

# UCOM COMMUNICATOR

Spring 2021



Marcelle and Oscar lead a UCOM cooking class pre-Covid-19

# More Access to Fresh Local Produce

Are you ready for a bit of late pandemic good news? Because you have made trusting relationships with our neighbors possible, UCOM has spaces for 30 families to receive weekly boxes of fresh locally grown produce from our friends at Crisp Country Acres.

“I’ve been trying different recipes to find out how to cook these veggies I’ve never had before,” said one of our pilot group of people in the winter of 2018-19.

Another mother rejoiced, “Knowing my children will eat these vegetables means I can buy them again without fearing that they will go to waste.”

Beginning in late May, and lasting 16 weeks, people who utilize SNAP benefits can purchase CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) boxes for 75% off. Though farmers receive full price for their product, your neighbors can access \$20 worth of fresh locally grown produce every week for \$5.



Carol with her CSA box. Carol was a faithful neighbor and longtime friend of UCOM. She passed away in 2020 and is greatly missed.

More good news: A special program called Double Up Food Bucks provides an additional \$4 in tokens that can be redeemed for Michigan produce at many Farmers Markets or UCOM’s Farm Stand—or any other place where the tokens are accepted.

There are still some openings for the Michigan Farm to Families opportunity. This year, participants can even select their favorite veggies for their boxes! To register, call Katie at 616.241.4006, extension 1021. This program is available at selected farms and pantries in Michigan in collaboration with the Michigan Fitness Foundation.



# Educating and Entertaining in the age of YouTube and Covid



GVSU Dietetics intern Alyssa makes a split pea curry with ingredients from the Healthy Choice Pantry

A healthy lifestyle starts with healthy eating which is so much more than just having nutritious foods available. You've been helping ensure our neighbors

have access to fresh produce and healthful foods in UCOM's Healthy Choice Pantry and farm stand for years and you're also helping provide vital nutrition education.

Due to the pandemic, UCOM's regular schedule of classes like Sit and Be Fit, nutrition education from our partners at Spectrum Health, and our in person cooking classes have all been put on hold. However, your support has meant that new opportunities like a "Fresh Conversations" zoom class about the benefits of physical

activity, short cooking demos from Grand Valley State University (GVSU) dietetics interns working at UCOM, and healthy recipe cards for our food services have helped fill the nutrition education gap during this time.

UCOM's latest GVSU dietetics intern recently filmed a video making a split pea curry in which all but one ingredient could be found in the Healthy Choice Pantry. A previous intern filmed a video sharing tips for blanching and freezing fresh fruits and vegetables in conjunction with UCOM's gardening program and a video recipe making healthy granola bars. A third intern shared her own recipe for a super simple and healthy hummus.

All of these videos and more are available on the [UCOM website](#), [UCOM YouTube channel](#) and all of our social media platforms like [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)!

## ***Walk With Us!***

Are you ready to get outside and walk?

This year the Walk For Good Food will be virtual and you can participate in your own back yard!

From May 2-12 walk in your neighborhood to support Access of West Michigan, UCOM, and others working to shift local food systems to support and nourish everyone.

Find more information at: [UCOMGR.org/Walk4Food](https://www.ucomgr.org/Walk4Food)

**YOU'RE  
INVITED**

TO A  
NIGHT OF

# **COOKING UP COMMUNITY**

AT UCOM'S SPRING VIRTUAL EVENT:  
LET'S GET COOKING!

**MAY 20 @ 7PM**

SILENT AUCTION  
MAY 17-20

**Let's Get**



**Cooking!**

**HOSTED BY  
SHELLEY IRWIN!**

JOIN IN FOR:

LOCAL CHEFS - DELICIOUS RECIPES  
JOYOUS CELEBRATION

[UCOMGR.ORG/GETCOOKING](http://UCOMGR.ORG/GETCOOKING)

# YOU CAN HELP!

1. Join our recurring donors in supporting UCOM each month!
2. Help us buy our Truck! UCOM just paid \$3500 for a new (to us) box truck and we are looking for a donor to underwrite it!
3. Donate small garden tools for our community gardeners.
4. Volunteer to prep our community garden or flower beds for the season!
5. Share this newsletter with a friend!

# UCOM

Resources for living. Hope for life.

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[www.UCOMgr.org](http://www.UCOMgr.org)