Food Sustainability and Creation Care

Being good stewards of God’s creation is a shared message in many religions. Each religion discusses the importance of caring for the earth, water, and sky and provides guidance on what we are led to do. Caring for these resources provides everyone with the precious gift of healthy food and drink.

No matter what area of dietetics you work in, there are opportunities to practice food sustainability and creation care. Each step of the food system gives us an opportunity to improve food growth and production, food transportation and storage and responsible food consumption and waste. What areas do you see yourself drawn to?

This issue of Food & Faith Conversations will provide you with examples of what RDNs and others are doing in their communities, Academy resources related to food security, and the importance of working within your faith community to implement change.

You'll also learn more about Religion MIG activities during FNCE®, your chance to apply for an RMIG award and grant, upcoming health observances, and so much more!
Religion Member Interest Group - Purpose Statement

The Religion Member Interest Group (RMIG) is a community of members interested in networking and enhancing their religious competency skills as it relates to nutrition and the ability to communicate with diverse audiences. RMIG supports multiple religious communities who bring together culturally diverse professionals interested in increasing cross-cultural awareness, competency, networking and reducing health disparities of their communities. Membership is inclusive of those who identify with a religious community or who otherwise have an interest in increasing cultural competency skills.

Objective 1: Offer members a connected community of togetherness and networking
Objective 2: Increase competence of members through leadership, education and professional development
Objective 3: Develop training and resources
Objective 4: Advocate and showcase knowledge and diversity of RMIG throughout the Academy
Objective 5: Identify potential sponsors that align with RMIG

RMIG Leadership

Yaquullah Ibraheem Muhammad, MS, RDN, LD - Chair

Jessica Pearl, MS, RD, CSSD, CSQS, CLT, CDN, FAND - Past Chair

Mariah Harron, BSc - Secretary

Hiba Hamadeh, MMedSci, RDN - Professional Development Chair

Bushra Islam, RDN - Nominating/Awards Chair

Lisa Brown, PhD, RD, LDN - Diversity Liaison

Kelly Moltzen, OFS, MPH, RD - Webinar Chair

Mary Angela Niester, MPH, RD - Newsletter Chair, Website Coordinator

Elizabeth L. Abbey, PhD, RDN, CDN - Newsletter Editor

Rita Brummett - Manager, DPG/MIG Relations
FNCE® 2019

Congratulations to RMIG Student Stipend Awardees!

The funds for the FNCE® Student Stipend Program are provided from generous donations to the Academy’s Foundation by DPGs, MIGs and Academy donors - like you! A deserving 142 students were each awarded $100 stipends to offset their expenses at FNCE® 2019. Thank you for your donations and congratulations to: Manal Elfakhani and Sara Farmer for being RMIGs 2019 stipend award recipients!

DPG/MIG Showcase

We had an incredible turnout at our RMIG booth during the DPG/MIG showcase. Thank you to everyone who stopped by and said “hi” and the members who asked to be more involved in RMIG leadership positions. Thank you as well to the many volunteers who took time out of their busy FNCE® schedules to spread the word about RMIG and engage in lively discussions with showcase attendees. The first-hand accounts of what’s happening with faith in nutrition focus areas has inspired RMIG leadership to plan many future educational materials, webinars and FNCE® sessions.

Lema Safadi & Bushra Islam answering questions about RMIG. Yaqutullah, Mary, Jessica, & Bushra having fun at the RMIG booth!

NOBIDAN/RMIG Award Reception

Those who attended the joint reception of NOBIDAN and RMIG experienced an amazing night of vegan food, networking, educational opportunities, and fun! Thank you to Yaqutullah and Jessica for working with NOBIDAN leadership in planning this celebration. Neal Barnard, MD was the keynote speaker and discussed various studies, including the EAT-Lancet, that show the powerful impact plant-based diets have on our health. Dr. Barnard encouraged RDNs and NDTRs to continue to discuss with their patients and clients the importance of adopting plant-based eating patterns. RMIG then kicked off the awards ceremony by presenting three Outstanding Volunteer Awards to: Lema Safadi, MS, RDN; Bushra Khan Islam, RDN; and Mary Angela Niester, MPH, RD followed by NOBIDANs awards and special recognitions. The evening ended with great music and dancing!

