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THE GRAPEVINE

Teachers College, Columbia University

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Rockland Farm Alliance

by Jack Taliercio

Is Rockland County, New York, just thirty miles north of Manhattan, a hotbed of sustainable agriculture? A grassroots effort, led by the passionate vision of a single farmer, John McDowell, may well revive local food production in the historic Dutch settlement. "One of the earliest industries of Rockland County was the growing of foodstuffs for New York City," said McDowell. As a musician and film composer, McDowell achieved worldwide recognition with his soundtrack to the

Academy Award winning documentary, *Born Into Brothels*. He has toured and recorded with the band Rusted Root, Krishna Das and has produced several albums including his solo CD, *Speaking the Mamma Tongue*. All the while, McDowell has maintained a strong connection with the soil.

In early 2007, led by McDowell, a broad-based coalition of farmers, community groups and activists, local and county

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Students, Faculty, Alumni, and Staff,

Happy November! This is my first official semester as Editor-in-Chief of the Grapevine Newsletter, and I am looking forward to collaborating with many of you on future issues.

In this mid-semester fall issue, we would like to give a warm welcome to some of the new students who began the Program in Nutrition both in the spring and fall of 2013 (page 6). These New Student Notes give everyone a glimpse of our nutrition backgrounds, interests and future pursuits.

In this edition's feature, we learn about Rockland Farm Alliance and sustainable food production in Rockland County, NY. This issue also explores some relevant research on nutrition and childhood obesity as it relates to psychosocial theory (page 5). Experience the food of Spain in our Exotic Tastes section (page 8), or zip across to Pennsylvania and check out life on a pig farm in our Out and About section (page 12). There is a re-cap of the October NYCEN meeting held at TC (page 10), and our Op-Ed tells a story about living vibrantly despite chronic pain (page 11).

We have a Restaurant Review of Harlem's Jin Ramen and some exciting free fitness opportunities to check out (page 9). With the fall season in full swing and the holidays approaching, this issue would not be complete without an extensive Recipe Section (page 14) full of winter squash and baked apples galore!

Thanks to all of the students who have volunteered to write. The Grapevine is written by the students in the Teachers College Program in Nutrition. I encourage all of you to get involved. Send your ideas to me at sal2182@tc.columbia.edu.

And don't forget to "like us" on Facebook at

Facebook.com/TheGrapevineTeachersCollege

Special thanks to Ryan Renaud, dietetic intern, who has been helping find exciting stories to post on our Facebook page.

Enjoy the issue!

Stephanie Lang
Editor-In-Chief
Nutrition Education

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The Grapevine

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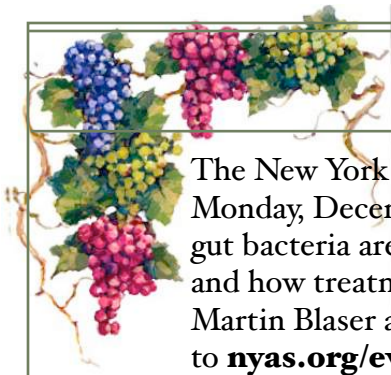
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Fresh off the Vine

The New York Academy of Sciences is putting on an event called Hats Off to Bacteria on Monday, December 2 from 7:00 - 8:30 pm. Learn about our basic microbial ecology, how our gut bacteria are linked to diabetes and obesity, how newborns are first colonized by bacteria, and how treatments are changing people's lives. Speakers include Dr. Lawrence Brandt, Dr. Martin Blaser and Dr. Maria Gloria Dominguez-Bello, moderated by Christine Gorman. Go to nyas.org/events for more information.

Intelligence Squared U.S. Debates: Don't Eat Anything with a Face. According to a 2009 poll, around 1% of American adults report being vegan, rising to 2.5% in 2011. Taking into account our health, the environment and ethical concerns, we hear from Dr. Neal Barnard, Gene Baur, Joel Salatin, and Chris Masterjohn on which diet is best. Do vegans have the right idea, or are we meant to be carnivores? This debate is taking place Wednesday, December 4 at 6:45 pm at the Kaufman Music Center. Visit kaufmanmusiccenter.org/mch/event to learn more.

Please join the NYC Food Policy Center and the Museum of Food and Drink for the first Roundtable #1: NYC Soda Regulation. Thursday, December 5, 2013 from 6:30-8pm (reception to follow). This live debate will focus on NYC's soda regulation, which, while it remains in question, is a high-profile example of a growing and controversial trend of public intervention in private dietary choices. At the CUNY School of Public Health: 2180 Third Avenue at 119th Street, New York NY 10035

A snapshot from the November book club at Dr. Wolf's place. We read Saru Jayaraman's *Behind the Kitchen Door*, and invited Mamdouh and Nin from the Restaurant Opportunities Center (ROC) organization to join us for a fantastic meal and great discussion!

Visit <http://www.rocny.org/> to learn more about ROC.



(Rockland Farm Alliance, cont'd)

officials and interested citizens formed “Rockland Farm Alliance” with a simple mission: to preserve, create and enhance sustainable food production in Rockland County, NY.

After starting the first CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) in the county, McDowell and his wife Alexandra quickly recognized the lack of infrastructure and support for the few remaining farms in the county, and together with other dedicated members of the community made preserving existing farmland and supporting local farms a main goal of Rockland Farm Alliance.

