

Women Finding "CommonGround" Through Food and Talk

What happens when 24 urban women join 5 farm women and cook a meal together? Let's just say you would have seen a roomful of conversations, joy, and camaraderie. Food is an emotional topic for many of us and this night of talking about food and preparing it was no exception. We talked, laughed and truly enjoyed each other's company and at the end of the night, learned a little more about each other. Yes, we found **common ground** through food and talk.

[CommonGround](#) is a volunteer organization of farm women who connect with other women answering questions they may have about their food. CommonGround invited a cross-section of women from the Minneapolis/St. Paul area to participate in a cooking class held at [Cooks at Crocus Hill](#). These women represented academia, mommy bloggers, nutrition and dietetics and media.

Cooks of Crocus Hill is a kitchen cookware and gadget store in St. Paul, In addition to their retail store, they also provide cooking classes. Their cooking philosophy surround two words - *joy and connection*. And that describes our evening as we cooked and enjoyed a meal together. The evening started with wine and appetizers, followed by a short introduction of the CommonGround volunteers. We immediately broke into five random groups, where each group was assigned to cook a certain portion of the meal. Just imagine a large kitchen with nearly 30 women cooking and preparing a meal together! You may think chaos, but it was the exact opposite. The cooks of Crocus Hill had everything in place and were very helpful in keeping us on task. Here is the menu that we prepared (along with recipes and pictures!):

[Warm French Herbed Potatoes](#)

[Roasted Root Vegetables with Gremolata](#)

[Boston Bibb Salad with Walnuts](#)

[Pork Medallions with Mustard-Braised Leeks](#)

[Fresh Berry Mini-Shortcakes](#)

As we were preparing the meal, the chefs gave us cooking tips and information. I must admit I grilled Chef Mike on how he cooks pork. Let's just say he knows his "pork." When we finished, it was time to eat. And I must say, the food was fabulous!

There is no question there is a food movement happening in our society. People are wanting to

cook more healthy foods in their own homes and even though I am a "church cookbook" type of cook, I would definitely make these dishes again. My favorites were the pork medallions (they were so moist and tender they practically melted in your mouth - cooked the way pork was meant to be cooked) and the berry shortcakes (can you say heavenly?)

After we finished eating, the CommonGround volunteers sat together in front of our guests for a Q & A forum. With food being such an emotional topic, no question was off the table. The majority of the questions centered around animal antibiotic use and GMOs (genetically modified organisms). There were great questions and we as CommonGround learned a lot also by listening to concerns and questions our guests had about the health and safety of food. Something we all share.

On a personal note - I don't think you can downplay the openness and connectedness that I saw with this roomful of women. Another observation was the genuine passion for agriculture showed by the CommonGround volunteers. It really took me aback as I listened to the other volunteers speak . I am proud to be a part of this group.

At the end of the night, I was pleased how well the evening went. I had never been to a cooking class before and somewhat sheepishly, I must admit that I am not very adventurous in my cooking endeavors. But that may change! The only problem of the evening? It ended too soon! Great comments of the night were received and many of them told us they hoped to be invited again. And I do too.

Do you have food questions? Be sure to checkout [CommonGround](#) or [Minnesota's CommonGround](#) for answers to your questions!

Here are a few more links to other questions you may have about your food.

[Why It Is Okay to Feed Your Family GMOs](#)

[Top 5 GMOs Myths From a Mom's Perspective](#)

[Why I'm Pro-GMO](#)

[Antibiotics are Rampant in our Food Supply](#)