NOBIDAN and RMIG leaders with Neal Barnard, MD. Kelly Moltzen, Yaqutullah, Bushra, & Mary post award ceremony. Bushra receiving her award.
RMIG Spotlight Session

Conference attendees at RMIG’s session on “Feasting and Fasting: Nutritional Guidance During Religious Observances” left with great information and essential resources for counseling their patients and clients. The session started with a case study of a patient refusing meal trays and beverages and went on to discuss how RDNs and NDTRs can address this situation. The emphasis was on the need to provide appropriate nutritional interventions that are culturally sensitive yet practical. Each step of the NCP was discussed and attendees walked away with a better understanding of the documentation and monitoring of one’s nutritional status during times of fasting.

Next, speakers representing the world’s 3 major religions – Jewish, Muslim and Christian - identified the health and nutritional benefits of fasting and the risks and limitations of counseling patients of diverse religious faiths. Each discussed the reasons for fasting, who is required to fast, exceptions from fasting, and types of fasts for certain holiday observances. Special emphasis was placed on medication use during fasting, dehydration, chronic disease management during a fast, and a plan for when to end the fast. In addition to fasting, feasting during holiday observances and celebrations was also discussed.

Thank you to moderator Candace Coats, RD, LD and speakers Eva Brzezinski, MS, RD, CDE; Wahinda Karmally, PhD, RDN, CDE, CLS, FNLA; and Kelly Moltzen, OFS, MPH, RD for all your hard work and for a wonderful, thought provoking presentation!

More from FNCE® 2019

226. Feasting and Fasting: Nutritional Guidance During Religious Observances

Sunday, October 27 | 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM | CE: 1.5 | Level 2 – Intermediate

Session Details --> https://eatrightfnce.org/sessions/936604/

Eva Brzezinski presenting during Spotlight Session
It's Award Time!

RMIG Nutrition Outreach Mini-Grant

RMIG is offering three Nutrition Outreach and Education Mini Grants valued at $75 each. These mini grants are available to three RMIG members who would like to provide nutrition education classes, workshops, or other food and nutrition related activities to faith-based communities. The focus must be on the Academy's annual National Nutrition Month® theme. Applicants must be either an NDTR, RDN, or student; as well as a current, active Academy and RMIG member. Grantees are required to provide a brief written report following the presentation. To apply, or for more information, visit the award section of the RMIG website.

Academy Diversity & Inclusion Awards & Grants

The 2019-2020 Diversity & Inclusion Awards and Grants are now accepting applications for the three categories below. Applications will close March 1, 2020 so submit soon. For additional information about these and other awards, visit the “Honors and Awards” section of the Academy’s website.

Diversity & Inclusion Mini-Grants: $100 - $1,000 grants to support affiliate, DPG, and MIG outreach to students and professionals from underrepresented groups within the nutrition and dietetics profession.

Diversity & Inclusion Action Award: A $1,000 award will be given to an ACEND-accredited dietetics educational program, affiliate, DPG, MIG, or other recognized Academy Group for their accomplishments in successfully recruiting and retaining diverse individuals.

Diversity & Inclusion Promotion Grant: Provides an up to $10,000 grant to support diversity recruitment and retention projects by ACEND-accredited dietetics educational programs, affiliates, DPGs, and MIGs.

Academy Updates

Strengthen Your Value through Research Skills

Nutrition professionals in all fields depend on research to provide the most up-to-date nutrition care to clients, patients, students, and communities. As a part of the dietetics career ladder, participation in research and improving research skills need to be priorities.

Planned by the Dietetics Practice Based Research Network Oversight Committee, now the Nutrition Research Network, the Certificate of Training in Research will guide participants through the research process with a special focus on ethical conduct, intentional research design, and practical application. Four modules cover the process of developing and conducting research along with analysis and publication in a variety of practice settings and diverse populations. Learn more at www.eatrightpro.org/onlinelearning.
Addressing Food Insecurity: Prioritizing Solutions

By: Mary Angela Niester, MPH, RD – Newsletter Chair

Figuring out how to tackle food insecurity in a community can seem like a daunting task. Fortunately, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, with funding from a General Mills Foundation grant, developed an easy-to-use toolkit that assists RDNs and NDTRs, community and worship leaders, health systems, and businesses in prioritizing solutions unique to each community’s needs.

The **Food Security Solutions (FSS) Toolkit** is a decision making tool with the goal of supporting communities at the local level who are working to promote food security. The toolkit assists subject matter experts in not only identifying food security solutions but also building consensus and engagement among experts all while supporting the community and positioning the community to take action. The framework for this toolkit comes from a process known as “Program and Budgeting Marginal Analysis” (PBMA). PBMA is used in health care systems in Europe to determine what is the most ethical and best way to allocate resources in the health care space. The FSS toolkit contains worksheets to guide individuals through the four steps of the FSS Prioritization Process.