On a recent visit to their farm, the couple told me that, “with nearly every facet of our community represented, we draw on the expertise of individual members to further our goals of preserving open space and bringing small sustainable farms back to Rockland.” Alexandra said that one of their main goals is “to create farms that serve as models of small-scale agriculture with educational facilities dedicated to the development and teaching of sustainable farming practices to people of all ages.” Together with the Town of Clarkstown, Rockland County, and a group of local residents, the couple set out to revive the historic Cropsy Farm in New

City. As a result of a year-long collaboration, a five-acre organic community learning farm was born. They developed workshops that range from kids’ composting classes and garden art projects, to work in the fields and farm internship programs. Now in its third season, the farm will soon be expanding its operation to over ten acres.

Rockland Farm Alliance has won widespread government support from local to state level; referred to by NY State Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee as “the largest and most diverse group of citizens gathered for a great cause in Rockland County.” Visitors are welcome and it is easily accessible from Manhattan by car, bike, bus or train.

As part of ongoing efforts to build community and create support for its educational programs and farm operations, Rockland Farm Alliance hosts a variety of events throughout the year. In fact, the Teachers College organization, Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition Educators (SANE), conducted a conference call with McDowell at one of the recent meetings.

Visit the website rocklandfarm.org/events to find out about upcoming events with Rockland Farm Alliance.



Journal Watch

By Laura Guerra

We all know the numbers. Over the last 30 years, childhood obesity has more than doubled (from 7% to 18%), and adolescent obesity has more than tripled (from 5% to 18%). It has spread rapidly across race, gender, and class lines, and has disproportionately affected African-American, Mexican-American, and Native-American children. As nutritionists, we know a number of individual health behaviors and environmental factors play a role in the obesity epidemic. No one cause can be singled out because the multiple environments in which children are embedded (family, peer, school and society) operate together to influence the development of their health behaviors and health status.

Making behavior changes is difficult to begin with, and it can be especially hard for children and adolescents to follow through on good intentions when getting exercise is not easy or safe, or the only food options available are not healthy. Each of us has probably wondered what would it take to align a community to be more supportive? Would such an undertaking even be possible in a large city?

A study in *Preventive Medicine* looked at this type of community effort in Omaha, Nebraska, and the initial results were encouraging. The primary goal of the Omaha collaborative was to create community support for children achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. *Activate Omaha Kids* was designed, implemented, and evaluated using the Ecological

Model, the Health Policy Model, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Active Living by Design 5P Model.

These three models were used extensively throughout the organizational development and planning processes for this effort. The Ecological Model ensured all levels of the community were involved in the effort, and defined the scope of work needed to create meaningful results. The Health Policy model assured that community knowledge, political will, and social strategies were considered throughout the planning process. In the early phases of the program, it generated criteria to evaluate initial participants' ability to be impactful, and later in the program generated the criteria to help rank the activities identified by the planning "plank" committees. And finally the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation 5P Model was expanded beyond its traditional scope of looking just at how the physical environment supports changes in physical activity, to look at how the nutritional environment supports healthy eating.

Having a single concise model enabled the collaborative to communicate its needs clearly. The specificity of the final business plan produced by the collaborative allowed potential funders to see how each activity fit into the overall community plan, and delivered against the plan's objectives. Funding requests were developed for 7 of the 24 initiatives and more than a million dollars were secured.

The community collaborative created by the partnership between Our Healthy Community

Partnership and Alegent Health, *Activate Omaha Kids*, was quickly and successfully formed in part because it was designed, implemented and evaluated using the three models (Ecological Model, Health Policy Model, and the RWJF 5P Model). The models guided the process of building the overall plan by providing a framework to ensure that all levels of the community were represented, and that the ideas generated were comprehensive, specific, and feasible.

The study suggests it is possible to have a more cohesive collaborative structure by integrating models throughout the process, from selection of the participants through initiative selection and prioritization. Environmental change was possible because the effort involved all levels of the community actively from project onset: from identifying the issues, to planning how they might be addressed. In addition, the models provided an objective lens through which disparate groups could view the connectedness of their efforts. By using a theory or conceptual framework, the decision-making and project prioritization became a coordinated effort to fulfill the overall vision, rather than devolving into the individual agendas of the program's significant number of participants.

References

Huberty, J.L., Balluff, M., O'Dell, M., Peterson, K., (2010). From good ideas to action: A model-driven community collaborative to prevent childhood obesity. *Preventive Medicine*, 50, S36 – S43.

New Student Notes

On behalf of the Grapevine Newsletter, we would like to extend a warm welcome to the Nutrition students who began their studies here in the Spring 2013 and Fall 2013 semesters. Some of these new students offered to share with us where they are from, what their nutrition interests are, and a few other fun facts about themselves. What an impressive group!

Elizabeth Gray Adler: From Oyster Bay, NY, Elizabeth went to Vanderbilt University and received a B.S. in Human and Organizational Development. For the past year and a half, she has worked for a medical oncologist who specializes in gastrointestinal cancers at the Clinical Genetics Service at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

Tyffanie Ammeter: From Rye, CO, Tyffanie attended the University of Colorado at Boulder to get her B.S. in Business Management with emphasis in Accounting. She is bilingual in Spanish and lived in Chile for over 4 years. Tyffanie was in Chile for the 8.8 earthquake in 2010, and it played a big part in motivating her to make the career change to nutrition and exercise.

