 14th thirty farms and ranches around the Rogue Valley welcomed community members to their land to participate in free field tours, tastings, demonstrations, kids activities, and more. We are incredibly grateful for the six additional farms that joined the tour this July, and for the clear blue skies and respite from the smoke we endured last year.



*Farm Tour attendees listening to Lanita Witt.*

MFC staff started the day at the south end of the Rogue Valley at [Willow-Witt Ranch](#), located on Shale City Road in Ashland on the way up to Grizzly Peak. Willow-Witt Ranch is proud to be a good steward of their unique ecosystem. Owners Lanita Witt and Suzanne Willow work daily to enhance the health of their land, water, and air and to provide organically produced food, products and services for the local community.

Elementary School in Ashland. Our goal is to expand the program to include all of the school districts in the Rogue Valley within the next five to ten years. The goal of the Digging Deeper School Partnership Program is to work in partnership with schools to build a culture of health. This means weekly garden education programs, monthly Harvest of the Month programs when the whole school gets to try a new fresh, local fruit or vegetable, teacher professional development training every quarter to help support teacher's efforts to integrate the school garden across the curriculum, and field trips to visit local farms every fall and spring. In addition, the partnership includes working closely with school food service providers to incorporate and feature locally grown Harvest of the Month produce, developing volunteer corps of parents who help in the kitchen or cafeteria to improve school lunches, and working with schools to develop wellness visions and policies that support healthier children and families.

**MFC:** *For those in the community that don't have school-aged children, how does Rogue Valley Farm to School's work impact the community at large?*

**RVF2S:** All of us who live in the Rogue Valley are connected to our local food system in a multitude of ways. By supporting Rogue Valley Farm to School, you are supporting our local farmers as we work to increase their market share of sales to schools. It benefits all of us to have a thriving, healthy community, from the way in which we nurture our soils and care for our water, to ensuring that as many children as possible have access to healthy, delicious food that can help their minds and bodies thrive. As a community, we all benefit when those around us thrive, particularly those most vulnerable. Rogue Valley Farm to School is dedicated to creating a food system that cares for the planet as well as our community, and it takes everyone to make that possible.



**MFC:** *Tell us something most people don't know about Rogue Valley Farm to School.*

**RVF2S:** Some may not realize that the Rogue Valley is actually one of the leaders in the Farm to School movement statewide and even having a national impact. Rogue Valley Farm to School worked closely with our US Senators and other national legislators to create a program that allowed schools in eight states to purchase locally grown, unprocessed fresh fruits and vegetables using their USDA funding. This has led to changes across the US, opening doors for schools to purchase more locally, and the Rogue Valley's own Fry Family Farm and Naumes Fruits were two of the initial leaders!

**MFC:** *How can community members get involved and support Rogue Valley Farm to School?*

**RVF2S:** We are always looking for volunteers, either to help in some of our partner school kitchens and cafeterias, or on the farm with our Harvest Meal Program. We also need over 100 volunteers every spring for the [Siskiyou Challenge](#), our big community fundraiser on the last Saturday in April. We also are happy to have help in the office, and of course, donations are very, very welcome. We raise 90% of the funds required to provide our programs to schools, and we couldn't do that without the generosity of individuals or businesses like the Medford Food Co-op. ■

## From the GM: **2018 Annual Report**

by Anne Carter – General Manager



Medford Food Co-op exists to sustain a vibrant, healthy community and a thriving local, organic food economy. You – a Co-op owner, customer and supporter – are the reason the Co-op is thriving! In 2018, 313 new owners joined your co-op. Currently, there are 3,893 owners. These owners and other customers shopping at the Co-op contributed to a 6% increase in sales last year.

Shopping at the Co-op contributes to the local food economy and is particularly beneficial to the 43 local farmers and 40 local food producers that we purchase from. When we say “local” we mean within 100 miles of Medford. Last year, sales of products from local farmers and food producers totaled \$543,242 – a 24% increase over 2017!

Shopping at the Co-op benefits our community in numerous ways:

- supporting local farmers and food producers,
- educating about food, nutrition and health,
- protecting and improving Bear Creek and the Greenway,
- collaborating with other organizations to grow our local food system.

Together, we are invigorating and improving our community, one grocery shop at a time! [Visit our website to read the full report.](#) ■

# Staff Spotlight

*Get to know the staff!*

## Carol Wagenet

### How long have you been cooperating?

I've been working at the Medford Food Co-op for nearly two and half years, and an owner for seven years.

### What do you do at the co-op?

I am a cashier – working the front end of the store assisting with grocery purchases and customer questions.

### What brought you to the co-op?

My husband first “found” the Co-op shortly after it opened, and we've been shopping here ever since. When it was time for me to find another job several years ago, I focused on fun places to work and this is it!

### What do you like best about your job?

I really like the Co-op staff and the customers. They provide me with positive interactions all day.

### Tell us your co-op favorites:

Bok choy in Produce, buckwheat groats in Bulk, Jarrow's Vitamin B-12 in Wellness, and Hail Merry's Meyer Lemon Tart in Grocery.