**Step 1: Identify Unmet Needs**
- Complete a community assessment and program inventory to determine baseline information about food insecurity in the community and how it’s addressed (or not addressed).
- Conduct a gap analysis, based on the community assessment and program inventory, to determine the ideal scope.

**Step 2: Suggest Solutions and Screen**
- Suggest solutions to address the community’s most immediate need.
- Screen suggested solutions with input from stakeholders.

**Step 3: Estimate Values**
- Assess cost and contributions for each solution from step 2.
- Develop an impact score – what is the return on investment with the solution(s)?
- Determine how confident the cost/contributions are. This may result in “quick win” opportunities that can be immediately addressed at no or low cost.

**Step 4: Prioritize Food Security Solutions**
- Determine the “sweet spot” where the input score, uncertainty score and financial estimate from step 3 intersect. This results in the Best Expected Impact.

This no-cost **toolkit** also includes resources on how to identify stakeholders, determine timelines, and stakeholders’ roles and responsibilities. You'll also discover how a faith based pilot program, Kalamazoo’s Loaves and Fishes, used the toolkit in their planning process. This toolkit has also been used internationally with immigrant populations in Mumbai.
A Recipe for Nourishing Those Experiencing Food Insecurity:
Developing Community Partnerships that Address Hunger and Malnutrition

By: Lisa S Brown PhD, RD, LDN ~ RMIG Diversity Liaison

Ingredients:
High Quality Food Resources
Nutrition Education
Hands On Culinary Education and Food Tasting

Directions:
Mix healthy food resources, available where and when people need them; preferably including some pre-made meals ready to heat. Add a dash of nutrition education so individuals learn why they should choose healthy meal options and how to tailor nutrition to meet health goals. Fold in culinary education, including cooking skill development and food tasting opportunities to make new habits sustainable over the long-term.

Establishing Partnerships

Food insecurity is a complex and multifaceted problem. Traditionally, solving food insecurity has focused on the provision of food. While an important step, food alone does not address the full scope of the problem. Since the financial crisis of 2008, many community-based programs have modified their approach to address the issue on several levels, pairing provision of food with nutrition and culinary education aimed at promoting long-term behavior change and improving health. Partnering with nutrition professionals is a great way to expand the capacity of individual programs and offer more comprehensive support. Dietitians need to know about the resources in their community, assist with efforts where we have expertise to help, and promote these valuable resources to our clients and patients. The following programs are a sampling of organizations in Massachusetts that use the recipe above.

Daniel's Table, based in Framingham Massachusetts is a nonprofit hunger relief agency. Daniel's Table started in 2011 when Alicia and David Blais, the owners of a small restaurant in the city of Framingham, recognized that the number of food insecure individuals had increased dramatically in their community. In response, they began a free monthly dinner in their restaurant. The overwhelming response to the monthly dinner showed Alicia and David that the scope of the problem required a larger scale response. They changed their approach and began to bring the meals to low income neighborhoods in the city via a food truck a few evenings each week. While this improved access to a hot, healthy meal, it still did not address the full scale of the need. In their current evolution, the Blais' now have dozens of partnerships with local agencies including schools, the local YMCA, community health centers, and other local service agencies. They locate freezers at those agencies and fill them with restaurant quality, healthy meals which allow food insecure individuals and families to access a premade frozen meal when they need it. In addition, Daniel's Table runs a monthly cooking class and refers individuals for nutrition and culinary education through their vast partner network.
The MetroWest YMCA in Framingham also recognized a need to address food insecurity in the community after the financial crisis. The Y partnered with Daniel’s Table and another local non-profit: Lovin’ Spoonfuls, in order to provide food resources to families who were food insecure. The Y partners with local groups who handle food provision so that the Y is able to focus its efforts on nutrition and culinary education. With the expansion of free meal and snack programs through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the building of a teaching kitchen, and the general expansion of nutrition education programs, the MetroWest Y began hiring dedicated staff to support its anti-hunger initiatives. The new staff includes a full time RD and other staff trained in nutrition and culinary arts. Now the Y is able to offer regular cooking classes targeting a variety of demographic groups including kids and teens, and individuals with specialized medical needs such as diabetes. In 2015, through a grant from the TJMaxx corporation, the Metrowest Y was able to build a teaching kitchen and a culinary garden with the aim of increasing culinary skills. They now regularly offer cooking classes that also serve to expose kids and adults to new, healthy foods! As a nonprofit community agency, the Y makes these resources available to all residents of the MetroWest community, assisting with financial barriers as needed.

Using a very different model that incorporates the same ingredients, The Daily Table in Boston MA started in 2015 as a small nonprofit community grocery store. The organization was founded as a retirement project by Doug Rauch, formerly of Trader Joe’s. Mr. Rauch wanted to tackle the massive amount of wasted food in the US, while also addressing food insecurity. As he says “when you’re a hammer, all the world’s a nail”, so he created a grocery store (now with multiple locations) located in a low income neighborhood of Boston. His store offers low cost, high quality, healthy groceries and ready-to-heat meals made on the premises. The Daily Table partners with local agencies like the Greater Boston Food Bank and local food manufacturers that donate “short code” product (food too close to its code date to make it to a warehouse and then to the shelves of traditional grocery stores). They sell this food at very low, SNAP friendly prices. The Daily Table partners with the Codman Square Community Health Center, and Health Works which has a non-profit program in the Boston area. Through these partnerships, they provide culinary education at a newly built teaching kitchen at the Dorchester location. They also rely on the Boston area Community Health Centers to provide nutrition education as part of their comprehensive medical services.

Sources:
- https://www.metrowestymca.org/giving-tuesday, accessed November 1, 2019
- https://danielstable.org/get-to-know-us/, accessed October 31, 2019
Giving Gardens

By: Elizabeth Abbey, PhD, RDN, CDN ~ RMIG Newsletter Editor

“Helping hands” — that is the meaning and mission of Yad Ezra in Berkley, MI. Yad Ezra has provided kosher food to vulnerable Jewish families in Southeast Michigan for almost 30 years. They have grown from serving approximately 250 families per month in 1990 to over 1300 this past year. While emergency food assistance is at the core of Yad Ezra’s programming, the organization’s leadership more recently began looking for ways to stop the cycle of poverty and cultivate independence among its clients. In 2015, Giving Gardens was developed. The objectives of this living, learning garden are to:

1) empower participants with the skills to grow and process their own food;
2) promote a better understanding of the local food system;
3) create a strengthened connection to Judaism through food and gardening experiences;
4) connect diverse participants across social, economic, and religious groups; and
5) create a welcoming space for all, blurring the lines between volunteer and client.

All food grown in Yad Ezra’s 1100 square foot greenhouse and three outdoor gardens goes directly to the food pantry. Stathis Paul, a staff member at Giving Gardens, explains that the greenhouse is not meant to be a production facility but is intended to “reintimate folks with our agricultural heritage”. Clients, volunteers, and staff members are encouraged to learn alongside one another. To help them connect their faith with agriculture, there is one garden bed for each Hebrew month of the year. The plantings in these beds are pertinent to the specific foods consumed at Jewish holidays each month (e.g. bitter herbs during the month of Nisan).

Giving Gardens also holds monthly educational classes on topics such as food preservation, mushroom cultivation, and beekeeping, and a local chef offers quarterly cooking classes. Their Giving Gardens Club (modeled after Keep Growing Detroit) provides gardening resources such as seeds, seedlings, garden consultation, and tool sharing. They recently added a diaspora garden that includes foods and herbs pertinent to people from a variety of Jewish backgrounds.

To make the operation as sustainable as possible, all plant waste (including that from the food pantry warehouse), is composted by a local composting company. Wherever possible, they also utilize companion planting principles to maximize space and minimize pests, and plant native species to attract pollinators. Looking to the future, Paul shares that Yad Ezra hopes to grow its position as a food hub destination in the region, all while holding true to its mission to honor each person who comes to their door. “Clients can come to us and trust us to be caring, discrete, and respectful.”

Book of Tehillim (Psalms) 104:10-14 “He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches. He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth”
The Green Chalice Program is a mission of the Christian Church (DOC) in the United States and Canada. It has two tiers—the first level is to become a Green Chalice Congregation/Assembly, and the second level is to become a Certified Green Chalice Congregation/Assembly. For the first level, congregations form a green team, sign a Green Chalice Covenant, and then make three changes that will move their congregation toward better caring for God's creation. To become Certified, congregations up their level of commitment by taking action in each of the following areas: building/facility; grounds/property; worship and office practices; and education/outreach/justice.