Ian (Yi Han) Ang: From Singapore, Ian went to NYU for his undergraduate degree as a double major in Neural Science and Psychology. This year, Ian is a new doctoral student in the Nutrition program. He is not new to TC, however, as he has previously completed a Masters in Clinical Psychology from Teachers College.

Morgan Bookheimer: From Philadelphia, PA, Morgan went to Cornell University and studied Nutritional Science. She currently works for a medical non-profit and is interested in one day running her own non-profit organization in the field of nutrition and public health.

Sandeep Kaur Dhillon: From Los Angeles, CA, Sandeep has a B.A. in English Literature from UCLA. She had a brief stint in law school before withdrawing to become a yoga teacher and personal trainer. She decided to get a graduate degree in Nutrition and become a Registered Dietitian so she could educate on preventative as well as healing health care through nutrition and exercise.

Niharika Goenka: From Bombay, India, Niharika completed her undergraduate degree at Barnard College with a B.A. in History.

Matthew Graziose: From Huntington, NY, Matthew has a B.S. in Nutritional Sciences from the University of Delaware. He also has an M.S. in Nutritional Sciences from The Pennsylvania State University. Matthew is a personal trainer, marathon runner and current teacher of the Food, Health and Choices fifth grade curriculum funded by the USDA.

Laura A. Guerra: From NYC, NY, Laura attended the University of Buffalo for her undergraduate degree in Economics. She also has a Masters in International Finance from the Thunderbird School of Management in Glendale, AZ. Laura is working with the Double Discovery Center to develop an after school program focused on nutrition.

Alix Kantowitz: From Englewood, NJ, Alix has an NYU B.S. degree in Nutrition and Dietetics. Alix completed the Dietetic Internship at NY Presbyterian Hospital and she attended Culinary School at Natural Gourmet

New Student Notes

Institute. After becoming an RD and going to culinary school, Alix started a company called Shovels and Spoons that teaches healthy, farm-to-table cooking to children and provides nutritional counseling.

Jessica Laifer: From Alpine, NJ, Jessica has a B.A. in History with a minor in Irish Studies from NYU. She is a licensed ZUMBA instructor, and she teaches donation-based ZUMBA classes for charitable causes in her spare time.

Katie Leonard: From New York, NY, Katie has a B.A. in Studio Art from the University of Georgia, and she hopes to use her background in the arts to create inspiring and engaging tools for nutrition education for children and families.

Deborah Olarte: From Oceanside, NY, Deborah has a B.M. in musical theater from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. After deciding that being a "starving actress" wasn't for her, she went to work as a legal assistant/paralegal in a stressful NYC law firm. The stress took its toll on her body, which led her to yoga and proper nutrition. She became a certified yoga instructor and the writer/creator of *thefoodyogiblog.com*. In the future, Deborah plans to be an RD educating others to prevent disease through proper nutrition and exercise.

Rachel Paul: A doctoral student behavioral nutrition, Rachel hails from Philadelphia, PA. She has a B.S. in Nutrition, and an M.S. in Public Health Nutrition from Case Western Reserve University. Her future professional interests include academia and federal government—how social relationships affect food beliefs and behaviors and how policy can positively facilitate these relationships. Check out Rachel's blog, *CollegeNutritionist.com*.

Jenna Kaufman-Ross: From Marlboro, NJ, Jenna has a degree in Spanish from University of Michigan. She would like to work with athletes in the future!

Miyuki Shimizu: Originally from Nasu, Japan, Miyuki has a B.S. in Public Health Nutrition and Dietetics from Kansas State University and an M.S. in Dietetics and Nutrition from University of Kansas Medical Center. She recently volunteered for a monthly street cleaning in the West Village, and would like to create sustainable and clean communities where everyone can enjoy their healthy and happy lives.

Laura Sienkiewicz: Laura grew up in Vestal, NY and went to SUNY Buffalo. Laura's interests include creating healthy recipes and taking weekly guitar lessons. You might come across her singing and playing with her band, The Roman Empire, here in NYC. Laura also loves volunteering with her dog, Lulu, who is a certified therapy dog.

Lindsay Smith: From Austin, TX, Lindsay went to Boston University and Texas State University. She has a food and nutrition blog called The Functional Foodie: *consciouscravings.wordpress.com*.

Matthue Tompkins: Currently studying Nutrition Education, Matthue comes from Islip, Long Island. He completed his undergraduate coursework at the Culinary Institute of America, where he received a BPS degree in Baking and Pastry Arts Management. Matthue volunteers for Teachers College Community School (TCCS), assisting in after school nutrition classes. He also enjoys playing the cello in his spare time.

EXOTIC TASTES: THE TRAVELING FOODIE- !VIVA ESPAÑA!

by Lindsay Smith

One of the best parts about traveling around the world is trying food from different cultures and places. In June, this traveling foodie was lucky enough to visit the wonderful country of Spain for three weeks, so I'm here to share the delicious food that I sampled as I traveled across the country.