### How has working at the co-op affected your life?

I never knew I could interact with so many people all day long and come away feeling more energized than when I arrived.

### Tell us something we don't know!

My first job in my profession was working for Rockwell International in Southern California as a member of the Technical Staff supporting the NASA Space Shuttle Program!

### What do you like to do outside of work?

I like to learn. I enjoy reading and experiencing improvements in my overall wellness. I'm also currently learning all about the ways to navigate estate planning and successfully administer one's financial affairs now and after one passes.

### Where did you grow up/where have you lived in your life?

My childhood started living near Disneyland and continued in Australia, Western Samoa and Eagle Point, Oregon. As an adult I've lived in Salem and Corvallis, Oregon; Pensacola, Florida; Newport, Rhode Island; Lakewood, California; and now Southern Oregon once again. ■



*Farm Tour Recap continued from page 1:*

After learning about the history of the ranch, wetland restoration, agritourism, farm stays, and more from Lanita at Willow-Witt, we traveled on to the [Farm at SOU](#) in Ashland to see the student-run farm featuring Bee Girl's research project, and an apiary.



The [Bee Girl Organization](#) is a nonprofit with a mission to educate and inspire communities to conserve bees, their flowers, and our countryside. The organization, founded by Sarah Red-Laird,

aims to conserve our bees by educating people, especially kids, on bees' importance through their programs focused on community classes and events.

After we visited the buzzing fields at the Farm at SOU, we made a brief stop at [Valley View Orchard](#) before heading out to the Applegate Valley. Although the peaches were still a week out from the u-pick season, we got to taste some delicious jam, and sampled wine from [Long Walk Vineyard](#) before we hit the road.

Our first stop in the Applegate Valley was [Lavender Fields Forever](#). Rows of gorgeous lavender greeted us when we pulled up to park. As we picked lavender bundles we were enraptured by the multitude and variety of happy, buzzing bees. With a lavender lemonade in one

hand and lavender brownie in the other, we set off to find ourselves some farm fresh veggies.

With less than an hour left on the tour, we buzzed down the road to [Whistling](#)



[Duck Farm](#) for fresh vegetables and flavorful fermented goodies. With our bounty safely stored in the cooler away from the hot afternoon sun, we decided to spend the last few minutes of

the tour relaxing in the shade at [Oshala Farm](#). Oshala was still packed with visitors and cars when we arrived at the end of the afternoon. We enjoyed a cold glass of refreshing iced tea made from Oshala's organic herbs and caught up with farmer and owner Elise Higley and fellow community members who also spent the day enjoying the bounty of our region.

## Important Dates

### **The Oregon Wine Experience**

Monday, August 19th – Sunday, August 25th Bigham Knoll, Jacksonville. A week-long fundraiser for Asante Foundation and Children's Miracle Network featuring extraordinary Oregon wines, delicious culinary creations, and one-of-a-kind experiences. More information at [www.theoregonwineexperience.com](http://www.theoregonwineexperience.com).

### **Community Art Wall Show**

Saturday, August 31st from 5:30pm – 9:00pm The Café. Join us for an [Art Show](#) featuring fine art from Emily Konkol and Finlay Sabin. Meet the artists, mingle with community members, and purchase originals, prints, and cards – 20% of all proceeds will benefit Living Opportunities!

### **Bear Creek Stewardship Day**

Saturday, September 28th from 9:00am – 12:00pm Bear Creek Greenway. Volunteer to clean-up along the Bear Creek Greenway for Public Lands Day! More information at [bearcreekstewards.org](http://bearcreekstewards.org).

### **Greater Medford Multicultural Fair**

Saturday, September 28th from 10:00am – 4:00pm Pear Blossom Park. A free, one-day celebration of local culture! This family-friendly event features entertainment, games, and food. Admission and parking are free. More information at [www.facebook.com/greatermedfordmulticultural](http://www.facebook.com/greatermedfordmulticultural).

### **Board of Directors Meetings**

Third Monday of each month 5:30pm – 7:30pm Medical Eye Center. Please check our [online calendar](#) for any location and/or time changes. If you are an owner planning to attend a meeting and you would like a specific topic to be addressed, please email the General Manager: [gm@medfordfood.coop](mailto:gm@medfordfood.coop).

Based on the numbers provided by this year's participating farmers, we estimate about 1,500 folks participated in the 2019 [Rogue Valley Farm Tour](#) – with many attendees visiting multiple farms. We're excited and inspired by the growth in both the number of attendees and the number of participating farms the second year of the tour. The mission of the Farm Tour is to increase interaction between community members and local growers and based on the feedback we've received the last two years, it's working! ■

**ART SHOW**  
SATURDAY, AUGUST 31ST 5:30 PM - 9 PM AT THE  
MEDFORD FOOD CO-OP  
945 S RIVERSIDE AVE

FEATURING: 20% OF ALL PROCEEDS  
MUSIC WILL GO TO  
LIVING OPPORTUNITIES

FINE ART BY  
EMILY KONKOL &  
FINLAY SABIN

ORIGINALS,  
PRINTS, & CARDS

A NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION THAT  
SUPPORTS PEOPLE WITH  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES