



## MFC Vendor Profile:

### Glee Gum

Studies suggest that chewing gum improves concentration, memory and alertness, and can even combat stress and anxiety. Whether you chew gum to boost cognition, improve breath, or alleviate pressure changes during travel, the type of gum you chew can have impacts far beyond your personal use. Read our vendor profile below to learn about [Glee Gum](#) and their sustainability efforts.

**MFC:** How did Glee Gum get started and what does chewing gum have to do with trees?

**GLEE:** Glee Gum gets its great texture from chicle, a rainforest tree sap. Company founder Deborah Schimberg first heard of chicle back in 1992, when she and her family traveled to Northern Guatemala. She learned that all chewing gum was once made from this sticky stuff—until manmade materials became the norm.

Seeing how the sustainable harvest of chicle protects trees and provides an ongoing source of income for forest dwellers, Deborah returned home to Rhode Island feeling inspired. She developed Glee Gum with hopes to revive chicle's use in gum production and help conserve the rainforest.

**MFC:** How do your company's values guide your ingredient choices and product offerings?

**GLEE:** Today, Glee Gum continues to be made with pride by Deborah and her company, Verve, Inc. Based in Providence, RI in newly rehabbed, solar-powered building, Verve is an independent company dedicated to creating environmentally and socially responsible products.

While most gum comes in blister packs, we use recyclable packaging instead – primarily, recycled cardboard. We also believe in empowering people with disabilities, otherwise known as differing abilities. To that end, we are proud to work with supported employment facilities to pack our [Glee Gum Pops](#) and Pouches and assemble our [Make Your Own Candy Kits](#).

We source the highest quality ingredients we can for all our products. Most conventional gum contains artificial flavors, colors (like Blue 2 Lake or Red 40), sweeteners (like Aspartame or Acesulfame K), preservatives (like BHT), and 100% synthetic gum base. In Glee Gum, we instead use natural flavors, colors (like red beet and beta carotene), sweeteners (like the FairTrade cane sugar in Classic Glee Gum and xylitol in Sugar-Free Glee), and chicle gum base.

## From the Board:

### The Future Doesn't Stand Still

by Jim Sims - Board President

This past year has seen your Co-op expanding, profitable, and better able to serve the health and wellness needs of ourselves and our families. The opening of The Café is an obvious example of the work we have done to offer expanded services to our customers and community. The Café's menu of delicious, organic food makes it easy to eat a healthy lunch or pick up ready-to-eat food for dinner when your schedule doesn't allow time to cook a meal. Best of all, because of your support, the new Café was constructed without adding any additional debt to the Co-op.



This year our Co-op granted its owners a patronage dividend from the profits made in 2016. The patronage dividend is on top of the monthly owner coupons and [weekly sales and promotions](#). And we do more than offer cost advantages to our owners and customers. Our Co-op supports and participates in building our community. We donate 100% of the profits from bagged apple sales to the Rogue Valley Farm to School program. We send out [quarterly newsletters](#) to keep all our owners aware and involved. We reach out via [social media](#) to keep even more of us informed.



**MFC:** Glee Gum is the first FairTrade chewing gum. What does it mean to be FairTrade?

**GLEE:** All six flavors of Classic Glee Gum — Peppermint, Cinnamon, Bubblegum, Tangerine, Mixed Berry, and Spearmint — are Fairtrade certified. So are our Make Your Own Chocolate Kits and Gummies Kits. The [FAIRTRADE Certification Mark](#) guarantees that the cane sugar sweetening Classic Glee Gum and the Gummies Kit, as well as the cocoa powder and cocoa butter in the Chocolate Kit, meet the social, economic and environmental standards set by

Fairtrade International. [Fairtrade International](#), a nonprofit organization, oversees an alternative system of global trade in which farmers and workers are paid a fair and stable price for their produce, regardless of changes in the market.

**MFC:** What are your most popular products?

**GLEE:** Our top sellers are Bubblegum, Peppermint, and Spearmint Glee Gum, as well as our Make Your Own Chewing Gum Kit.

**MFC:** What do people have to do to get Glee to plant a tree?

**GLEE:** Simply document the purchase on this page of our site: [gleegum.com/aboutus/plantatree](http://gleegum.com/aboutus/plantatree). We've partnered with the nonprofit [Trees for the Future](#), which works to improve the livelihoods of impoverished farmers by revitalizing degraded lands. Your purchase of Glee helps us – and them – to plant more trees!