Patatas bravas is one of the most classic dishes, where it is often served as a tapa in bars. You can practically find this dish everywhere in Spain. It consists of white potatoes that have been chopped up into small bits, which are then fried in oil and served with a spicy tomato sauce and a sweet aioli. This dish was a staple in my diet while I spent my time in Spain. The spiciness of the sauce mixed well with the sweet aioli, while the potatoes served as a tool to cool down the heat.



You obviously can't go to Spain without sampling some of the sweets that they have to offer, especially the churro.

Churrerías are very interesting places. You can either have a churro as a late night snack or for breakfast instead of donuts. Churros are fried pastry dough, which can either be long and thick or short and thin. At most churrerías, you can order your churros with a side to dip it in. Obviously I went with the most luscious and popular choice of hot chocolate. This hot chocolate is not your typical thin American cup of hot chocolate, but instead a thick cup of melted chocolate. Heaven in a cup.



Another popular tapa dish are croquetas, which are filled and fried bread-crumbed rolls. In Spain, croquetas are mainly filled with jamon (ham), chicken, or seafood. In this picture below, the croquetas are filled with ham and goat cheese. This may have been one of the best dishes that I had on my trip to Spain. You can find these at any restaurant in Spain or in a market, such as in Madrid or Barcelona.



Of course I couldn't write about Spain without including the most iconic Spanish dish: paella. Paella originated as a dish from Valencia that has been utilized throughout Spanish cities as a popular dish for non-Spaniards. It consists of white rice, meat, and vegetables served in a large hot dish. There are a wide variety of types of paella you can order such as seafood, Valencian, and mixed that will include land and sea creatures. The top of the rice is soft while the bottom of the dish is crispy and fried due to the heat from the pan. It is such a rich and filling meal.



If you want to sample classic Spanish tapas dishes, there are a variety of tapas bars in Manhattan such as Marcha Cocina in Washington Heights, or Bar Jamon in Gramercy!

RESTAURANT REVIEW

By Jessica Laifer

RAMEN: NOT JUST FOR BROKE STUDENTS ANYMORE, BUT, OF COURSE, WE'RE STILL WELCOME

Since Momofuku opened shop in 2004, New York City has been experiencing what some may call a "ramen renaissance". Ramen bars have popped up all over the city, serving handmade noodles in a rich, satisfying broth, putting their white styrofoam cup counterparts to shame. And New Yorkers can't get enough of it, as evidenced by the ever-present crowd in front of Ippudo or Totto Ramen, pouring out the door on any given night of the week. We're not sure what ramen places have against reservations, but we're certainly willing to wait. Matzo ball soup - you have some competition.

A recent, notable addition to New York's expanding ramen scene has graced our fair neighborhood, and is mere steps away from campus. Nestled beneath the above-ground 1 train station at 125th St, just a few feet from the entrance, lies the unassuming Jin Ramen. Though it doesn't look like much from the outside, Jin serves some of the best ramen in the city - comparable to the other big names previously mentioned, but with a relatively minimal wait time (at least until they start making ramen burgers, or Cronuts™). The broth is extremely flavorful, and the noodles, oh the noodles. They are of the perfect texture, thin and springy, yet firm; a far cry from your just-add-water variety. The Tonkotsu (\$12) and Miso Ramen (\$13) are among the more popular choices, but all of them are good. The appetizers, particularly the Kara-Age (\$6), are a worthy addition

to your meal, although we found the Steamed Pork Buns (\$7 for two buns) to be more appealing on the eyes than the tongue. Service is friendly, but understandably lacking during busier times.

While ramen isn't exactly a superfood, Jin Ramen offers options to make your bowl o' noodles slightly healthier, setting them apart from most of the other ramen joints. The soups listed on the menu are made with either pork or a chicken/vegetable broth, but can easily be substituted with a seafood or vegetarian broth at no extra charge, finally making ramen friendly to pescatarians and vegetarians. There's even a spot at the table for the gluten intolerant, as the tasty and surprisingly filling Tofu Salad comes in an entree-sized portion (\$8). Being that it is served in the same oversized bowl as the ramen, and with all of the same toppings available to add on, you can create a hearty meal that won't have you feeling left out among the noodle dishes.

Jin Ramen is owned by the same people as the previously-reviewed Flat Top, and we can't wait to see what else they bring to the neighborhood. In addition to the location and price point, it also appeals to students with fantastic happy hour deals Monday through Thursday, so you can trade your green juices in for \$10 pitchers of Sapporo, if only for the evening.

With the cold weather fast approaching, Jin Ramen is certainly a welcome addition.

Jin Ramen

Address: 3183 Broadway (between Tiemann Place and 125th St).

Phone: (646) 559-2862

Website: jinramen.com

Notes: Reservations not accepted. Happy Hour is Monday-Thursday, 11:30 am-3:30 pm, 5:00-6:30 pm, 9:30 pm-close.



Work it Out: Yoga, African Dance & Tai Chi...All Free!

By Tyffanie Ammeter

As someone new to living in New York City, I have been happily surprised by the number of free fitness occasions offered. I am the type of person who likes to workout in groups instead of phoning it in on the elliptical. Of course, machines like the treadmill and elliptical offer an excellent opportunity for indoor exercise, but if I have the chance, I will always pick a fitness class over such machines. So in the past few months, I have been taking advantage of the multitude of complimentary exercise classes offered all over the city, whether it is Zumba, yoga or even tai chi.

