

JULY - AUGUST ISSUE 2022

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a lifestyle resource from Food Equality Initiative

FROM FROM MAGAZINE

**BACK TO
SCHOOL:**
Freshman Year
Edition

**LIVING IN
AMERICA'S
BREADBASKET:**
And Not Being Able To
Eat Bread

**WHITE
HOUSE
LISTENING
SESSIONS:**
What 3 FEI
Staff Learned

FORAGING:
A Few Ideas to Get
Started



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

This month's issue of Free-From Magazine started out with a back-to-school theme, but now that it is completed, I'm realizing just how much of a hodge-podge it is. We've got articles about foraging, making snacks fun, reviewing dairy-free ice cream, and even allergens in pet food. But that is the spirit of education, right? Learning a little bit about everything gives you a springboard to learn even more!

Don't get me wrong, this issue still has some good information about going back to school - simultaneously the most exciting and most stressful time of the year, especially for students who have special dietary considerations. We've got some important tips for setting up 504 Plans and general best practices for equipping your child to advocate for themselves

in all sorts of situations. Not only are these skills necessary for maintaining their health and safety, but it significantly helps them develop skills for advocating in all areas as young adults and beyond.

Speaking of young people advocacy, a majority of this issue's articles are written by students from high school and college. Many of them have food allergies or celiac disease themselves, or are just genuinely interested in health and helping improve it for everyone. I can honestly say that I am impressed by these articles written by our student-friends of Food Equality Initiative. These articles are submitted voluntarily, outside of what is required from their academic institution. These students are so in-tune with current issues and have chosen to go out of

their way to speak up about them. (When I was in high school, the only writing I did was the assignments required by my English teacher.)

So you could say the July/August Issue is for students, by students. I hope you enjoy and that you learn something like I did.

Sofia Gillespie
Editor in Chief,
Free-From Magazine

COVER DESIGN & LAYOUT

Amelia Richard
Marketing and Creative Director,
Free-From Magazine

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Free-From MAGAZINE

a lifestyle resource from Food Equality Initiative

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*Disclaimer: The recipes included in the Free-From Magazine are suggestions. Please read carefully and make any substitutions that are necessary for your diet. Consult your doctor if you have questions or concerns. NOTE: Cooking is a science experiment and some ingredient substitutions may not produce the same results.



THE TASTEMAKERS

The Match of My Dreams

By Ravi Kalvade

It was match point. I walked to the back of the court and twirled my racket nervously as the boy opposite the net bounced the ball with his racket. I could tell he was even more nervous than I was; the team matchup was tied at 4-4 and this one was the decider between victory or disgrace. I walked back to the line and bent down into a half-squat. My opponent took his time, trying to throw me off my game. He finally threw the ball up in the air, and then came swinging down like a mighty hammer. I got to the ball just in time and chipped it back, though the return was quite high. He struck the ball down the line to my right, and I thought it was going to finish me; nevertheless, I raced for it and at the last second swung cross-court with all my might. The ball exploded off my racket to give me, and my team, victory.

All right, that's a bit of an exaggeration, but it is what I hope to become in the tennis world. Due to my environmental allergies and asthma, I never thought I would be able to even play a sport. But as my health continues to improve, I intend to make the most of it!

For a long time, I could not play any sport.

I have always been, and will always be, an avid sports fan. I grew up watching Federer, LeBron, and Messi, among other greats of our time. Unfortunately, for a long time I couldn't play tennis, basketball, or soccer.



I was diagnosed with asthma when I was two and a half years old, and eczema even earlier than that. I had trouble breathing after vigorous exercise and the sweat caused severe itching and made my skin extremely dry. Both of these conditions prohibited me from playing the sports I love to watch. My brother used to play tennis at our park nearby, and I would go and watch him hit with my dad, but the pollen and my developing environmental allergies kept me in the bleachers.

I switched to chess competitions.

I know what you're thinking - big whoop. But really, chess is an amazing sport! Kings used to play it on actual elephants, camels, and soldiers on a giant 8x8 board as a military strategy game. Even though it seems boring when you're staring at a checkered piece of cloth with carved wood on it for an entire hour in silence, imagining the legendary battle that takes place gives it that spark that I love.

I learned chess when I was 3 and consider it as much of a sport as football or basketball. However, chess is a sport I can play without running out of breath or scratching behind my knees for half an hour and then not being able to bend them for another two. This wonderfully competitive sport of the mind was perfect for my medical needs. As I was finding happiness in chess competitions, my family started traveling to the state championships, played far away from our home.

Enter food allergies.

In addition to asthma, eczema, and pollen allergies, I am allergic to all tree nuts, peanuts, dairy, eggs, wheat, some lentils, tropical fruits, and the list goes on. Since I have reactions to these foods by touch, we had to ask the other players to abstain from eating during the games, and we would wipe down the chess pieces before every match.

Chess became a bit challenging for me and my parents once weekend travel increased, so I stopped playing chess competitively, although I still play it for fun. I have

learned a lot from the game; it taught me to always think 2 moves ahead before I do anything to evaluate the repercussions of my decisions, and that it is alright to make mistakes if you learn from them.



young me at a chess competition.

Indoor sports are cool, too.

Another great sport that was less intensive on my body was table tennis. Since it is played indoors, I didn't have to deal with the pollen or the heat, which kept my eczema in check. I still had to make sure not to overexert myself to trigger my asthma. I love playing this sport everyday with my dad. This game has developed my reflexes and taught me about the importance of persistence.

Eventually, my pollen allergies and eczema got better, and I got an opportunity to start hitting balls using my brother's tennis rackets. With no formal tennis training but hours of tennis games analyzed on TV and computer, I was surprised to qualify for my high school's JV tennis team. I get to play a few matches in the competitions against other schools due to my low seeding, but I aspire to get better.

The match of my dreams is always a possibility.

I hope my health will keep on getting better so that I will be able to continue playing sports! I have been practicing yoga since I was 3 years old and this has helped me to strengthen my muscles while increasing my flexibility, increasing my lung capacity and staying positive. In conclusion, I feel that I was able to overcome the roadblocks created by my food allergies and other medical conditions by looking at the opportunities I had at that time and running with them. Playing all these different sports has helped me make new friends, and has made me happier and healthier.



RAVI KALVADE



BACK TO SCHOOL FRESHMAN YEAR EDITION

Kamisha York | Peyton's Allergy Shield of Hope

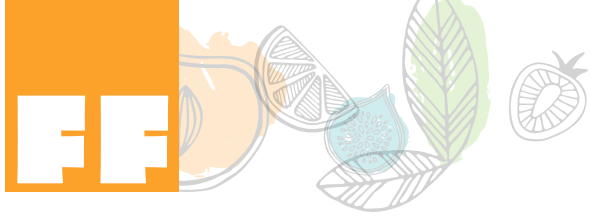
Back to school is an exciting time - meeting new people, shopping for new school supplies...

