



BUILDING COMMUNITY, ONE ZUCCHINI AT A TIME

submitted by Elizabeth Jensen
Redding Grange #15 (CT)

In 2021, a group of intrepid townfolk re-launched Redding Grange in Redding, Connecticut, a local civic organization dedicated to building community while giving a strong nod to its agricultural roots. This summer marks the second year of the Grange's partnership with US Food Rescue, a national non-profit working to end food waste - and the effort is yielding more than cucumbers.

Helping Hands

The premise of the food rescue program is simple - Redding Grange arranges the collection of produce from our town's farms and gardens, and US Food Rescue volunteers pick up and distribute the vegetables to local food pantries. The Granite Church in Georgetown and the Redding Grange Hall on Newtown Turnpike set out collection coolers from 8am-12pm on Wednesday mornings for people to drop off their excess bounty. Ice

packs keep the vegetables fresh while they await transport. The first distribution stop is Redding Social Services, where the staff selects vegetables needed by people who live here in Redding, and the balance travels on to ARC Comida Food Pantry, which serves approximately 5000 unduplicated people throughout the year.

But as with many things that appear simple, reliable execution takes many hands. Hands like Yo Stuller, a Grange member who

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Some of Redding Grange's volunteers at the 2023 food rescue program. Photo submitted

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UPCOMING

September 16 @8:30pm ET
Lessons of the Degrees
<http://grange.biz/degreelessons>

September 18 @ 8:30pm ET
Membership Matters
<http://grange.biz/matters>

September 24 @ 8:30pm ET
Communications Zoom-torial
<http://grange.biz/GrangeZoomtorial>

September 30
End of National Convention
General Registration period
<http://grange.biz/ng158>

PRODUCE RESCUE

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lives near the Hall, who reliably puts out the cooler and ice each Wednesday morning. And hands like Bill Hill, who regularly brings a large bumper crop of produce from Warrups Farm and Open Farmhouse to donate. Resident Tegan Conlon has been caught donating red-handed on more than one occasion, and there are many others who donate as well.

At the Granite Church location, Redding resident and Grange member Alice Garrard leads the charge on filling the cooler with donations from the Redding Community Garden. Alice sets out her own cooler at the town garden each Tuesday to accept veggies grown by fellow gardeners, and then spirits them away to The Granite Church for pickup. Alice says "The Redding Community Garden is a unique place in our town. There are over 20 plots where we learn, share, and help one another. Friendships have grown throughout the years, despite the seasons. And now, we have the opportunity to share what we produce with those in need in our own town, and beyond, with the freshly grown food that we produce."

Inspiring Others

The good work happening here in Redding has also inspired others. Resident Cathy Smeriglio shared the produce drive program with the owner of Mason's

Farmstand on Main Street in Monroe - a business that Cathy supports. Mason's was eager to help, and now Cathy picks up a large donation from them each week to add to the drive.

With all the coming and going with coolers, vegetables, and ice, friendships have been formed. Cathy and Alice met and found they share a sense of humor, both being from Brooklyn. Yo and Bill Hill share laughs around the cooler at the Grange Hall.

But of course, even with the fringe benefits of creating new friendships and engendering community spirit, the crux of the program remains the impact on the people helped by donations of fresh food. Rabbi Ari Rosenberg, the executive director in charge of the ARC Comida Food Pantry in Danbury, summed it up by saying, "For every fresh vegetable we distribute, we're not only filling bellies with nutritious food. We're also putting smiles on the faces of mothers and children who know what a blessing it is that they are receiving."

And *that* says a mouthful.

Redding Grange is a local chapter of the National Grange. The Redding Grange fresh produce drive continues through October 2nd. For more information or to get involved, email community@reddinggrange.org.

T-MOBILE TO GIVE ONE SMALL TOWN A \$2 MILLION HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD MAKEOVER



This coming football season, the competition won't be just on the field. T-Mobile will transform Friday night lights forever for one deserving small town with its new program Friday Night 5G Lights! T-Mobile is launching

the program with former NFL Star Rob Gronkowski to bring awareness to the massive investments the company has made in rural America - nearly 500,000 square miles of new 5G coverage and hundreds of new stores - while celebrating the community spirit that makes small-town America so special. Nothing brings that spirit out quite like high school football.