One such event was the full-afternoon event called City Salutations held on Sunday, September 8 at the Brooklyn Bridge Park. It was put on by Flavorpill and sponsored by EmblemHealth. We lucked out with gorgeous weather that day—the sky was cerulean, the sun was out and the air was clean, setting the perfect scenario for beginners and advanced practitioners alike to come together and celebrate wellness and health.

The day kicked off with a tai chi class given by Thomas Droge and DJ'd by Natasha Blank. I found it to be a great way to center myself and get into my body (instead of my mind) as well as take in the beauty of the park and harbor. It also included a bit of free-style dance, which is always welcome to help pump up the energy!

Next up was an African dance class with Djoniba Mouflet from Djoniba Dance and Drum Centre. With the live drummers and Djoniba's high energy, it was nearly impossible not to participate! He took us through a quick warm-up and then taught us some "choreography". I use that term loosely because while there were specific moves we learned and in a specific order, there were no counts associated with each move. Instead, as is traditional in African dance, the drummers gave us the cue for when we should go on to the next move. After getting down and practicing the

choreography several times, Djoniba ended the class by gathering everyone in a circle and giving people the chance to in the middle to dance however they wished. By the end of the 45 minute class, everyone was out of breath and sweating, but also smiling from ear to ear.

The day wound down with a 1.5 hour yoga class given by Seane Corn. DJ Drez spun the perfect beats to match our practice—whether smooth and soft while we were taking a moment to set an intention standing in *tadasana* with *anjali mudra* (often referred to as “prayer pose”), or upbeat with a lot of bass while building heat in Warrior 2. Seane gave us multiple opportunities to send out love to the universe while also working out our bodies.

Flavorpill and EmblemHealth passed out free yoga mats and snacks for everyone to relax, refuel and hydrate after a full day of physical activity!

So how can you get in on the FREE fitness action? Here are a few resources:

Teachers College Fitness Classes.

No need to sign up, just show up 10-15 minutes before classes (held in Whittier Café) and enjoy!

Flavorpill NYC (<http://beta.flavorpill.com/newyork>) – New events are added all of the time. Flavorpill lists a multitude of events from yoga and fitness to dance parties, book fairs and concerts.

NYC Parks & Recreation (<http://www.nycgovparks.org/>)

Subpages **BeFitNYC** (<http://www.nycgovparks.org/befitnyc>) and

Shape Up NYC (<http://www.nycgovparks.org/programs/recreation/shape-up-nyc>) for more information.

Also check **Meetup.com**, and stores like **Lululemon** that offer free events like in-store yoga and running clubs.

NYCNEN October Meeting

by *Matthue Tompkins*

Does nutrition education really work? This was the question proposed for the NYCEN (New York City Nutrition Education Network) meeting, hosted by Teachers College, on October 4. NYCEN is dedicated to educating and supporting a network of members, who seek to improve the food and nutrition environment for a healthier New York City. It has been in operation since 1998, and provides an excellent environment for the exchange of ideas among nutrition professionals.

I was glad to see the vast number of students present, showing an interest in evaluating the relevance of nutrition education. Education is important to facilitate behavior change, but to encourage sustainable change, more than knowledge is required. Thus, the importance of evaluating the relevance and effectiveness of a program comes into full focus.

The meeting consisted of four speakers, who presented successful nutrition education programs, tailored to school-aged children. After an introduction and overview of the nutrition programs at Teachers College, given by Dr. Isobel Contento, the meeting commenced with Christina Dyer, the Assistant Manager of the Eat Well Play Hard in Child Care Settings Program. This is a program that focuses on nutrition and physical education in children, using strategically developed modules. Surveys and other evaluation tools are helpful to assess program success, but parent feedback proves to be a valuable assessment instrument, as in other programs.

Following Christina Dyer, Jeannine Fournier, the Director of Nutrition and Health Education of Food Bank for NYC, led an evaluation of the Cookshop program. This curriculum uses education and hands on classroom experience to encourage children to adopt healthy eating practices. A key principal of the program is to demonstrate that eating healthy, while on a budget, is feasible, producing a benefit for both parents and children alike.

After a brief intermission, Pam Koch, a familiar face from Teachers College, detailed the Choice, Control, and Change program. This program is divided into five units, and was developed using theoretical models, such as the social cognitive theory. After an extensive evaluation process (formative, outcome, process, and qualitative), the results indicated success in decreasing screen time, reducing sweetened beverage consumption, and increasing physical activity among children.

To conclude the conference, Alice Goodman, Executive Director for the Office of School Wellness Programs, spoke about the School Wellness Works Portal. This organization works with the Department of Education, and focuses on encouraging health and well-being among school children. The portal allows schools to accurately assess their needs, and links them to solutions, by providing accessible resources that individual schools may not have. Numerous schools participate city wide, and greater expansion is anticipated in the future.

Although this was the first NYCEN meeting that I have been to, it will certainly not be my last. This conference provided a great opportunity to connect with other nutrition students, as well as professionals currently influencing the nutrition field. The speakers present were knowledgeable about nutrition subject matter, as well as the challenges in health promotion. They provided valuable insight into creating practical programs that can be clearly evaluated, in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and application.

For anyone interested in joining, a \$10 NYCEN student membership will provide access to all meetings throughout the calendar year. Also, you can visit the website at <http://nycnen.org>.

