

What the Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op Means to Me

by Leah Inaba

The Sacramento Natural Foods Co-Op (SNFC) is a beacon of hope amidst a selfish, irresponsible, wasteful and careless society. I am so impressed by the SNFC because I recently came to Sacramento from Southern California, and there isn't a store like it there from my knowledge. Prior to discovering the SNFC I had always wanted to support small, responsible businesses and eat healthier, but I wasn't sure how to go about doing that. So for me, the SNFC means support for local farms, happy animals, small business/community ownership and healthy eating habits.

One of the reasons I adore the SNFC is its support of local farms. It is very important to me that I buy as much locally grown food as possible in order to try and reduce my contribution to global warming. I am proud to support the existence of these local farms so that the SNFC will always be able to buy locally grown food. It is such an easy and very important task to buy locally in order to improve the air we breathe, respect the land we live on and support the continued existence of these people and animals whose habitats are in danger due to global warming, which in the end is all of us.

As long as all the animals on the planet have clean enough air to breathe that enables their survival, I want them to be happy animals. Whether they are animals that we gain food from or not, I want them to be free of disease and hardship. To me, the SNFC means supporting free-roaming and free-range animals that have not been given food treated with growth hormones, pesticides or antibiotics. If we as humans would never want to be caged up without the ability to roam, why should we force animals to live this way? If we as humans would never want to eat food riddled with harmful chemicals and additives, why should we feed it to animals? It all comes down to the selfless respect for all beings, humans or otherwise. I respect the SNFC for this reason.

As the previous owner of a small business I understand the dynamics of business ownership and market share in this country, and I will always support small businesses over chain stores any day. While it is terrible that the cost of living is so high in our country, and in our state in particular, that all people cannot do this, I always try my best. It is a travesty that multi-million dollar companies force local "mom and pop" stores out of business only to scoop up their profits and put them in the corporation's pockets to be spent elsewhere. Not only does small business support a family's basic needs for survival instead of greed and power, it also supports the local community. The SNFC does this in spades thanks to its very ownership by the community which benefits from it. This they way it should be.

Last, but certainly not least, shopping at the SNFC means better health. There is such an enormous pressure that comes along with the simple, necessary task of eating because each individual is responsible for their own health based on the foods they eat. From fast food to restaurant to organic; there are so many choices out there. As a young adult this is something I have learned only recently. I now realize that my health, well being and longevity are up to me.

Because of this I have decided to eat as healthy as I possible can. This means very, very little fast food, soda and junk food: all foods that I used to eat religiously. I am trying to eat lots of fruits and vegetables, unlike my eating habits in the past. I am also trying to incorporate natural medicines such as foods, herbs and vitamins into my diet in order to take advantage of the added extras of some foods. For example, thanks to the SNFC's wonderful "Consumer's Guides," I have recently learned that beets and burdock root are excellent foods to eat if you want to purify your blood. As a person who suffers from eczema, this is very helpful information. Because the skin is made up of mostly blood, I am trying to cure or alleviate my skin ailment by attempting to purify my blood. The SNFC gives many choices for healthy fruits, veggies, grains and herbs. Another reason the SNFC helps me eat healthy is its commitment to natural organic foods. I don't want to eat harmful pesticides. I want to eat foods rich in natural nutrients, not additives and preservatives. The SNFC enables me to do this.

As a new SNFC customer I am constantly discovering something new to love. There is so much I love already: fresh, organic fruits and vegetables, food-based vitamins, ethnic foods, many varieties of milk, food from happy animals, Echinacea and delicious frozen foods. It's hard to believe there could be more benefits waiting to be discovered though I know that there are. So to me the SNFC means support for all these beliefs that I cherish; amazingly under one roof. Thanks SNFC!!