T-Mobile will choose 16 finalists

to each receive a \$25,000 cash grant and the opportunity to win a \$2 million grand prize that includes a \$100,000 cash grant, a new teched-out scoreboard, 5G network upgrades, the ultimate tailgate party for the whole community, a 5G powered drone show, and a special gift from Gronk: an upgraded weight room! There are also chances for anyone who enters to win money for their school every week. Visit www.FridayNight5GLights.com to learn more and enter!

YOUR BEST SHOT FOR A HEALTHY WINTER AVAILABLE AT THE BIG E!

Flu and Covid shots will be available at New England's Largest Agricultural Fair

Following a successful vaccination program in 2023, the National Grange and the State Granges of New England are teaming up with [Families Fighting Flu](#) and [PharMerica](#) to offer vaccines for influenza and Covid-19 to people of all ages who attend [the Big E](#) in September.

Vaccine clinics will be held September 13th-29th from 10am-7pm on the front lawn of the New England Grange building.

Attendees are asked to bring insurance cards if they have one, but the vaccines will be given free of charge. Additionally, each person who receives a vaccine will also be given a \$10 Starbucks gift certificate.

This is the second year that the organizations are teaming up to run the vaccine clinic. In 2023, more than 3,500 vaccines were given during the two-week period of the Big E.

"The Big E is one of the country's premier agricultural events, bringing together members of the local communities and drawing in crowds from across the country," said National Grange President Christine Hamp. "One of the guiding principles of the Grange is protecting the health and well-being of our communities. Vaccines are an important and effective tool in helping to prevent the spread of disease, so we're thrilled to offer these to attendees free-of-charge."

"We were so pleased to be a part of the vaccine outreach at last year's Big E and even happier



The vaccination booth set up outside of the New England Grange Building at the Big E in 2023. More than 3,500 vaccinations were administered in 2023, and the National Grange is aiming even higher in 2024. *Photo submitted*

to come back for a second year," said Michele Slafkosky, Executive Director of Families Fighting Flu and New Hampshire resident. "For 20 years, we have been sharing the stories of our families who have been severely impacted by influenza. We are here to raise awareness of the important role that vaccination plays in keeping your family and our communities healthy."

"Access is a huge barrier to vaccination across the country," said T.J. Griffin, Chief Clinical Officer at PharMerica. "It's critical that vaccinators meet people where they are, and with the thousands of people who come through the Big E's gates each day comes a great opportunity to offer them vaccinations."

The Centers for Disease

Control (CDC) recommends that people over the age of 6 months are vaccinated against [Influenza](#) and [Covid-19](#) ahead of the annual respiratory disease season.

The Big E runs from Sept 13th-29th. Massachusetts Day is September 19th.

More information available at <https://www.grangevaccinationeffort.com/>

This project is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)) through USAgging as part of a financial assistance award to USAgging totaling \$74,999,835 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official view of, nor an endorsement, by USAgging, ACL/ HHS.

MAKE TODAY A  **Good Day!** TM **SUBSCRIBE:** [NATIONALGRANGE.ORG/GOODAY](https://www.nationalgrange.org/gooday)

RIO LINDA'S ZUCCHINI RACERS ZOOM TO VICTORY

By John Todd

originally published in Rio Linda Online

The annual Rio Linda Grange Zucchini Races returned this past weekend, bringing a burst of quirky fun to the community. Spectators lined up to cheer on their favorite zucchini-racing contestants as they raced down a specially constructed track, vying for the coveted title of Zucchini Champion.

This year, the event was moved both in time and place- from late afternoon to take advantage of the cooler morning temperatures and from Depot Park to the Rio Linda Library Park, as the races have been expanded into a full-blown festival, with classic cars, food stalls and craft vendors.

Zucchini racing, a unique and lighthearted sport, has gained popularity across the United States in recent years. While the exact origins of the sport are unclear, it's believed to have emerged from rural communities as a way to celebrate the bountiful harvest. Today, zucchini races are often held as charity events or local festivals, attracting participants of all ages.

The Rio Linda Grange event featured a variety of races and competitions, including Fastest, farthest, and Best Dressed for children and adults alike. Contestants displayed impressive creativity in decorating their zucchinis, transforming them into everything from race cars to superheroes. The atmosphere was filled with laughter and excitement as participants and spectators cheered on the speedy vegetables. The big winner was Duane Hamp of Spokane, Washington, who won the Adult Distance and Fastest categories, as

well as the G.O.A.T. award for having the Zucchini that went the farthest on the day.