Op-Ed: Living a Vibrant Life, Despite Chronic Pain

by Sandeep Kaur Dhillon

Chronic pain is no joke. Neither is chronic fatigue. The frustration, disillusionment, and hopelessness that come along with these symptoms can make the most resilient of warriors waver. I was diagnosed with fibromyalgia and rheumatoid arthritis two years ago, during a time when I was supposed to be carving out the path to a future that was bright, shiny, and beautiful. And it was a gradual, sluggish, exhausting journey to falling flat on my face. It took me a long time, and a lot of mistakes, to stock my metaphorical toolbox so that I could build a happy, productive life. Now I am going to share my tools with you. I won't be another person telling you to "totally give yoga a shot" or "try going gluten-free!" The tips that follow transformed my life. Whether you are a chronic pain veteran or new to the club, whether you are further down the path of life, or a novice like me, I hope you can walk away with something to think about.

1. Don't resist your condition. By embracing it and allowing it into your truest reality, you can open yourself to dealing with it properly.

2. Surround yourself with positive people. Life is hard enough. You don't need people around you who make it harder. This includes toxic friendships, clingy relationships, or even acquaintances who complain about silly things like too much school reading. Every ounce of energy counts. You want to make every drop positive.

3. Be kind to yourself and *listen to your body*. Easier said than done. As a 20-something who's recently moved to the most spectacular city in the world, it's a pain in the butt to stay in on a Friday night when you know all of your peers are out partying. It sucks. But the pay off of being able to go for a morning jog or see a funny movie is better than the days you'll spend recovering from your late night out. Pick your outings wisely. Drinking margaritas and laughing at a festive restaurant? Yes. Going to a house party and getting smashed? No.

4. Eat properly. Avoid dieting extremes, but don't be afraid to play with your diet. Phase out foods that make you feel less than how you want to feel. Keep a food log to target what makes your symptoms worse.

5. Absolutely incorporate physical activity into your life. **YOU MUST EXERCISE.** Even on days when I can't straighten out my legs without feeling like someone is stabbing my knees, I stretch. Your joints need it. Whether it's gentle yoga, swimming, walking, or even taking a warm shower and stretching after, commit to just 10 minutes a day.

6. Accept help. The smallest of things can drain your energy stores. Whether it's finding someone to help you bring in your groceries or asking a classmate to lend you notes so you can use your energy to actually listen to your professor in class instead of writing down everything he says, be open to receiving and asking for help.

7. Do things that make you genuinely happy. Every day, find

something to smile about. Even if you have to go online and look up ridiculous jokes or silly memes.

8. Honor your emotions. Allow yourself to feel sad when your symptoms flare, but don't wallow. Accept how you feel, process your emotions, and then make space for something more positive, like calling a friend.

9. Begin every morning with a game plan, but be flexible. The smallest things can zap your energy in a heartbeat—and you'll need to re-evaluate your day

10. Consider taking a break from social media; doing that has made me so much happier. I'm no longer sad or depressed seeing other people my age do things I can't do. You'll also find that by removing yourself temporarily (or, like me, permanently) from things like Facebook will nurture your true friendships. And those friends are the ones you're going to want to talk to, and who will really be there, when the next flare-up strikes.

Your life can be sweet and wonderful if you love your body and take care of it well. Whatever your illness, you simply have different hurdles to jump over than people who don't suffer from your symptoms. It's all in the baby steps. It took me almost 2 years to stabilize enough to move across the country, away from my family. And that was with the support of everyone around me. If you don't have that kind of support, understand that it might take longer. Be patient. The stronger your foundation, the taller you'll stand when the next storm strikes.

Out and About: My Week Working on an Organic Pig Farm

By Abigail Robinson

I decided to get out of NYC this summer and experience America. What better way to experience America than on a farm...or a suburban strip mall...but a farm sounded like an adventure. I also wanted a better understanding of how food is produced. So, I logged into the WWOOF-website (Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms), found a farm suitable for NY girls like me, and signed up for a week. Then I went back and noticed it was an organic pig farm...oh well, too late. Then I told my Jewish mother.



Day 1: Located in the Alleghany mountains of Central PA, Clearville is located 4.5 hours from NYC and 30 minutes from the nearest town (there were so few cars there,

you wave every time one goes by). Clearville was close enough to drive, but far enough that I felt like I was getting the true “Pennslytucky” experience. I decided to drive instead of take the train so I could make a quiet escape if it was too hardcore for me.

I was greeted by Farmer Dan and the other WWOOF-ers and was shown to the WWOOF “cabin.” The word “cabin” is an overstatement. It was a garage full of tools, guns and dead snake skins on the wall. No bathroom, and that was fine until it was 3am during the night in the pouring rain and I did not want to go outside. After putting down my bags, I was quickly whisked away for a safety talk on pigs and guns (two things that there were a lot of on this farm). I learned some basics such as never directly face a pig because they think you are a threat and may charge at you and always stand at an angle.

Day 2: As it quickly became apparent I had no useful farm skills, I was put to work pruning tomato plants. Perhaps this is where they banish all volunteers with no useful farm skills. There were a lot of tomato plants, and some of them were engulfed by weeds. Tomato plants are pruned to give the tomatoes better access to sunlight (to maximize photosynthesis) and to prevent the spread of disease. I actually enjoyed pruning while

listening to books on tape, it was quite therapeutic. The fun part was starting out with a plant that you could barely see any tomatoes on, and ending up with a piece of art.