But for a child who has dietary restrictions or other disabilities, the excitement can get lost in worry. My daughter, Peyton, is allergic to peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish, dairy, and eggs. She experiences a great deal of anxiety at the start of every school year. This year she will be a freshman at a high school of almost 3,000 students. This is a lot for anyone, let alone a child with food allergies, to become accustomed to. This will certainly be a big adjustment for my food allergy family.

In March, even before finishing 8th grade, Peyton tried out for the high school junior varsity cheer team and made it! I started brainstorming then on how to prepare for the new school year with new obstacles. Considering Peyton has multiple food allergies and asthma, I figured that we should start preparing for high school once she made the cheer team, then by August we will be ready to hit the ground running.

The following has helped me maintain a safe and reliable relationship with the elementary and middle school administrators and staff. As we transition to high school, we will implement the same policies and procedures (and more if needed).

The best gift I can give to Peyton is self-advocacy.



504 Plan Meeting

In the spring of 2022, we met with our 504 Coordinator from Peyton's middle school to prepare for the transition to high school. **(A 504 is a legal plan between the parent/student and teachers/schools receiving federal funding. The 504 Plan outlines how the school will accommodate your child's special needs, in this case, my daughter's food allergies.)** Peyton is present at all of our 504 meetings - this is my specific request, so that she is aware and understands what her rights are and what her 504 Plan details.

The high school distributes their schedules in August, a week before school starts. As this is a new school for Peyton and we do not know which teachers she will have, we scheduled a second 504 Plan meeting in this period after receiving her schedule and before school starts to discuss with school staff about what is outlined in her plan.



Establish A Point Person

Middle school and high schools present an interesting challenge in the fact that your student does not have just one teacher. A lot of times they will not even have a homeroom teacher or a class team-leader, so it is hard to know who exactly to contact about your student's health needs.

We found that it is important for us to establish a point person while our student is at school. This needed to be someone who Peyton felt safe and comfortable around for Peyton to confide in with any concerns. Examples of who this person could be are a school administrator, counselor, or favorite teacher. In middle school, our point person was the assistant principal, and we are looking forward to determining who her new point person will be at the new school.



School Nurse

When transitioning schools, I strongly suggest attending an open house or requesting an individual tour before school starts. It is important to get acquainted with the new layout and that your child is aware of where the nurse's office is located. At this time, you can also request to speak with the nurse to learn if the position is full-time and/or whom shall your child contact if the nurse is out for the day.

Emergency Procedures

Peyton is allowed to self-carry her epinephrine auto-injector and asthma inhaler. According to her 504 Plan, her bag of medication must always be on her, which means when Peyton is participating in athletic activities, the teacher/coach must always carry Peyton's bag with them.

Questions to ask:

- Who is trained to use an epinephrine auto-injector?
- Will all your student's teachers be required to be trained in how to use an epinephrine auto-injector?
- Who will administer the training?

School Lunch/Lunchroom

If your child will be eating lunch provided by the school, you should meet with the cafeteria manager/staff. Even if your child is not eating school lunch, it is still important to know what foods your child may be offered.

Questions to ask:

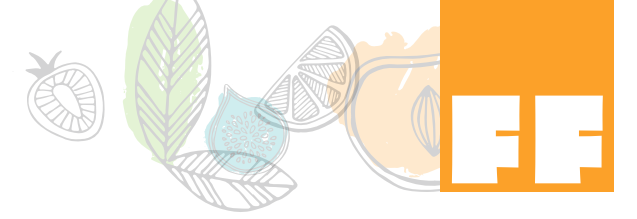
- What alternative ingredients are used for my student's allergens?
- Where is the food sourced from?
- What are the procedures to avoid cross-contact when preparing lunch?
- Does the staff understand the difference between cross-contamination and cross-contact?
- What training is provided to the staff regarding preparing food for food-allergic children?

This is also the time to discuss where your child will be sitting in the cafeteria. Peyton despised sitting at the "Safe Table" in elementary school, but the first week of 6th grade, Peyton finally understood the importance of sitting at the "Safe Table." (Unfortunately, she experienced an allergic reaction after sitting across from a friend who was eating a granola bar containing nuts.) I would highly recommend talking with your student and lunchtime officers to work out what will be best to prevent something like that happening to your student.

Self-Advocacy

The older our children get, the more responsibility they start to have over their own health and well-being. The best gift I can give to Peyton is self-advocacy. Through practice and constant encouragement, I can give her the power to use her voice to stand up for what she needs to feel safe while at school, playing sports, and away from home.

Thanks to years of practice, Peyton is not afraid to speak up, introduce herself to teachers/others and make sure they know she has food allergies. We've taught her that if someone is eating something that she is allergic to in the



classroom, to explain how this is not safe for her to be around, and to ask your friends to wash their hands after eating lunch. It is never too early to teach children how to advocate for themselves; this skill will serve them well, both as children and adults.



ABOUT KAMISHA

I am Kamisha York (Misha for short). I am the Executive Director of Peyton's Allergy Shield of Hope, a 501 © (3) that my husband and I started in honor of our 13-year-old daughter Peyton. Peyton's Allergy Shield of Hope is a non-profit that is here to advocate and educate for those living with food allergies. In my free time I love to relax and listen to a good audible book, bake, and blog about how my husband and I navigate our crazy life with 3 kids and managing Peyton's food allergies at www.foodallergyjourney.com

How a Grill Pan Changed the Way I Cook

Cindy Kaplan

This handy tool changed my life.

Summer is known as grilling season, but in my kitchen, we grill all year long. And, I literally mean “in my kitchen,” -- not on a charcoal or gas grill, but on a stovetop grill pan.

In the spring of 2012, I woke up to an email from my sister that read, simply, “Do you own a grill pan?” Ten years later, I own three.

My sister’s email was prompted by my recent diagnosis; though I had had a long list of severe food allergies since the week I was born, for months I’d been having a reaction almost every day to foods I’d always been able to eat safely. A few weeks earlier, I’d found an allergist who took me seriously and conducted new allergy tests. They determined that my body had gone into a stress-related allergic shock. Apparently, I’d “overdosed” on many of my safe, comfort foods by eating them far too often. They told me I needed to avoid certain foods until my body regulated itself and I could conduct another round of testing and food challenges. Though I cooked many meals at home already, I needed to double down on my efforts, all while calming down from the stress, which was the underlying cause of it all - talk about mission impossible.

I was panicking. How was I supposed to learn a whole new set of cooking skills while working 10-12 hour days and lower my stress all at the same time? My new allergies included onion, garlic, tomato, wheat, soy, sesame, cinnamon, olives, dairy, and green peppers. These are all things that are used

for seasonings and sauces! Plus, when the “shock” didn’t show any sign of improvement after a month, my doctor suggested I keep my diet bland and 100% unprocessed. That meant no herbs or spices, other than salt and pepper.

Enter my sister and her brilliant suggestion for a grill pan.

The beauty of grilling is that it’s simple and tasty with very little effort. The act of grilling imparts flavor on the foods, so while marinades are totally fine, they’re not necessary. The high heat also means foods cook pretty quickly, and the only “active” part of the experience is chopping any veggies and flipping the food once or twice.