While the outcome of the races is ultimately determined by a combination of factors, including zucchini shape, weight, and the racer's skill, the true winners are often the participants and the community as a whole. The event provides an opportunity for people to come together, have fun, and support local causes.

This year's event coincided with the Rio Linda Grange's 100th birthday, and dignitaries came out to honor the Grange appropriately: a representative from Ami Bera's office, who delivered recognition in the Congressional Record, Supervisor Sue Frost, who delivered a Sacramento County Proclamation, and representatives from the National Grange organization. *Good Day Sacramento* came out to feature the event on television.

As the day began to heat up, the Zucchini Races came to a close, leaving participants and spectators with lasting memories of a truly unforgettable day. The event showcased the community's spirit and creativity, proving that even the most ordinary object can become the star of an extraordinary event.

The Rio Linda Grange Zucchini Races were supported, in part, by the National Grange's Rural Life Initiative, with support from Pfizer. Learn more about the Rural Life Initiative at <https://www.nationalgrange.org/rural-life-initiative>.



Duane Hamp of Spokane, Washington, was the big winner of the day at the Rio Linda Grange Zucchini Races.

Photo provided



Children from around the Rio Linda area entered a variety of decorated and wheeled zucchinis in the races.

Photo provided



GRANGE FOUNDATION SEEKS BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANDIDATES

submitted by Joan C. Smith

Chair, Grange Foundation Board of Directors



The Grange Foundation is seeking candidates to join the Board of Directors, with election to be held on November 11 during the National Grange Convention.

The two-year term runs from November 2024 through November 2026.

We will be electing two members for the expiring terms of Joan C. Smith (DC - not seeking reelection) and Marty Billquist (MT). The Board of Directors meets 8 times a year, every other month; five (5) meetings via ZOOM and three (3) face-to-face at National Grange Leaders' Conference and at the National Grange Convention.

The Grange Foundation supports youth development, promotes agriculture education and research, improves communities, and fosters culture, heritage, citizenship, and charitable activities.

Come join your Grange Foundation Board, be part of the programming of the Grange at the National level.

Please email ngfb@grange.org telling us why you would like to be part of this Board and a short biography. I look forward to hearing from many of you. Your responses will be provided to all delegates prior to the Convention to support the voting on Monday, November 11.

Candidate information is due by October 11th.

- January 2024 - Financial Review
- February 2024 - 1-N-1000 Club Annual Zoom Meeting
- February 25, 2024 - Applications For GF and National Ag In-the-classroom (NAITC) "Partnership In Ag Literacy" Due - Open To All Granges and Grangers
- March 1, 2024 - GF Scholarship Applications Due
- April 10 - Ernestine Keiser Scholarship Winner Announced
- May 1, 2024 - Deaf Awareness Grant Applications Due
- February - May - Review Grange Foundation Corporate Documents
- June - Grange & National Agriculture-in-the-classroom (NAITC) Award Presentation, Salt Lake City, Utah
- August 28 - 1-N-1000 ZOOM
- November
 - Annual Meeting with Delegates - BoD Election
 - Fundraising Auction
 - BoD Elects Officers
- ALL YEAR - \$24 IN 2024 - Contributions
- ALL YEAR - MAMP - Meal-a-month Program, Give To Gf And Eat At Home Once A Month



2024 GF HAPPENINGS

11/13/2023

A list of Grange Foundation Board efforts in 2024.

Graphic provided.

GRANGE YOUTH T-SHIRT DESIGN CONTEST VOTING



The entries for the **Grange Youth T-Shirt Design Contest** are in!

Through September 16, head to <http://grange.biz/tshirtvote> to vote for your favorite of the designs!

The winning entry will be turned into an actual t-shirt that will be sold to raise funds through the Grange Foundation to support youth programming and development.

Grange Youth T-Shirt Design Contest

Voting open until Sept 16
<https://grange.biz/tshirtvote>

NATIONAL GRANGE & RURAL MINDS PRESENT WEBINAR

Getting access to the medications you need shouldn't be hard. Unfortunately, health insurance companies and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) keep adding new obstacles that patients have to overcome just to get the medications they need at their local pharmacy. Learn more about how we can change the current system by limiting the control of these healthcare monopolies.

