

# What the Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op Means to Me

By Teresa Johnson

As a thirty-one year old woman my experiences with the Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op flood back 17 years, to a time when I was a young teenager. My mother was battling lung, bone and brain cancer, and a friend of hers introduced her to the Macrobiotics lifestyle. The Co-op was, and still is, the optimum place to purchase the items necessary for a cancer-fighting regimen. Despite her best efforts, the cancer had taken over my mother's entire body, and even the best of nutrition was unable to help her. My mother passed away in 1990. The memories I have, however, of her efforts to learn a better way of living are a part of the legacy she left behind. It is for these memories that I am forever grateful. Organic food, natural products, and a health-filled lifestyle full of life sustaining energy all played a wonderful part in my mother's last years. This introduction to the Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op is not only in my past but also a part of my present. Now with the newest addition to our family, Hannah, the SNFC will be a cherished part of our future.

After not thinking much about sustainable farming or healthy and nutritious whole foods for approximately ten years I became reacquainted with the Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op. Although I always had the embers of passion for clean living in my soul, left there almost as footprints in the sand by my childhood memories, it wasn't until my husband, Billy, began having horrible digestive problems that we took a trip down to the SNFC to investigate what could be done for him. Despite all the invasive medical procedures, the conventional medical doctors could not give a good explanation for why Billy would throw up after eating, and wake up in the middle of the night with stabbing pains in his intestines, only to spend hours on end running from the bed to the bathroom. The answer we were given was, "He has IBS--irritable bowel syndrome," and with that brief and uninformative diagnosis the gastroenterologist walked out of the office, where my husband lay on his side, bare from the waist down after having undergone a sigmoidoscopy. It was at that moment I began to realize there had to be a better way. I remembered my childhood trips to the SNFC, and thus began our quest to find that better way, that alternative to conventional medicine. It came in the form of organic, whole foods that we purchase at the SNFC.

Not only do we *buy* our products from the SNFC, but we especially appreciate the informative, helpful and friendly staff. Every time we have a question or a need, we can always find someone who either knows the answer, or will try to get the answer for us. Most recently we were shopping for several products that we didn't know much about. First, we wanted to start buying only organic raw, unpasteurized dairy products. To our good fortune we came across Shannon, the wine/beer/cheese

manager, and she spent the time necessary with us to explain the term “raw,” as well as direct us to the products we were looking for. She was extremely knowledgeable as well as delightfully friendly. We thoroughly enjoyed our conversation with her and look forward to seeing our new friend whenever we come to shop.

The very next day I came to SNFC with sensitive gums, looking for a better alternative to the dentist recommended product. I just recently began having problems with tooth root/gum sensitivity, and came to the SNFC confident I would find a solution to my new problem. Thankfully I approached Bella, and it seems she could recommend a product to me based on her own personal success. Her testimonial, as well as her helpful nature, was once again a blessing in a time of need.

Today we can thankfully say that as long as Billy is careful with the kinds of foods he eats he can maintain a healthy digestive system. In addition, we are now taking our investigations one step further and seeking naturopathic/homeopathic remedies. As we continue to study we hope to increase our knowledge as well as improve our lives, and the lives of our children. Our first child, Hannah, was born just 4 months ago, and she had the benefits of being nourished in the womb by the same organic, healthy foods that my husband and I ate. Looking into the future, we are excited about what we can teach our children, as well as what we can continue to learn together as a family. We believe with all our heart that it is vitally important to support our farmers who practice sustainable agriculture, buy and eat healthy animals who were raised in natural environments, and use only non-toxic and biodegradable cleaning products. This clean lifestyle is not only necessary for our own lives, but for the future generations.

Most recently I was thankful that the SNFC is providing it's shoppers with pre-drafted letters to the FDA commissioner regarding the upcoming cloning of animals. The SNFC's long history of helping its members to speak out politically is another valuable asset of the Co-op. I plan to make copies of the letter and distribute to all of our friends and family who do not yet shop at the SNFC, so that they too can be soldiers in the war against the horrible conventional trend.

It is because of my past memories, our passion for a healthier today, and our desire for a sustainable future for our children, which continues to bring us back to the SNFC week after week. My appreciation for their efforts in supplying fine products cannot be expressed in words. Without the SNFC, my life, my family's life and the welfare of all those who shop there would be drastically altered. Thank you SNFC! This is what you mean to me.