Though I live in southern California, where the weather is grill-friendly year-round, I don’t have access to outdoor space, so I thought this easy cooking method was out of the

picture for me. But, with a grill in my kitchen, I could have access to delicious meats, fruits, and veggies without much fuss.

One of the most underrated aspects of the grill pan is how easy it is to cook multiple foods at once. You can combine multiple veggies on the grill pan at the same time, or a combo of meat and veggies, just like you would a full-service grill. Now that I can eat onions again (yay!), I often toss a few sliced onions on the grill pan about halfway through cooking burgers. On a random winter night, I can recreate the perfect Fourth of July experience in my kitchen.

If you find yourself turning to home-cooking to manage your food allergies or other food-related medical needs, consider adding a grill pan to your kitchen staples. As far as specialty cookware goes, they’re fairly affordable (\$20 - \$40) and many are dishwasher safe.



RECIPE

Grilled Chicken Breast

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb Chicken breast (or tenders), boneless
- 1 tsp Oil (whichever is friendly to your diet; I prefer olive oil)
- Dried parsley and garlic powder, to taste

DIRECTIONS

Coat chicken evenly with oil and spices (you can do this on the pan, on any prep surface, or place the meat and spices in a Ziploc bag and shake it). Place on grill pan on medium-high heat. Cook on each side for 5-7 minutes, depending on the thickness of the meat.



1. Place the food on the pan. You can grease it lightly if you prefer, but it's not necessary - most grill pans have a strong non-stick coating.
2. Center the pan over your burner and turn the gas flame to medium-high. If you are working on an electric stove, you may need to pre-heat the pan before adding ingredients for best results.
3. Flip your food to cook on each side, until grill marks appear. The darker the grill line, the more well-done the food. (Usually takes around 20 minutes.)
4. That's it!

Here are some recipes to get you started:

RECIPE

Grilled Pineapple

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Pineapple, cut into chunks (can also use canned chunks or rings in 100% juice)
- Cayenne pepper or red chili flakes, to taste (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Place pineapple on grill pan, heated to medium-high. Sprinkle cayenne pepper or red chili flakes onto one side of the pineapple, to taste. (For a less spicy flavor, leave out the spices - pineapple is delicious on its own!) Grill 5 minutes on each side, or until brown grill marks appear.



RECIPE

Grilled Zucchini

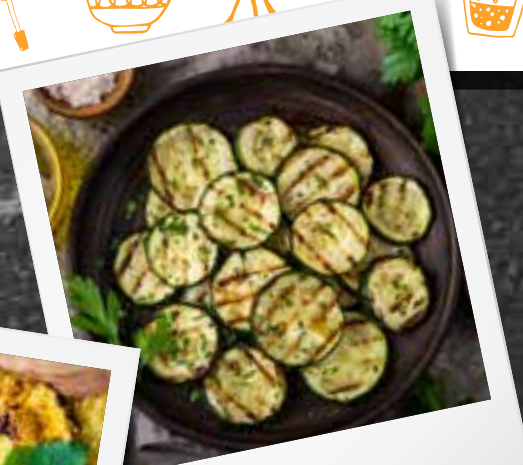
INGREDIENTS

- 2 Zucchini (or yellow squash), medium-sized
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 tsp Oil (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Slice zucchini to your preference - I like circles that are a quarter-inch thick, but sticks or halves can work too (and halves are great if you're short on chopping time!). If you prefer darker grill markers and/or softer veggies, lightly grease the pan. Cook zucchini about 5-7 minutes on each side on medium-high heat, until brown grill marks appear and desired tenderness is reached.

This can be replicated with many veggies - peppers, eggplant, asparagus, onions, or even winter squashes like butternut and kabocha. Cooking times can vary depending on the thickness of the veggie - winter squashes tend to take 10-15 minutes on each side, while onions and asparagus take 3-5 minutes per side.



ABOUT CINDY

Cindy Kaplan is a writer, producer, and entrepreneur navigating life in Los Angeles. She blogs about life with 35+ food allergies on her Substack, "Chocolate-Covered Lox."

LIVING IN AMERICA'S BREADBASKET AND NOT BEING ABLE TO EAT BREAD

THE MIDWEST CELIAC DESERT

Clayton Steward

Illustrating a celiac desert through my own experience

Recently I read a phenomenal memoir, *Heartland* by Sarah Smarsh, about a Kansan who was born a fifth-generation wheat farmer. Smarsh explores self-identity, generational inheritance, class in America, and her lessons learned growing up on the open plains. West of Wichita, she says, is an area with the nickname: “breadbasket of the world.” For me, as someone who lives with celiac disease (making wheat, as well as barley and rye my archnemeses), the notion she often references in her memoir of feeling alien but entirely at home is something I find to be very relatable among the wheat fields of the Midwest.

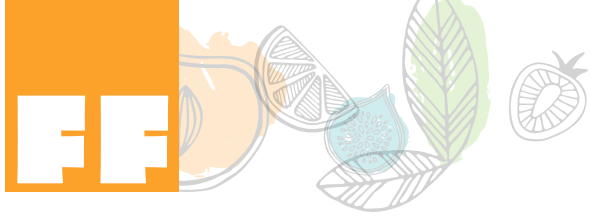
According to the USDA, a whopping 1.8 billion bushels of wheat was harvested in the U.S. during the 2020/2021 season. The land mass required to produce that much wheat is roughly 38.1 million acres. The Midwest is prime real estate in the United States for large wheat growing operations and has been for generations.

The irony of it all is that the heart of the country that produces the grain that goes into bread, pasta, and virtually every processed food on the shelf, is a “celiac desert” in comparison to the coastal regions of America. A quick Google search of “celiac in the Midwest” may yield articles and blog posts with headlines saying how abundant the choices of dining are for those living with celiac disease. This may be true for Chicago, Kansas City, Minneapolis, and other major cities, but what about the plethora of small towns that dot the countryside? Towns that reflect my own hometown.

When I was diagnosed in late summer 2017, I was the only person in my school that had celiac disease. My school was K-12th grade and was made up of a little over 100 students. While I was fortunate to be an outgoing senior in high school when I was handed my diagnosis, I can’t imagine receiving the diagnosis if I was the shy elementary schooler I once was. Access to resources in my immediate community were non-existent and the one restaurant in town at the time could never have accommodated me fully.

One weekend in college, I went back home to escape dorm life. Tearing down a dirt road in my gray, single cab Dodge Ram, arm out the window letting the spring evening blow around the dusty interior, I headed home to meet some friends. One of the fields I passed by made me pull my arm back in the window and crank the pane of glass back up. I was passing a wheat field. There is no basis for going by a field of green wheat making me ill, but the window stayed up on principle. A gentle reminder that the thing that can wreak so much havoc on my body is always nearby, slowly swaying in the rich black soil my neighbors cultivate.





I am fairly confident my experience is not a unique one for a Midwestern individual with celiac disease. The casual acts of packing your own school lunch everyday, just drinking water at a restaurant while your friends order delicious-looking food, and of course, the icing on the cake is passing the endless fields of wheat on your drive literally anywhere.

