

CHEESY CHATS

(IN SUBSTITUTE OF A DINNER TABLE CHAT WITH YOU)

UPDATES IN ETHIOPIA >>

Thanks to your monetary support, our friend and employee Alimetu (whom we introduced to you in the last newsletter) is taking English classes in the capital city. English is important for business in Ethiopia, especially since we plan to market our cheese to the booming expat community and eventually export to shops in New Zealand. Alimetu is set to lead the business in the long-term, and her advanced English training is an important step towards this goal. **Woo!**

We've made a six-month plan to launch the ice cream operation starting in December, which we're focusing on first since (1) it's easier than cheese, (2) ice cream still preserves the milk that's spoiling during fasting seasons in Ethiopia, (3) ice cream is a hit in Ethiopian cities already, but the quality isn't great, (4) we already have distribution and sourcing set up, and (5) if worst case scenario does happen and unrest in Ethiopia continues to grow, we can quickly train employees on ice cream making and managing.

LOGISTICS FOR YOU >>

We are halfway to our fundraising goal of \$50,000! **Thank you!** This amount will fund equipment purchases, construction, packaging and distribution costs, and a portion of employee salaries so that all profits can be invested back into the business for the first two years. We're on track nearly reaching our goal by November, and we really wouldn't be able to say this without you.

Payment and additional donations can be made virtually via Vemo @ jackie-bannon-3 or Paypal to bannon.jackie22@gmail.com. Thank you for your support.

Our next (and last) pick-up meal featuring a Middle Eastern feast is on August 4th! Liam has been dreaming of the dessert for this meal for months, and oooweeee I can't wait!



Middle Eastern tickets

Thanks to Fiddlehead Coffee, we can now also serve you in person! If you'd rather dine with us on Friday, August 6th, tickets are \$60/person and can be purchased online. All proceeds go towards our project in Ethiopia.

And if you REALLY love this Indian-Italian meal and want to eat it all again (or want to recommend and / or gift it to someone you know), you can reserve tickets to dine in **this Friday**, July 16th.

PS. Did you see the 100+ pounds of veggies that are mixed in throughout this meal? Follow us on Instagram @[spreadin_cheese](https://www.instagram.com/spreadin_cheese).

PPS: No need to return containers this time around. :)

PPPS: Want more good food times? Check out [nightmarketmn.com](https://www.nightmarketmn.com), and explore the market on July 17, Aug 21, & Sep 18th. :)



Indian-Italian tickets

EAR FOOD

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Liam and I try to engage all of our senses when we're cooking and eating, and one way we do this is with music: sometimes background dinner tunes and maaaany dance parties in the kitchen. We thought we'd share a slice of the sounds that are folded into your food. Like food for your ears! Scan the QR code to access the Spotify playlist.



A REFLECTION FROM JACKIE

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Liam and I first started seriously thinking about fundraising for our cheese project in Ethiopia last winter. We were both working at Shepherd's Way sheep's cheese farm outside of Northfield, Minnesota, living in a rural tiny home, and gearing up for what we imagined to be a simple and restful spring and summertime before moving to Ethiopia.

We felt uncomfortable asking people for money since our project still felt like a distant dream at that point, and we realized our farm salaries weren't going to cut it. Besides, we wanted to share the project with people more intimately. We have so much to learn and so much we're excited to share- with you, with the community of farming families we'll be working and living with in Ethiopia, with each other, with anyone really. So, last winter, we decided that we'd strive to meaningfully connect and collaborate with people through every step of the project, including our fundraising. So here we are, sharing flavors and sometimes stories with you too.

Life is inherently full of surprises, and we seem to never really know where we're going. When Liam and I met in Ethiopia in 2019, the third thing I said to him was, "we're going to be the best of friends" because our schedules aligned and we'd be working together in the middle of nowhere for a month. I never thought that month would extend perpetually.

We delivered 60 dinners to family friends for our first fundraising event in April, and now we're serving 300 people, mainly strangers, with pick-up meals and dine-in feasts at Fiddlehead. I didn't expect that through sharing food around Rochester I'd gain a whole new perspective of my hometown too. What I used to believe was a corntower dud-town with limited possibilities is actually a place bubbling with opportunity, drive, and creativity. Of course I'm still skeptical of Rochester's culture - infused with busy-ness and perfectionism - but I can see it and appreciate it more fully now. I've reconnected with people who have lived here for as long as I've known, the same people who used to host play dates when I was a toddler or feed me dinner during high school. They encompass Rochester's innovative, ambitious energy, and I'm now realizing that it's because of these people and their will to share that this energy has become ingrained in me too.

There seems to be a collective search for more that makes Rochester so unique - a city of people questioning and exploring how great they can really be or how fully they can live, an energy I haven't experienced so strongly in other places. People seem to be open to possibilities. I see it in the way people retreat from Midwestern flavors and sign up for our meals. I heard this openness from Fiddlehead owner Sarah. "Saying yes to everything," she told us, in reference to her business, "is how you end up here."

Rochester's "yes!" energy has helped shape my life. That's why I said yes to hundreds of possibilities over the years, leading to both successes and failures. That's why I said my most risky "yes!" when agreeing to make cheese with people I didn't really know for the sake of economic development in a place that is still foreign to me. It's this same "yes!" energy that exhausts me when I find myself spread thin. And it's this same "yes!" energy that defeats me when the things I've energetically devoted myself to don't pan out the way I envisioned.

Liam and I have had to accept this reality: that the plans we agree to will change, that life is full of surprises beyond our control. Unrest in Ethiopia has been simmering for nearly a year now, and recent weeks have proved that it won't die down anytime soon. Even worse, it may continue to accelerate. Liam and I have had to ask ourselves if it's wise to follow through with our "YES" to setting up the creamery in an unstable country during a particularly unstable time while a civil war brews on. We've had to make a plan for ourselves and guidelines as to when we'd decide the project is too risky. We've had to accept that if it does become too dangerous, we'll have to give it up and hold on hope that there are thousands of other opportunities that we could say yes to... cheesy opportunities, and not.

As for now, we're still moving forward with our goals in Ethiopia. We're driven by the fact that in order for some sense of stability to be achieved in unsettled countries, there needs to be sustainable economic opportunities. There needs to be long-term outlook. There needs to be hope.

We thank you for having hope in us and in this project that initially sounded absurd and wacky. We say we're spreadin' cheese, and I suppose we are, but what we're really trying to spread is a sense of agency, community, hope, collaborative ideas, and opportunities that give people the option to continue saying "yes!"

For now, **YES! GNOCCHI TIME!**

JACKIE'S
THOUGHTS
CONTINUED

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