Day 3: There are about 30 pigs at the farm. The pigs live together in groups of 5 or 6 in large wooded areas. They are known as “happy pigs” because they interact all day with other pigs and spend time with humans. There is even designated “pig socialization” time. It’s important for pigs to be happy because they are easier to handle when sent to slaughter. Supposedly, happy pigs make for tastier bacon (they ate bacon with every meal on the farm). During my first “pig socialization” session, I was pretty nervous because the pigs are fast and have large teeth. By the end, I learned how to best stand around pigs. I became pretty comfortable and even gave some tummy rubs.



Day 4: More pigs and tomatoes

Day 5: On Thursday night, everyone on the farm went to

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the local bar, appropriately called the “Rock Box.” It was everything you would expect a rural bar to be including mullets, t-shirts with motorcycles and 75 cent-beers. I asked the girl behind the bar if they had a salad on the menu. Indeed they did not and I went through the menu and asked item-by-item “is this fried?” Everything, including the broccoli, was fried.

Day 6: I love chickens. Chickens are the last animals I ever expected to like on the farm, but they are fascinating creatures. Not only can you eat them, but they provide fresh eggs every-other-day! Here are a few things I didn’t know about chickens:

- 1) The rooster is the man. There can be anywhere from 3 to 25 hens per 1 rooster. (If there are two or more roosters, and not enough hens, they may fight till the death).
- 2)The rooster has a very strong protective over his ladies. About a year ago at the farm, a dog came onto the property and attacked the hens. The rooster stepped in and gave his life to protect the hens.
- 3)Chickens are not creatures of the night, and choose to go into the coop for safety. One hen, Sweat Pea, was quite a bit smaller than the rest of

the hens and was ostracized by the group. She choose to sleep in another coop while the rooster and the other 8 hens slept together.

4)Chickens have many different calls they use between themselves to alert the flock of a danger or food. There’s a call for danger in the sky, ground, and more.



Day 7: There were WWOOFers at the farm for anywhere from a week to a year. I could have learned the intricacies of pig farming (or even gained enough muscles to pick up the feed container) if I had stayed there for a longer period of time. I think though, for my purposes of gaining an

appreciation for where food comes from (and how many man-hours are required on a sustainable diverse farm), a week was enough. Never again will I look at a \$2.99/lb apple at the farmers market the same way again. But I smelled awful, and it was time to go home and take a shower.



SQUASH SOUP PALOOZA *By Ione Machen*

Winter squash season has arrived! One great thing about winter squash is that you can substitute any variety in a recipe; it just depends on your tastes. **Butternut squash** is smooth and buttery with a deep yellow-orange color and nutty flavor. It is often called for in soups because its texture is dense and not stringy at all. Try to experiment with different squash varieties to discover your favorite!

Acorn squash is a mild and sweet variety with a lighter color and stringier flesh. **Buttercup squash** is sweet and creamy. **Delicata squash** has a thin, edible skin and a flavor similar to a sweet potato. **Kabocha squash** has a similar flavor to a pumpkin. **Pie pumpkins** come in many varieties, but in general they are small and dense with an intense flavor (very different from jack-o'-lantern pumpkins). Check your local farmers' market to see which varieties are in season today!

Making soup is my favorite way to savor these rich and creamy vegetables throughout the fall and winter seasons. Soup recipes in general are extremely forgiving—if you make adjustments or substitutions, it's still easy to end up with a delicious product.

Below are two great soup recipes that have served as guides for my own experimentation in the kitchen. Both came from family and friends, and were originally loaded with butter and cream. But squash is naturally creamy, so you can use a very small amount of cream or coconut milk (or none at all!) without compromising the rich flavor of the soup. While these are pureed soups, squash also works well as a chunky addition to heartier soups like chili and lentil soup.

Both recipes can be made as thin or as thick as you like; just change the proportion of broth. Depending on the consistency you choose, these soups can be served as more of a starter course or more of an entree. Try adding crabmeat in the bowl for added protein, and to make the soup more filling. Enjoy!

Rebecca's Squash & Pear Soup is sweet and delicate.

-Ione

Rebecca's Rich Butternut Squash & Pear Soup

- 3 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 6-8 cups cubed & peeled butternut squash
- ¼ to ½ cup dry sherry
- 4-5 large tomatoes (or whole canned tomatoes)
- 2 fresh pears, cubed
- 2.5 cups veggie stock
- thyme, salt, pepper to taste
- cumin, cayenne to taste
- ¾ cup half & half, coconut milk, or other non-dairy creamer
- Topping: dollop of plain, nonfat greek yogurt**



Sauté onions in oil until translucent. Add squash and sauté until the squash begins to turn brown.

Add ¼ cup of the sherry and heat until the liquid is absorbed. For extra richness, repeat with another few tablespoons of sherry. Add the tomatoes, pears, veggie stock & spices and simmer until the squash is soft.

Blend the whole batch in a food processor and return to the pot. Stir in the ½ & ½ and heat just before serving. Serve in bowl with a dollop of plain yogurt & fresh chives.