Living in a celiac desert is heightened by many factors that plague the Midwest already:

- **Sparse healthcare centers** - requires traveling long distances to major cities to receive medical care or a diagnosis of a chronic disease, like celiac disease.
- **Higher poverty rates** - puts pressure on getting access to gluten-free foods which are priced **83% higher** than gluten-containing alternatives.
- **Digital divide** - less internet connectivity makes it much more difficult for rural individuals to find information and support via online sources.

Celiac disease only affects around **1% of the American population**, so the chance of having a neighbor with a similar diet is rare (especially when thinking of the vast swaths of land, broken up only by dusty gray, red, and brown roads that make up the rural Midwest). This myriad of issues, on top of living with a socially challenging disease, causes the solution to this problem of the celiac desert to be complex. Some groups such as Beyond Celiac and Food Equality Initiative are becoming beacons of support in these areas, through outreach and advocacy, among other supportive actions.

Growing up in rural Missouri and going to college in Kansas is about as authentic of a Midwest experience one can have. Every time I see homages to bundles of wheat and golden fields of grain, I can't help but laugh to myself. Even through the irony of the situation, I still feel an immense sense of pride knowing my neighbors and friends are feeding much of the world who can digest it.

This struggle to identify with a part of your life or culture is likely true for many with dietary restrictions. There may be pieces of your life that you no longer recognize or feel a

part of due to a diagnosis. Speaking up about those things is so important. Raising the alarm on inequities in your food communities is also so important no matter where you are - small town or major city.

I am incredibly grateful to know some of the men and women who take great pride in their wheat harvests here in rural parts of the Midwest, although I will never enjoy the fruits of their labors. I will forever bask in the irony of living in America's breadbasket, and be unable to consume even a slice.



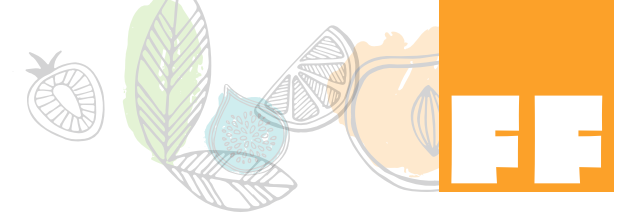
ABOUT CLAYTON

Clayton Steward is a graduate from the University of Saint Mary with a degree in Digital Communications; Journalism. He is a Missouri native who lives with celiac disease and eats a gluten-free diet, so he understands the importance of accessibility to safe to eat foods.



4 STEPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD SELF-ADVOCATE

Kortney Kwong Hing & Shahla Rashid



What an allergy child may not realize is that spaces are safe because a lot of what parents do behind the scenes - planning ahead of time and putting safeguards in place.



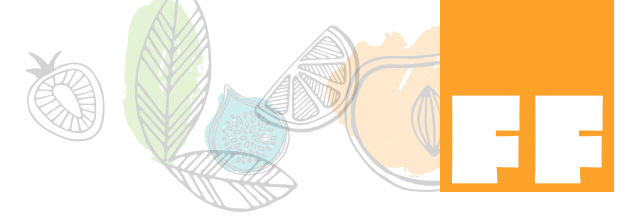
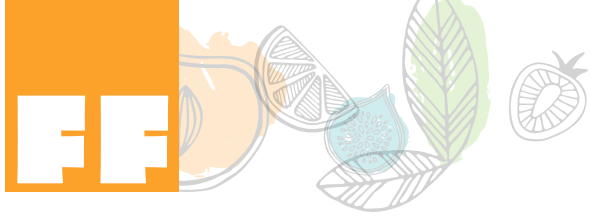
Gina Mennett Lee, M.Ed and her daughter, Jill, have come up with a simple four-step process that helps your child slowly take ownership of advocating for their food allergies. These steps were developed as Jill entered middle school and they knew that she would want to start gaining more independence in all aspects of her life.

To help your child gain more independence, it is important to teach your child how to take over these tasks as they get older.

Some examples of situations in your child's day-to-day are:

- At a restaurant - how do you alert the chef about your needs?
- At school - how do you make sure that your classroom feels safe?
- On a field trip - how do you plan ahead to make sure you are safe and comfortable?

Gina established her four steps because she wanted Jill to know how to function and be able to do everything that she wanted to do independently. The goal is to teach your child what practices need to be put into place to keep them safe and how to advocate for necessary accommodations.



Gina and Jill's 4 steps to gaining full independence

Listen to the full interview of Jill and Gina talking about how they came up with these steps on episode 21 of [The Itch Podcast](#).

Here is a brief outline of each step in an example restaurant situation:

STEP 1: MODELING

Set a positive example for your child. Keep in mind that when you are advocating, your child is always watching, so be aware of how you're doing it and what kind of cues you're giving to your child.

AT A RESTAURANT this means that the parent or guardian is ordering and the child is watching and learning. After ordering, it can help to explain why you said certain things and how this helps the waiter understand food allergies.



STEP 2: SMALL-STEP ADVOCACY

In this step, the parent or guardian gives the child a portion of the advocacy role. The adult is still mainly in charge of the advocacy, but the child takes on a small role.

AT A RESTAURANT the parent/guardian talks to the server, but the child has to tell the server about their allergies. This helps them begin to feel comfortable talking about allergies to strangers. If you bring your own food to a restaurant this is an opportunity to tell the server why that is.



STEP 3: SUPPORTED ADVOCACY

Let your child take the reins, but someone is there for support. This could be a parent or guardian as well as a family member or friend who knows about food allergies and can step in to support if needed.

AT A RESTAURANT the child orders and an adult jumps in only if there are any issues or if you feel like there was a miscommunication. The key is to let the child take the reins and just supervise from close-by.



STEP 4: COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT

Your child is able to advocate without the previous supports in place. This is where you and your child agree that they are confident enough to go out on their own.

AT A RESTAURANT they are able to order on their own. Heck! You may not even be there.



Customize for individual needs

A final note, as a parent, you have to remember that it's important to understand personality differences between you and your child. Together, come up with ways for your child to effectively advocate given their personality. It does not always have to be verbal, let your child use tools that work for them like texting and emails.

As your child gets older, you will find the natural time of when it is right to transition from steps. Depending on the activity, some things may happen faster than others, such as going out to eat versus advocating at school and involvement with their 504 plan.

Dressing Up Your Snacks

Emily Olson



Did you know that when food is more **visually** pleasing to the eye, it is also found to taste better?

eating. There are many ways to offset this by “dressing up” food and snacks to make them more appealing, while still keeping effort easy and the price affordable. It is important to adjust their eating habits to find snacks/meals that will keep them full for longer for their benefit and yours!

Healthier foods sometimes come with a not-so-tasty appearance. So, let’s talk about some ways to prepare snacks that look more engaging, taste good, and keep kids satisfied for a longer period of time.