Did you know that pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs):

- Decide which medications are covered and what you will pay out-of-pocket?
- Work with insurance companies to negotiate private discounts and rebates on your medications, but aren't required to pass those savings along to patients?
- Can dictate which pharmacies you're allowed to get your medications at, creating barriers to access and placing a lot of financial strain on local, rural pharmacies?

During this 45-minute webinar, Dr. Madelaine Feldman, a rheumatologist and patient advocate, will discuss how insurance coverage can limit access and impact patient out-of-pocket costs. She will also

dive into ways that we can change the status quo by advancing important PBM reforms that better serve patients.

Dr. Feldman will be joined by Alfred Pence, pharmacist from Stanford, Kentucky, and owner of Coleman's Drug Store, an independent, small-town, family-run business since 1913. Even as a pharmacist, Mr. Pence has not been immune to the challenges faced by patients across the country. He currently struggles to fill his daughter's prescriptions and is unable to administer her vaccines because of changes to his insurance and coverage restrictions caused by their PBM.

Presented live via Zoom with the option to hear audio as listen-only, this moderated webinar will include a Q&A session.

Register for this free webinar on September 25 at 2:00pm ET / 11:00am PT by visiting: <https://bit.ly/3Rwfuxg>.



JOIN MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Join us for a special edition of **Membership Matters**, with members of the National Grange Diversity Task Force.

Diversity Builds Strong Granges

From its very beginnings, the Grange doors have always been open to all who wish to join in our endeavors and become members with us. In today's world, we need to actively reach out a hand to invite new members and welcome them to the Grange.

The Membership Matters meeting this month will focus on including everyone. It will be facilitated by members of the

National Grange Diversity Task Force and will include members of Roy Grange #702 (WA) who have built pathways in communication to promote diversity in their Grange allowing EVERYONE to feel included.

Connect at <http://grange.biz/matters> on September 18 at 8:30pm ET / 5:30pm PT.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

with Amanda Brozara



158th Annual National Grange Convention

Bettendorf, Iowa



Register: nationalgrange.org/158thconvention

REGISTER FOR NATIONAL GRANGE CONVENTION

The 158th Annual National Grange Convention, being held in Bettendorf, Iowa from November 11-16, 2024, is now less than 60 days away.

The General Registration period ends on September 30th, so Grange members and friends nationwide are encouraged to register soon.

The schedule of events and tours is available on the National Grange's website at <http://www.nationalgrange.org/158thconvention>.

In addition to materials already listed online, we are thrilled to begin releasing information about some of the workshops that will be held during the Convention. In all, more than 30 individual workshops will be available - if you can't attend in person, many of the workshops will be recorded to be released following the Convention.

Some workshops include:

Bridging Differences to Build Fraternal Bonds - SHIPmates Vic Stevens (WA), a member of the National Grange Diversity Work Group, and Scott Lyle (WA) use their personal journey that required setting aside assumptions, respecting truths and embracing grace to create a lasting friendship. Using this story, they talk about central tenets of the Grange and other fraternal organizations, and how we can better our Grange experience and our lives by embracing these and becoming unoffendable.

How to Effectively Teach/Lead a Workshop - SHIPmates Audrey Trowbridge (KS) and Melanie Hudson (NC), both educators, will provide attendees with strategies for success when planning and leading a workshop in Grange, at work or in your community.

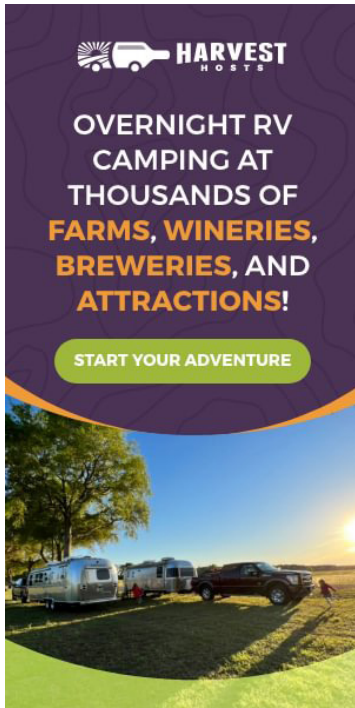
What to Do When You're Stuck - Vertical Thinking, Presented by Emma Edelen (IA)

Ever get stuck on a problem? Don't know how to get past it? Sometimes you just need a new perspective. Learn about how you can incorporate whiteboards into your office and how to use them to get "unstuck" in your thought process

National Grange Story Slam - Hosted by National Grange Communications Director Philip Vonada and organized by the 2024 Communication Fellows, this interactive event will call on members to share their impromptu story about a to-be-announced topic. Participants are encouraged to sign up in advance with the Fellows. Prizes will be awarded!