**MFC:** Tell us something about Glee Gum (or chewing gum, in general) that most people don't know.

**GLEE:** Here are a few fun facts:

- The color of the first successful bubble gum was pink because it was the only color the inventor had left. The color “stuck,” and today bubble gum is still predominantly pink.
- During WWII, U.S. military personnel spread the popularity of chewing gum by trading it and giving it as gifts to people around the world.
- Chewing gum while cutting onions can stop your eyes from tearing up.
- Studies suggest that chewing gum can help you concentrate. Studies also have shown that chewing gum may improve longterm and working memory, reduce muscle tension, and increase alertness.
- Ever wondered why chewing gum on an airplane keeps your ears from popping? Chewing gum makes your salivary glands produce 250% more saliva than normally, so you swallow more.



Harvesting chicle - Photo courtesy of Glee Gum

This helps to balance the pressure in your head.

We've worked really hard to add at least a dozen or more new owners every month, expanding total ownership to over 3,400 households. We have organized classes on local production and marketing for producers, offer samples of local products in the store, and presently purchase products from over 123 local growers and producers.



Board members Patty Casebolt, Kellie Hill, and Kristi Schoenbachler at the Good Food Festival in May 2017.

We do even more for our community when you think about it. When the Co-op first opened we had fewer than 18 employees. Now we employ 33 people: 24 full time and 9 part time. As local residents, our staff contribute to the local economy.

The Co-op's future doesn't stand still for long, however. We expect to out-grow our present location in another 4 years. So, will we expand; will there be an additional store location, what will the future vision look like? We'll investigate locations, financing, size, economies of scale, and all of the research that makes for a new “present” to evolve into our expected and planned vision. And we'll all be a part of doing that, led by our [Board of Directors](#).

It's been an honor to serve as president of such a successful, dynamic, and essential organization. I will be retiring from my work at the Center For Non-Profit Legal Services in March and will also be resigning from the Co-op Board. The Board is seeking people who are excited about our potential and interested in helping the Co-op expand into the future. Yes, ultimately it's us, Co-op owners, who'll step up and join in the cooperative spirit of those who have led us this far. Thank you.

# Staff Spotlight

*Get to know the staff!*

## Juliana O'Brien

### How long have you been cooperating?

Almost two months. This is the first time I have lived in a city with a co-op!



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

I came to expand our outreach related to nutrition and wellness, and to provide education about the fantastic wellness products we offer. I hope to offer interactive classes and workshops in our Café in 2018! I purchase for and organize the Wellness area in the co-op, which includes dietary supplements and all kinds of personal care products.

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

When I first visited Medford, I had such a good experience shopping here because the atmosphere and the employees were always very welcoming and

had a lot of knowledge. I was impressed with the selection of unique and high quality products in such a small store, and it is the only place I wanted to work in Medford.

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

Connecting with people and learning about health and natural healing. I learn something new about nutrition or wellness from customers and colleagues every day. I love that!

### Tell us your co-op favorites:

Buddha Butter lip balm because it is light, the ingredients are clean and organic, and it feels natural. Nordic Naturals makes a great liquid vitamin D supplement, which I began taking when I realized my D levels were low. I have to get used to these winter grey skies. There are too many wonderful creations in our Café for me to pick just one...

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

It has helped ease my transition to a new city where I barely know anyone. The Café is my favorite hangout.

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

I play the native flute.

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

Exploring the outdoors. When I lived in Sedona, I was out hiking the red rocks or walking along Oak Creek everyday. I would love any recommendations someone would be kind enough to share about natural areas to explore near Medford and beyond! I also love music, reading, movies and a good card game.

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

Arizona, where I have spent my life until now. The Phoenix area and Sedona were home to me. Living in the Sonoran Desert gave me an appreciation for nature and the wide open spaces, dramatic landscapes and harsh climates of the American West. I am super excited to explore Oregon!

## Concern for Community

by Halle Riddlebarger - Marketing Manager

Over the course of the last year, Board members Patty Casebolt and Debi Boen contributed [newsletter articles](#) exploring the cooperative principles and how Medford Food Co-op embodies each principle. These articles help to describe and define the principles and values that differentiate cooperative businesses from other types of businesses and organizations. In this article, we will delve into the seventh and final cooperative principle.

### 7th Principle: Concern for Community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

Genuine concern for our community and the commitment to make it thrive is second nature as a cooperative business. So much so, that we regularly field the question "Is the Co-op a non-profit?" The short answer is no, cooperative businesses are not the same as non-profit organizations. The long answer helps connect the dots. In economic terms, a non-profit is an organization that uses its surplus revenues to further achieve its objective, rather than distributing its income to the organization's shareholders or members. Non-profits are tax exempt, meaning they do not pay income tax on the money that they receive for their organization. Like non-profits, cooperative businesses do use surplus revenue to achieve our vision and ends. However, co-ops are not tax exempt, and in profitable years, co-ops have the option of returning profits to owners in the form of patronage dividends, and/or retaining the capital for growth and improvements.