Starting With The Basics

It is important to start off with learning what nutrients are key to making a good snack. Most of the typical snacks children reach for like chips or cookies are low in nutrients and will not keep fuel levels up. Instead, **prioritize** getting two main things into your children’s snacks: fiber and protein. Examples of foods with high fiber are vegetables, nuts, oats, and fruits. Fiber is slowly digested by the body,

Think about it: would you be more likely to enjoy something that is mashed together and thrown on a plate, or that is arranged nicely and formed into fun shapes and sizes?

It can be hard to keep your kids happy and well-fed during the summer months when they are using lots of energy. Not to mention, they also can be very picky when it comes to

which is key to keeping kids full for longer. **Protein** is the other important part in this snack equation in order to give strength and build muscle. Foods with high levels of protein include dairy, meat, eggs, and peanut butter. **Unsaturated fats** are also important in a balanced diet, but in smaller quantities than fiber and protein.

Size Matters!

Children are drawn to foods that are **smaller** in size that they can feed to themselves (and fit into their mouths with one bite). Examples of how to incorporate this would be: cut cheese into cubes to pair with crackers, use a small cookie cutter to cut soft fruits like watermelon or kiwi, or roll meat and cheese up to make pinwheels. By taking a few extra minutes to cut their food up in a fun and interactive way, it will encourage them to eat it all because it is visually appealing and it seems like a smaller amount, due to the smaller pieces.



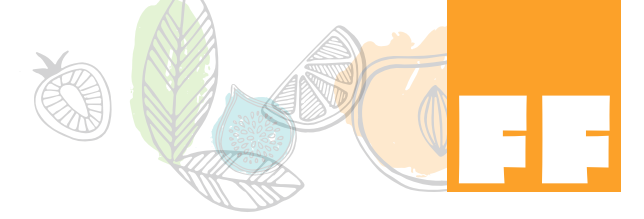
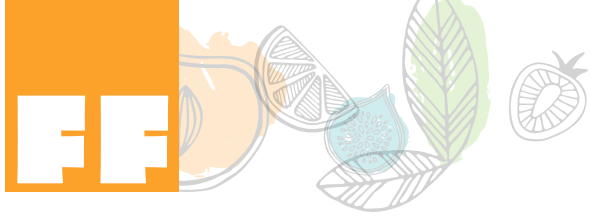
Yogurt Sundae

Sprinkles = secret weapon! Put them on yogurt, and voilà, snack time just got ten times more fun! Your kids will see fun colors and decoration, but underneath is a nutritious snack for them. Yogurt can be an awesome source of protein and calcium, but flavored yogurt can be high in sugar. Choose a plain, full-fat yogurt, then add your own flavors to it.

Here, I chose a Greek Vanilla Yogurt and added blueberries and a small pinch of sprinkles for some hints of sweetness and texture, but the options are endless for customizing a yogurt sundae! Adding granola to this would also be a great way to get a good source of fiber in there for your kids as well to keep them full.

PRO TIP: Try serving this for dessert by mixing in peanut butter or chocolate chips! Win, win!





PB & J

Are your kids bored of seeing a plain old square peanut butter & jelly sandwich on their plate? Give it a makeover! By simply cutting their sandwich into a new shape or adding a new topping, it will be a whole new experience for them. (It does not take much to get kids excited!) Use any cookie cutter you have laying around or even the rim of a cup to make a new shape. This hack is simple, but could really step up your snack game.

PRO TIP: Add honey to your peanut butter sandwiches if your child does not like jelly!



'Nana Sandwich

Who doesn't like cookies? Vanilla wafers are great to munch on, but even better when you can add a few things to make them more nutritious. Spread one side of the wafer with peanut butter and cut a few slices of banana. Put a slice in between two cookies and lightly push them together. Boom! You have the perfect finger food sandwiches that your kids will love. The banana is a good source of fiber and the peanut butter gives them some protein. Easy and delicious.

PRO TIP: Swap out peanut butter with other butters (apple butter or almond butter) for a different flavor!



Ham & Cheese Pinwheels

You can't go wrong with meat and cheese! These pinwheel rollups are fun, easy, and most importantly, YUMMY! Start with a tortilla and layer lunch meat + sliced cheese. Roll it up and cut horizontally to form pinwheels. You now have a bite-sized snack that has sources of protein, carbohydrates, and fats to keep to keep your kids energized and strong. If you would prefer to leave the tortilla out, roll up some ham and cheese, cut it in half, and stick a toothpick in it to keep them together!

PRO TIP: Cut your cheese into cubes for another fun way to serve it :)



What Do These Have In Common?

The most important things that these snacks all have in common is that they are easy, nutritious, and affordable. During the summer months it is important to help your children stay full and keep them growing strong.



ABOUT EMILY!

Emily Olson is a student at the University of Kansas. She enjoys spending time with family and friends and exercising. She is excited to write for Food Equality Initiative to share her passion of health and wellness!



DAIRY-FREE ICE CREAM TASTE TEST

Arjun Srinivas



July marks the beginning of National Ice Cream Month!

July 17 is Ice Cream Day

For those with dietary restrictions, it can sometimes be tough to enjoy desserts. But luckily with ice cream, there are a number of tasty ingredient alternatives that offer different takes on this traditionally dairy-based dessert. I taste-tested 4 different types of dairy-free ice cream in order to crown one the winner. As someone who used to be allergic to dairy but has since overcome that allergy, I think I'm uniquely qualified to decide not only what tastes the most like dairy-based ice cream, but what tastes best in general.

The Contestants

- **Cado** - made with avocado
- **WildGood** - made with extra virgin olive oil
- **OATLY!** - made with oat milk
- **So Delicious cookie dough** - made with coconut milk

CADO DARK CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM (Made with Avocados)

With this product being made from avocados, and marketed as a "frozen dessert" instead of an ice cream, I really didn't know what to expect. To be honest, with this alternative, I did not set my hopes too high. I have to say though, this ice cream greatly surprised me! The avocado provided a nice rich flavor, and the dark chocolate was an authentic taste. I would definitely recommend this as a dairy-free alternative for those who have dairy restrictions, but also to those looking for a healthier choice than milk-based ice creams.





WILDGOOD CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM (MADE WITH EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL)

First off, I wanted to say that it's pretty impressive that this ice cream is made not with some type of milk, but with olive oil, peas, and chicory. This ice cream has a texture that's a bit soft, but that isn't necessarily a bad thing. It immediately overwhelms with the chocolate flavor, but as this flavor fades away there's a bit of an aftertaste that tastes almost medicine-like, which I'm not really fond of. The chocolate flavor also lacks richness, which makes the taste lack some substance and feel a bit artificial. It still tastes quite good overall though, so it's still a good item to try.



OATLY! CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM (MADE WITH OAT MILK)

This next ice cream is made with oat milk. First of all, I want to say that this tasted the closest to a standard dairy-based chocolate ice cream. That doesn't mean I think it's the best, but if you're looking for a taste that emulates its dairy counterpart, I would recommend this. This ice cream has a softer, slightly chewy texture that I quite enjoyed. In terms of the chocolate taste, it's about standard; it doesn't feel extremely processed, but it also wasn't overwhelming me with cocoa. I really enjoyed this one and definitely would recommend it.