RECIPE CORNER

*Mama Marcia's Soup
has some serious bite!*

-Ione

Mama Marcia's Curried Butternut Squash Soup

- 1 large or 2 small butternut squash
 - 3 tbsp olive oil
 - 1 yellow onion, diced
 - 2 stalks of celery, diced
 - fresh grated ginger (about 2 thumbs worth, or more, to taste)
 - 1 large tart apple, peeled and diced
 - 1 tbsp Madras curry powder
 - 2 tablespoons tomato paste
 - 4-6 cups vegetable broth
 - salt and pepper to taste
 - cayenne or sriracha hot sauce to taste
 - 1/4-1/2 cup coconut milk
- Topping: Thin slices of red bell pepper**

Cut the squash in half and seed. Microwave for 20-30 minutes, until soft enough to cut off the tough skin. Cube and set aside. In the meantime, sauté the onion, celery, ginger and apple in the olive oil until tender. Turn down the heat and add the curry powder and keep stirring for one minute. Add the tomato paste, broth, salt and pepper and the cubed, cooked squash. Cook for another 15-20 minutes until everything is really soft. (If you want to just cut the skin off the raw squash and cube it, without microwaving add another 15-20 minutes of cooking time). Puree everything in a food processor or blender. Put back onto stove and add the coconut milk just before serving. Float the thin slices of red bell pepper on top of the soup and serve.



Recipe by

Emelia Stiverson

(featured on Tribeca Nutrition Blog)

This recipe is reminiscent of an apple crisp, but without the added cups of sugar and fat from sticks of butter. Adding 2 tablespoons of homemade or store-bought whipped cream (made with real cream and without hydrogenated oils) on top of each apple will make this a nutritious dessert a real treat!

Baked Apples with Oats and Blueberries

Makes 4 servings

- 4 Golden Delicious apples
- 1/2 cup quick cooking rolled oats
- 1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 cup finely chopped unsalted raw pecans
- 1 TBS pure maple syrup
- 2 TBS **frozen unsweetened blueberries** (not thawed)
- 1/4 cup water

Recipe:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Wash the apples, dry, and place on a cutting board. Remove the core and seeds by using a grapefruit spoon, melon baller, or regular spoon. Lightly prick the top of the sides of the apple with a fork (this prevents the apples from splitting).

Combine the rolled oats, vanilla extract, ground cinnamon, pecans, maple syrup, and blueberries in a small mixing bowl. Spoon the mixture into the cavity of each apple.

Pour the water into a 8 X 8 baking dish. Add the apples. Carefully put the baking dish on a rack in the middle of the oven. Bake until the apples are soft, about 45 minutes.

Let cool for 5 minutes then serve right away or cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days.

RECIPE CORNER

This dish allows you to take advantage of one of fall's best treasures – **the spaghetti squash.**

This winter squash is rich in beta-carotene, which your body can convert to vitamin A. Additionally, the olive oil and feta cheese contain fat, which encourages the absorption of this fat-soluble vitamin. Squash your pasta craving with this healthier alternative and feel good about going in for seconds – you're going to want them!

Spaghetti Squash with Veggies & Feta Cheese

Serves 4

- 1 medium spaghetti squash (about 3 lbs.)
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ small onion, chopped
- 1 medium zucchini squash, chopped
- ¼ C extra virgin olive oil
- ½ C grape tomatoes, halved
- ½ C reduced fat feta cheese, crumbled
- 2 basil leaves, finely chopped
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp ground black pepper
- dash salt

Recipe by **Alyssa Cohen**

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Cut squash in half lengthwise and remove the seeds. Place face down on baking sheet. Bake ~40-50 minutes, until the strands pull away with a fork.

Meanwhile, warm 2 Tbsp olive oil in large skillet. Add onions. Cook 3-4 minutes. Add zucchini and cook another 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add tomato, spices (garlic powder, salt, pepper) and garlic. Cook another 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Remove spaghetti-like strands from squash using a fork and place in skillet until squash is completely cleaned out. Add remaining olive oil and basil and cook 3-5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add feta cheese, stir and remove from heat. Serve hot and enjoy!



Nutritional Analysis Per Serving:

Calories 220, Fat 17 g, Saturated Fat 4 g, Cholesterol 5 mg, Carbohydrate 16 g, Fiber 4 g, Protein 6 g, Sodium 288 mg, Calcium 101 mg



Did you know?! The skin of the delicata squash is “delicate” enough to eat! No need to peel it, just roast and enjoy.

Nutritional Analysis Per Serving:

Calories 164, Fat 7 g, Saturated Fat 1 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Carbohydrate 26g, Fiber 6 g, Protein 2g, Sodium 203 mg

Isobel's Roasted Delicata Squash & Onions

Serves 4

Recipe from Eating Well

- 2 pounds delicata squash (about 2 large)
- 1 medium red onion, sliced
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Cut squash in half lengthwise; scoop out the seeds. Cut lengthwise into 1/2-inch thick wedges. Toss with onion, 1 tablespoon oil and salt in a large bowl. Spread in an even layer on a baking sheet.

Roast, stirring once or twice, until tender and beginning to brown, about 30 minutes.

Combine the remaining 1 tablespoon oil, rosemary, syrup and mustard in a small bowl. Toss the vegetables with the dressing.

A colorful, healthy dish to bring to a holiday party!