While the co-op is not a non-profit organization, the seventh cooperative principle ensures that our focus includes policies and objectives that express our concern and commitment to the community. This inherent concern very much guides our outreach and education efforts - which vary from hands-on efforts to financial or in-kind donations.

Our hands-on efforts vary from nutrition education to environmental stewardship. For the last two years, staff members have visited classes at Orchard Hill Elementary to offer brief instruction to students on how to make easy, tasty, healthy snacks at home. We have also hosted store tours for a local Head Start class, which provides opportunities to talk to little ones about healthy foods and let them sample new things like pea shoots and sunflower seed butter. In regards to environmental stewardship, every April and September we help to coordinate and facilitate [Bear Creek Stewardship Day](#), a volunteer effort to keep litter out of the creek and beautify the greenway. We also take on sustainability efforts right here on co-op property because we know that what we do effects others. Through our participation in [National Co+op Grocers'](#) Co+Efficient program, we are able to track metrics related to waste, energy use, and more in order to make improvements over time. Through our enrollment in Pacific Power's Blue Sky program, we support

green electricity sources like wind power and reduce our CO2 footprint.

concerns to help support their efforts and events. We also make weekly donations of wholesome, nutritious produce, eggs, dairy, and assorted grocery items to the [Medford Gospel Mission's](#) The Main Ingredient Community Restaurant, who provides nutritious dinners seven days a week at no charge. Since 2016, we've donated over 55,000 pounds of food to the Mission, which simultaneously diverts food waste and helps feed hungry folks in the community.



Staff members Anne, Halle, & Caleb organizing volunteers for Bear Creek Stewardship Day in September 2017.

In terms of financial support, our efforts are equally varied. Since 2013, we've donated over \$7,000 to local non-profits thanks to our partnership with [Griffin Creek Coffee](#) and our coffee donation program. In support of [Rogue Valley Farm to School](#) and their various programs, we donate 100% of the proceeds of our three pound bagged apple sales. A lot of our support comes in the form of in-kind donations. For example, [we offer small in-kind donations to local organizations](#) promoting local, organic food, food related issues, or community health

Concern for community takes many forms. We allow local non-profits to table in front of the store to help raise awareness about their causes. We support over 100 local farmers and producers purchasing their products and promoting their brands in the store. And because we know we can't do all the work on our own, we work with groups like the [Rogue Valley Food System Network](#) to address food issues at an organizational level and grow our local food economy. Our sponsorship and participation in a wide array of community events allows us to engage with and educate the community about cooperatives. Events like the annual City of Medford Employee Health Fair, the [Brews, Bluegrass & BBQ](#) festival, and the [Oregon Wine Experience](#) provide opportunities for interaction, education, and information gathering – all of which better prepare us to provide for the needs of our community.

Of the community, by the community, and for the community could be a co-op mantra! We are so grateful for supportive people that have allowed the co-op to exist and to give back. We hope to grow our existing outreach efforts in 2018 and create new opportunities to interact with the community. Some of our future plans include: coordinating training opportunities for local food producers; offering space for local artists and acoustic musicians in The Café; utilizing Juliana, our new in-house nutrition and wellness expert, to develop nutrition and wellness demos and classes; and cooperating with the [Ashland Food Co-op](#) to organize the first-ever [Rogue Valley Farm Tour](#) this July. With dedication and enthusiasm, your co-op is here for you.

## Important Dates

### **Rogue Valley Growers Markets Start Again in March**

Weekday markets begin in March, and weekend markets pick back up in May. The 2018 schedule is below (start dates in bold):

- March 1st** Medford Thursday Market at Hawthorne Park
- March 6th** Ashland Tuesday Market at Ashland Armory
- May 5th** Ashland Saturday Market at Oak Street

Visit [rvgrowersmarket.com](http://rvgrowersmarket.com) for more information.

### **Our Family Farms Presents The Future of Soil**

Learn how the best farming practices can regenerate soil, improve yield, mitigate climate and environmental chaos, and serve as alternatives to pesticides and manufactured inorganic compounds derived from by-products of the petroleum industry. Find more information and register for the workshops at [www.ourfamilyfarms.org](http://www.ourfamilyfarms.org).

### **Board of Directors Meetings**

Third Monday of each month 5:30pm-7:30pm 225 West Main Street. Please check our online calendar for any location and/or time changes. If you are an owner planning to attend a meeting and would like a specific topic to be addressed, please email the General Manager: [gm@medfordfood.coop](mailto:gm@medfordfood.coop).