SO DELICIOUS COOKIE DOUGH ICE CREAM (MADE WITH COCONUT MILK)

This was the only one out of the four that was not chocolate flavored, so it obviously tasted different from the start. After a few scoops, I can say quite honestly that I enjoyed it a lot. The ice cream had a good texture and was not too hard or too soft. The dairy-free chocolate chips were also crunchy and great. Like the OATLY! ice cream, it tasted extremely similar to dairy-based ice cream which could be a positive, depending on what you are looking for. When it comes to negatives, I would say that this tasted a bit watery and diluted, but it's really not all that noticeable. Overall, I would say I really enjoyed this one. It is a great alternative that tastes almost the same as dairy-based ice cream.



SO WHAT ICE CREAM IS THE WINNER?

My personal favorite out of the bunch was So Delicious, but I think that also has to do with a flavor bias. (Cookie dough is my favorite flavor.) If I was to disqualify So Delicious, I would say my personal favorite is the Cado frozen dessert. OATLY! comes in as the runner-up. With that said, I think all of these ice creams really surprised me. I would recommend all of these for those with a dairy dietary restriction or even for those just looking for a plant-based, healthier dessert.



ABOUT ARJUN

Hi, My name is Arjun Srinivas, and I'm a Junior at Watchung Hills Regional High School. I have had food allergies since I was 4 months old, but since then I've outgrown a few, such as milk and eggs. Other than sports, my hobbies include playing the drums and guitar, playing video games, and writing.



Normalizing Food Allergy Awareness

Grace Leffall

I will never forget the first conversation I had with a family member about food allergies.

A close relative offered my daughter some strawberries, and I kindly explained that she could not have any because of a new food allergy diagnosis. My relative shrugged her shoulders and rolled her eyes. Then told me that she believed people with food allergies were just intolerant. In protecting my daughter, I did not expect my family members to be the ones to break my heart.

When I was younger, every family get-together involved sharing traditional dishes with each other. There were so many potlucks and BBQs with different kinds of foods for everyone to try. We still get together for family events, but having a child with food allergies makes it a bit more challenging for us.

Unfortunately, this first conversation made me nervous about going to other family get-togethers because I was afraid that I would have this type of conversation with other family members. It is so hard when people just don't get it. I dreaded having to explain to friends and family how food allergies are scary and how cross-contact could easily occur at family cookouts. I started avoiding gatherings, just to not have to deal with challenging comments.

The Challenging Comments

I would often hear things such as “we didn't grow up with food allergies,” “food allergies didn't exist back in *my* day,” “if you fed the food to her at an early age she would have

outgrown the allergy by now.” Although it can be extremely frustrating, I gave it some thought, and realized I was not going to let my daughter miss out on anything because of other people's dated views. I was ready to stand up for the inclusion of my daughter in these important social events. Through the years, I have learned effective ways to advocate for my child and others with food allergies, and I am here to share them with you.

To people making comments like that, I asked them why they believed this information was true. Most of the time, family members and friends were only given the minimal information on food allergies that were available decades ago. Or, they just form their own “expert” opinions from their own experiences of growing up.

However, we know, food allergies are becoming more and more common now than they ever have been before. The **Center for Disease Control & Prevention** says, “from 1997 to 2007, the prevalence of reported food allergy increased 18% among children under age 18 years.” So, in order to best advocate for my child, I take the time to teach my friends and family members about updated information and give them resources on how to learn more about food allergies.

Re-education takes time and patience

First, I take my phone and show them the definition of anaphylaxis. Then I show them the definition of cross-contact. Once they see how serious and life threatening food allergies can be, they can see how scary food allergies are for my child. They always have follow up questions, for example they ask why I bring separate food, snacks, drinks, and desserts for my daughter. I don't mind answering questions like this because I know that it will raise awareness about food allergies. I know that having these tough conversations help people understand her world a lot better.

Having this open and honest communication has worked wonders! Now, before future gatherings, friends and family come to me about safe foods for my daughter. Even more

significantly, they ask me about safe foods for their children's school gatherings or potlucks (events my daughter will not even attend). This thinking of and caring for others is truly remarkable and a full 180 from those nasty conversations from a few years ago. Equipped with the right information, we are more easily able to approach others with compassion and understanding.

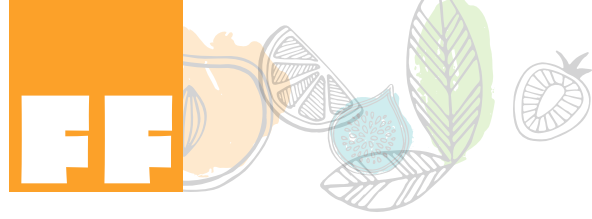


I gave it some thought, and realized I was not going to let my daughter miss out on anything

Advocacy starts at home

Once I started to feel confident in my role of advocating for a safe environment for my daughter, we started to join all of the family events again. I knew there would be tough conversations, but I was ready to advocate for my daughter and be confident in standing up for her.

Even though it's hard to have these difficult conversations about food allergies, I have learned how to listen and calmly answer friends and family when they aren't familiar with the severity of food allergies. I have learned that the more I open up and talk about food allergies, the more I am normalizing awareness. So, let's keep talking about it. Let's keep educating others about it. The more we do so, the more we can educate and give a voice for people with food allergies.



ADVOCACY AISLE

WHITE HOUSE LISTENING SESSIONS

In preparation for **President Biden's Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health**, the White House scheduled a series of listening sessions through Zoom across the country. These sessions allowed for attendees to share their experiences with hunger and/or diet-treated diseases in their communities.

Three staff members from Food Equality Initiative joined the meeting held on June 3, 2022 for the Midwest & Mountains region. There were many active note-takers, employed by the White House to make sure everyone's ideas and comments were accurately recorded to inform the Conference in September. Our staff members also took some notes; this is what they learned.

Kathy Downing: Improve Food Access and Affordability

55 attendees

In my session, I learned that agricultural workers cannot get overtime pay and that really set the mood for the rest of the session. A couple of people brought up the term "nutrition equity," which is something I heard there for the first time.

In order to reach nutrition equity, we need to take a lot of steps, both locally and federally. For example, one person suggested decolonizing our food distribution - that works through the way we grow food, the way we distribute it, to the way we waste food - it is the whole cycle. We need to take more of a regional approach and implement innovative ideas, like public-private partnerships.

In the meantime, nonprofits are doing work to stop-gap hunger with the end goal to make society more equitable,

where people don't have to be hungry. Lots of nonprofit leaders/staffers were in my session and they talked about how just giving people food boxes wasn't a good option, because oftentimes people didn't get what they wanted. That reminded me of what FEI is all about - offering choice to improve health and decrease food waste at the same time. But, these are just Bandaid solutions; without federal funding, it is difficult to create lasting change. Nearly all were pointing out that we're concentrating wealth and the government is giving the support dollars to multinational companies instead of the local, grassroots organizations that are really doing the work. Basically, that means - don't use nonprofits as an opportunity to make more corporate profits - use this as an actual way to improve food access.