Stay tuned over the next few weeks to learn about our workshops and what YOU can learn at this year's Convention.

GRANGE MEMBER BENEFITS & GRANGE STORE



Grange members can enjoy 20% off their membership with **Harvest Hosts**, which has thousands of unique locations across the U.S. and Canada that allow members with self-contained RVs to stay overnight on the property of an agriculturally-oriented business with no camping fees. With over 5,000 locations within the network, there is an adventure for everyone.

There is an app associated with Harvest Hosts that provides maps of the destinations, trip routing and planning, and much more. Members of Harvest Hosts can also enjoy other RV-oriented savings of over \$2,000 year-round. Join today with the code **GRANGE20** to redeem this offer

Coupon Code: **GRANGE20**

20% off of the first year for new members
5000+ unique locations

Grange members with RVs are encouraged to check out Harvest Hosts at

<http://www.harvesthosts.com> and use the code GRANGE at checkout.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW FLYER](#)

An advertisement for a book from the Grange Supply Store. At the top left is the Grange logo. To its right, the text "SUPPLY STORE" is written in a serif font. Below this is the website "www.grangestore.org". The main part of the ad features a book cover with the title "PEOPLE, PRIDE and PROGRESS" and a subtitle "125 YEARS OF THE GRANGE IN AMERICA" by David H. Howard. To the right of the book cover, the text reads: "PEOPLE, PRIDE AND PROGRESS", "125 Years of Grange in America by David H. Howard", "335 Pages Published in 1992", "SALE PRICE: \$6 plus shipping", and "Get your copy by ordering online through the Grange Supply Store at grangestore.com or by calling Loretta at (202) 628-3507 ext. 109."

Great news! The National Grange has partnered with **Grouper** to enhance your community engagement and well-being. For Grangers aged 65 and older, Grouper offers an easy way to stay socially active—just answer two simple questions to sign up, and receive \$50 upfront for having an eligible health plan, plus a \$20 wellness payment every three months.

Participating in group activities and service projects combats social isolation and has proven health outcomes. Visit hellogrouper.com/grange to redeem your benefit or learn more about this partnership.

An advertisement for Grouper. The top part has a dark red background with the text "Eligible Grangers 65+ Get \$50" in white. Below this is the Grouper logo and the text "pays you to be active in your community." and "REDEEM BENEFIT" in a purple button. To the right, there is a photograph of a man and a woman holding a quilt. Further right, a white box contains the text "GROUPEUR IS PROUD TO BE INCLUDED IN:" followed by logos for "One Pass" and "Renew Active UnitedHealthcare".

NATIONAL GRANGE

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Publisher Christine Hamp, National Grange President. Available to members at champ@nationalgrange.org or by phone at (509) 953-3533

Editor Philip J Vonada, National Grange Communications Director. Contact to submit a story idea for *Grange Today!* or *Good Day!* magazine, request assistance with publicity, business cards, social media, and more. Email pvonada@nationalgrange.org or call/text (814) 404-7985

Leadership Training & Membership Development - Amanda Brozana, National Grange Membership and Leadership Development Director. Contact to learn more about membership recruitment or how to start or reorganize a Grange, leadership training and more. Email abrozana@nationalgrange.org or call/text (301) 943-1090

Legislative and Policy Issues Burton Eller, Legislative Director. *National HQ*, ext. 114 or email beller@nationalgrange.org

Membership Recognition, Grange Supply Sales, Grange Programs and Member Benefits
Loretta Washington, *National HQ*, ext. 109 or email Lwashington@nationalgrange.org.

Free Grange Websites, Emails, *Good Day!* subscription questions, and Membership Database
Stephanie Wilkins, IT Director. *National HQ*, ext. 101 or email swilkins@nationalgrange.org.

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National Grange Community Service communityservice@grange.org

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