MCC started by focusing on their energy usage, switching to LED lights, and replacing drafty windows. Next, they evaluated their current programs and found ways to integrate them with creation care principles. For example, they use locally produced ingredients at their monthly community dinners whenever possible. MCC pastor Heather McColl explained that a key aspect of the DOC theology is to be people of the table, hence Communion is celebrated each week and church meals are frequent, integral components of church life. In the summer, the community dinners are vegetable-focused suppers that use produce purchased from the local farmer’s market. In the fall, they glean fruit from a local orchard to be used in the meals and to donate to local food pantries. Community dinner attendees have learned new ways to utilize seasonal produce, local businesses are supported, and food miles are minimized. McColl also shared that she “didn’t anticipate the other need this meal met—people coming around the table to meet their neighbors.” MCC became a Certified Green Chalice Congregation in 2015 and has continued to expand its work. In 2017, they partnered with Kentucky Interfaith Power and Light to install solar panels on their fellowship hall. Not only did this decrease their electric bill, it aligns with their goal to be carbon neutral.

Creation care is not just something that MCC “does” but is integrated into the fabric of worship every Sunday through prayers, songs, and liturgies. They hold an Earth Sunday Celebration each April and have hosted many conversations about the environment in conjunction with church potlucks. Moving forward, McColl wants MCC to focus on not only recycling but reducing consumption. Changes in the global recycling market made her realize that, “it is not just about the recycling, but we have to figure out how to reduce our use of single-use plastic.” If the past 10 years are any indication, MCC will continue to find creative approaches to address this issue and live out their call to care for the Earth.

“...See, I give you every seed-bearing plant on all the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; and to all the wild animals, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the earth, I give all the green plants for food. And so it happened. God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good....”

Genesis 1:29-31
Muslims believe that human beings are entrusted by God to act as stewards of the Earth by protecting the earth’s natural resources. God also reminds us to reflect and respect the balancing role of water cycle and plantations. Additionally, feeding the hungry and sharing with the needy are best practices to seek love of God and to enter paradise (Qur’an, 76:8-9). Below are examples of some Muslim based organizations that RDNs and NDTRs can refer to in educating individuals on healthy eating and healthy living in harmony with the earth.

**Green Muslims** This Washington DC based group was formed after a zero trash potluck iftar during the month of Ramadan. Their goal was to raise awareness of environmental issues within a Muslim community. Now, they can be found organizing events such as Our Deen is Green!, hosting hikes and cleanups around the DC community and provide speakers and educational materials to Islamic centers and youth groups. ([www.greenmuslims.org](http://www.greenmuslims.org))

The **Islamic Circle of North America Relief (ICNA Relief)** strives to uplift the underserved in the US through a nationwide network of shelters, food pantries, health clinics, skill development programs, disaster relief services, refugee services and more. ICNA Relief works to build healthy communities and strengthen families and create opportunities for those in despair while maintaining their dignity and advocating for their basic human needs. ICNA Relief’s national Hunger Prevention program feeds over a 100,000 people every year across 15 cities through the following services: Mercy on Wheels, Food Pantries, Food Drives, Ramadan Food Baskets, Eidul-Adha Meat Distribution, and Feed the Hungry Campaigns for the Homeless.

The non-profit **Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN)** is a community organization that fosters health, wellness and healing in the inner-city by organizing for social change, cultivating the arts, and operating a holistic health center. IMAN started by addressing social issues affecting communities of color living on Chicago’s South Side and has steadily grown, opening a second office in Atlanta. Fresh Beats & Eats Farmers Market is a part of the IMAN. This family-friendly, community-centered market aims to increase access to affordable, high-quality produce, create a holistic health, wellness and healing experience all while highlighting diverse local artists.

The **SMILE Food Pantry** provides healthy food to hundreds of families experiencing food insecurity in New Jersey area. The SMILE Food Pantry distributed nearly 35,000 pounds of food to clients last year. It provides fresh produce as well as milk and eggs and on-site case management to help clients achieve self-sufficiency. SMILE allows clients to “shop” for foods rather than providing a prepackaged selection. SMILE provides elderly and disabled clients with access to the food pantry through delivery services. Sara Elnakib, an active RMIG member, is among the SMILE Food Pantry founding members and serving as an Advisory Board Member on Health and Wellness committee.