People from nonprofit organizations did most of the speaking, which is kind of interesting. I'd rather hear from people that are directly impacted by hunger, instead of people who are representing people impacted by hunger (although some nonprofit leaders had also experienced hunger). So, it makes me think that maybe the White House could do more to reach the general public with this initiative.



Erin Martinez: Enhance Food Nutrition and Food Security Research

60 attendees

The Biden/Harris administration has made it known that one of their goals is to end hunger in diet-related diseases in the US. In this listening session, a couple of individuals shared their lived experiences with hunger and, through their stories, set the stage for why this conference in September is vital. Changes and improvements need and must be made when it comes to Americans' health and nutrition and none should be hungry.

Unfortunately, I was only able to be in my group for a short time due to another meeting. However, there were a couple of farmers in my group, one of whom asked: why is there all this funding for fresh produce when there's no education around how to store, prepare, and enjoy it so it doesn't go to waste? This really struck me as an area where FEI could work as well as developing more education in addition to recipes around other whole foods. Another person suggested that the government needs to set aside more funding for true nutrition research. That is certainly another area where FEI is working and can develop more.



Sofia Gillespie: Support Physical Activity for All

45 attendees

The basic gist of the conversation in my session was to increase physical activity, build more sidewalks. Of course solutions are never that simple, but sometimes the best thing is to start that simple. Most of the talk centered around investing infrastructure in building new and maintaining present sidewalks and creating protected bike lanes in town and trails in parks.

What was interesting in my group was the only people that spoke up were women, mostly mothers, who care about physical activity and want to be more actively involved (pun-intended). They offered lots of creative solutions to get people more active at any age-level, be it in school or in retirement.

For example, one woman suggested revving up intramural programs in schools, since high school sports have gotten so elite - provide a place for kids to play who just want to play and not necessarily be good at it. A woman (who just had her 79th birthday the day before) suggested "prescription exercise" packages be included in Medicaid - including something like gym memberships or workout classes for seniors.

I also decided to speak up, suggesting more than 1 credit of Physical Education be required in order to graduate high school - right now in Missouri, Kansas, and multiple other states, only one PE credit is required. They don't have to all be hard workouts, but at least something to get you moving. At FEI, we have been working on incorporating movement into our education programming, as it is often just as important as nutritious food when maintaining health.

The vibe of the meeting was very approachable, like no idea was a bad idea and we were all here to support each other. I especially liked that the level of the conversation was not too high. Unlike many meetings of this nature, it didn't feel like a group of nonprofit snobs - probably because most people were average citizens just there to make their voice heard.



GLUTEN IN PET FOODS

A CLOSER LOOK

Kathy Downing

What should individuals with celiac disease or gluten sensitivity consider when sharing homes with pets?

While not everyone with these conditions needs to worry about buying gluten-free pet food, those who continue to experience symptoms despite following a careful gluten-free diet may want to look to their pets' food bowls as one possible source for their symptoms.

Households with a young child with celiac disease or gluten sensitivity may consider feeding their pets gluten-free food, as toddlers might sample dog food from the bowl or kiss a pup on the mouth.

Additionally, some people react to **airborne gluten**, such as dust from dry, gluten-containing pet food. Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Nancy Patin Falini said one of her patients wasn't responding well to a gluten-free diet because of her fish food. "She was feeding her goldfish with food

containing wheat without washing her hands," Falini said. "She would then run out the door, drinking her coffee while driving to work to play piano. This resulted in continued symptoms and elevated antibodies."

Falini also points out that cat litter and other animal supplies can be sources of gluten. It is important to be aware that the FDA's rules on gluten-free food labeling don't apply to pet foods.

Worried about your pet having celiac disease?

Celiac disease as described in humans has not been directly documented in dogs, according to Dr. Carey Hemmelgarn, DVM. However, some Irish setters have been diagnosed with a gluten-sensitive enteropathy that is similar to it. Gluten-sensitive dogs can develop symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, weight loss, dermatitis, chronic ear infections, and poor coat condition.



Nut-Free Dog Treat Recipe

Grace Guthrie - adapted from Copykat.com

INGREDIENTS

1 1/8 cups Whole wheat flour
 1 1/8 cups All-purpose flour
 1/2 cup Sunbutter
 1 cup Water
 2 Tbsp Vegetable oil

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F. Blend wheat flour and white flour in a bowl. Set aside. Combine vegetable oil, Sunbutter, and water. Add flour, one cup at a time, forming a dough. You will need to blend the final flour by hand, kneading until a nice firm ball of dough is formed. (Takes quite a bit of kneading.) Let ball of dough stand for about 10 minutes to allow the gluten to relax (makes for easier rolling). Roll dough to about 1/4 inch thickness on a sheet of waxed paper.

Cut with desired cutter. Re-roll scraps to make more biscuits. How many biscuits you get depends on the size of the cutter you use. Score the tops of the cookies with a fork so the steam that builds up inside the cookies will release. Bake on an ungreased cookie sheet for about 25 minutes, turning the pan a couple of times during baking. Cookies should be hard to the touch before removing from the oven. You may need to increase baking time.

Cool, then store in a zip-lock baggie on the shelf. No refrigeration necessary. Shelf life is approximately 2 weeks.

PETS OF FEI

BUZZ, 1.5 YEAR OLD

My name is Buzz and I am Sofia's favorite coworker. She likes it when I talk to her throughout the day while she is working, so I take it upon myself to tell her all about the squirrels that get too close to the house. When I am not busy making sure our home is protected, you can find me trying to nibble on houseplants or napping in my favorite chair.



Buzz & Sofia

Buzz chillin'

TOGGLE, 1.5 YEAR OLD

My name is Toggle and I am Amelia's 3rd toddler. I like to make sure the twins get up in the mornings and I protect them while they play outside. I go outside to walk the perimeter of my new home once a day to make sure everything is in order, then I return for a nap near Amelia while she works until my other siblings come home from preschool. My nickname is Trash Panda, not sure why... I just really enjoy food.

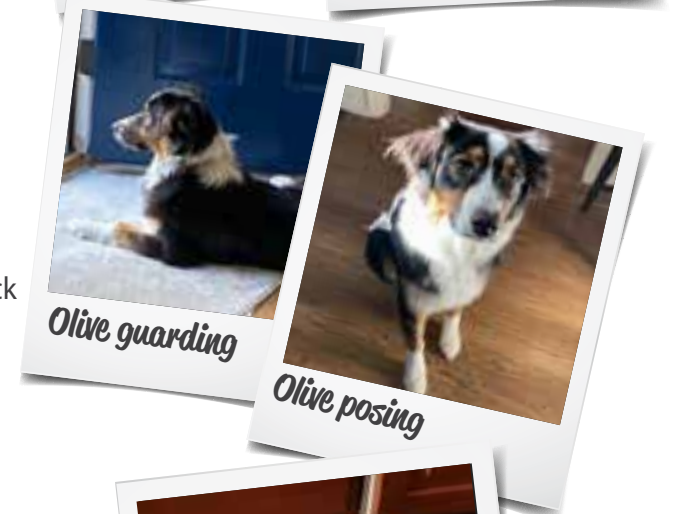


Toggle napping

Toggle at Amelia's feet

OLIVE, 1.5 YEAR OLD

Hi, my name is Olive. I'm an Australian Shepherd and my herd is Erin and her family. But, I have yet to meet a hoo-man that I don't like. While my hoo-man mom works, I keep a close watch for any delivery trucks and alert everyone that one is driving by. I love to chase any tennis balls tossed my way, go for mid-day walks to check out the neighborhood, and chew sticks.