“And it is He (God) who has made you vicegerents (khalifa) upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that He may try you through what He has given you...” (Qur’an 6:165)
10 Food Sustainability and Creation Care Takeaways

Now that you’ve got a taste of what’s going on in faith communities in regards to food sustainability and creation care, how can you as an RDN and NDTR be involved?

1) **Get involved with public policy** - Become familiar with the Farm Bill or any legislation looking at farm subsidies, food bank donations, or local policies regarding farmer’s markets or urban gardening.

2) **Support research** to understand the impact that faith-based food sustainability and creation care has on the health of the community you serve.

3) Get involved with **urban garden** efforts such as a plot of land at your place of worship or unused land at your place of employment.

4) **Donate unused oral supplements or tube feeding products.** Visit Feeding Tube Awareness Foundation ([https://www.feedingtubeawareness.org](https://www.feedingtubeawareness.org)) or Oley ([https://oley.org](https://oley.org)) to learn more.

5) Support or **create a health ministry or ‘green' ministry** in your place of worship.

6) Educate others about the topic of food sustainability by using the Academy Foundation's "Tossed Treasure" PowerPoint presentations and accompanying handouts.

7) Promote food sustainability and creation care to **youth groups and faith-based schools.** Check out Food Corps Healthy School Toolkit and Food Corps Sprout Scout resources.

8) Encourage **plant-based eating** - Host "Meatless Mondays" or bring back meat-free Fridays during Lent.

9) Assist others about expiration and sell-by dates to **reduce food waste.** Download the USDA’s FoodKeeper app or their website at [https://www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste/](https://www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste/).

10) Teach others about how to incorporate **leftovers** into meals, snacks and beverages. Visit Sarah Koszyk, MA, RDN's website to find “27 Dietitian Approved Recipes Using Leftover Foods to Reduce Food Waste”.

Feeling ambitious? Take a page from St. Joseph Mercy Health System in Ann Arbor (MI) and create your own farm! The Farm at St. Joe’s, located on the main hospitals campus, has hoop houses, gardens for oncology patients, equipment for rehabilitation a greenhouse, a CSA program with local farmers, an outdoor classroom and so much more! Check out their website: **The Farm at St. Joe’s**

Outdoor classroom with St. Joe’s hospital in the background

Share what you are doing in the area of food sustainability and creation care with other RMIG members! Log into the member only section of the RMIG website and be a part of the conversation on the food sustainability discussion board.
Holiday Food Gifts That Give Back

**Sweet Beginnings** ~ Chicago: Formerly incarcerated women and men harvest honey from urban beehives. Honey is sold for eating and for Beelove brand lotions, gels, and balms. ([beelovebuzz.com](http://beelovebuzz.com))

**Best Boy** ~ Indianapolis: Profits from the sale of zesty mustard, Carolina style BBQ sauce, and ginger caramel go to a grant program for qualifying child and family-related charities. ([bestboyandco.com](http://bestboyandco.com))

**Code 3 Spices** ~ Collinsville, IL: Selling savory spice blends to support veterans, crisis prevention hotlines and Back Stoppers, an organization that assists families who have lost a police officer, firefighter or EMT in the line of duty. ([code3spices.com](http://code3spices.com))

**Finnegan’s Brew Co.** ~ Minneapolis: Solving hunger through "barstool philanthropy" by donating ale profits to food pantries. ([finnegans.org](http://finnegans.org))

**Blk+ Bold** ~ Des Moines: Profits from mail order coffee and tea help economically disadvantaged youth go to college and succeed in their careers. ([blkandbold.com](http://blkandbold.com))

**Equal Exchange** ~ USA & Canada: Selling fair trade coffee, tea, chocolates, spices, and other goods to assist small-scale farmers, farm workers and artisans. ([https://equalexchange.coop](http://https://equalexchange.coop))

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Upcoming Monthly Health Observances

**December:** Holiday Eating, World AIDS Day (1st), National Stress-Free Family Holiday Month

**January:** National Healthy Weight Awareness Month, Thyroid Awareness Month, Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

**February:** Heart Health Month, National Black History Month, National Children's Dental Health Month, National Canned Food Month

**March:** National Nutrition Month, National Kidney Month, National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

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RMIG is looking for authors for our next newsletter!

The topic for RMIG's Spring Newsletter is "Chronic Disease Management in Places of Worship".

If you conduct research, are involved with programs within a place of worship, or if your organization or health system partners with churches, synagogues or mosques for chronic disease management or prevention efforts, please contact Mary Angela Niester at mniester@umich.edu.

We would love to have you share your stories with other RMIG members!