Olive guarding

Olive posing

MOOSE, 14 YEARS OLD (PROBABLY)

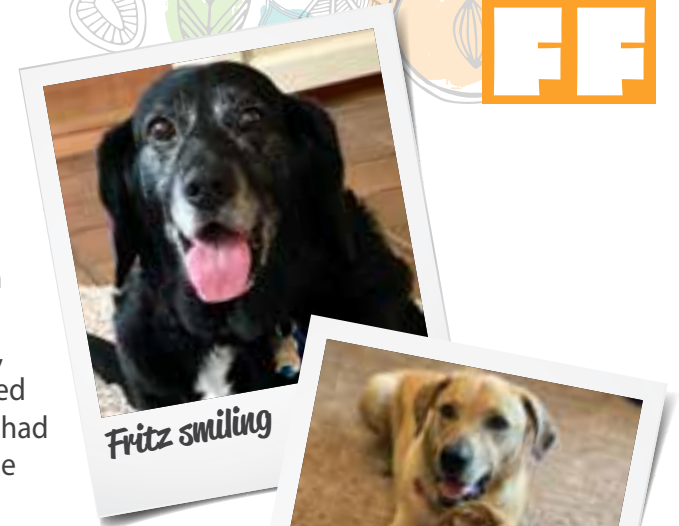
Hi! I'm Moose. In 2009, I was a stray in Pleasant Hill, MO. I was taken to a shelter – but it was a kill-shelter so I was transferred to Wayside Waifs. WHEW! My life was saved! Fortunately, a family came in to just "look," but my hazel eyes caught their attention and home I went! When my mama, Sarah, sits too long at her computer working for FEI, I try to get her to go to the dog park!



Moose waiting to go to the dog park

FRITZ, MY BIRTH CERTIFICATE WAS LOST, BUT WE'RE GUESSING I'M 9

Hi! I'm Fritz. Once upon a time I was owned by an elderly person who died. And then I was chained out in her backyard. No one cared – until I was rescued by Furry Kids Refuge in Lee's Summit, MO and my photo was put on their website. One day I was loaded into a car and driven to Kansas City where I met this family who had another dog – Moose. It was love at first bark. I keep watch while my mama, Sarah, works for FEI!



Fritz smiling

DUKE, 8 YEARS OLD, AND YOGI, 1 YEAR OLD

Hi! I am Duke and this is my little brother Yogi. I was used to being mom and dad's only child, getting all the peanut butter filled kongs and fluffy blankets to myself, but for some reason they decided I needed a friend. Yogi joined our family this summer after Mom and Dad adopted him from the shelter. He loves to chew up all my toys, out-hunt me for all the food scraps, and fall asleep in Mom's arms like a baby; but as long as I can snuggle next to Mom on the couch, that's okay I guess. My favorite thing to do is going for rides in the car with Mom and Dad. I love sticking out my head out the window and feeling the wind in my ears. While my mom, Kelsie, is my best friend, Yogi is starting to become a close second! Maybe Mom and Dad were right!



Duke & Yogi playing

BUCKET ALOE, 15 YEARS OLD

Kathy loves her 15-year-old Bucket Aloe plant because it is beautiful, resilient, and it improves indoor air quality. It's also her family's go-to sunburn remedy! It's called Bucket Aloe because when her husband repotted it, he repurposed a 5 gallon bucket for the new pot, handle and all. Lots of space to grow!



Bucket Aloe vibin'

HENRY AND MOCHA, 7 AND 5 YEARS OLD

Felipe simply loves his dogs. They keep him company while he works in his home office. They both like to go for walks and go crazy chasing squirrels and rabbits in the backyard. Mocha is a foster dog that he adopted four months ago, and she is still getting over some trauma and abuse. She is very shy, but Henry has helped her feel more comfortable at home.



Henry lounging

Mocha cheesin'

MONSTERA DELICIOSA, 4 MONTHS OLD

Crysta has quite the collection of house plants, but her Monstera Deliciosa is one of her favorites. It gives a very jungle-feel to her bedroom. It is growing incredibly quickly, and unfurls huge leaves frequently.



Monstera Deliciosa modeling

A Pocket Guide to Foraging!

Alexander Wedgbury, Abigail Reing, and Creme de Cornell



Roasted Chestnut Butter

1. Roast 2lb chestnuts, scored with an x at 400°F for 25-30 min.
2. Cover with paper towels, cool, and peel.
3. Food process into a fine powder, then add 1 cup water.
4. Add honey and salt, to taste.



chestnuts roasting on an open fire

To look for chestnut trees, find the spiked green balls in summer (don't touch!), then return in the fall once the balls have browned. Remove the spiky shell with gloves!



Cornelian Cherries

These beautiful fruits come from an invasive dogwood species (not-native to anywhere in the US) used often for decoration. In the winter, the trees produce a white-yellow flower. The berries appear in summer, ripe for jams and jellies!

- 500g Cherries
- 150g Sugar
- 2 Tbsp Lemon juice



1. Sanitize jars.
2. Simmer ingredients until thick, about 30-40 minutes.

Wild Garlic

Garlic Mustard may be a weed, but it's delicious! The basal leaves found in late fall & early winter are less bitter than the leaves on the flower stalk. Gather as much as you can to make pesto - perfect with tomatoes or pasta!

- YOUNG SHOOTS - salads
- BULBS - soups & sauces
- FLOWER - crush like garlic or decorate salad

Wild Pesto

- 3 cups Wild greens
- 4 Tbsp Pine nuts
- ½ cup Olive oil
- 1 tsp Lemon juice
- 4 Tbsp Nutritional yeast
- Salt & pepper, to taste

1. Blend all ingredients, except olive oil.
2. Slowly add oil while blending.
3. Season with salt & pepper.



Rosehips

As the name suggests, Rosehips come from the wild version of everyone's favorite flower. The red firm berries appear in fall and early winter.

- Flavor pairings:
- Cardamom
 - Almond
 - Pistachio



Use this simple syrup in pastries or cakes for an aromatic hint and sweet-tart taste!

- Remove top & remove seeds
- Prepare & Add 3 cups Rosehips
- 3 cups Boiling water
- Cook 20-30 minutes.
- Strain, then dissolve 2 cups sugar.



From the warm days of spring to the cool days of fall, our flora always has something to offer - if you're willing to look!

*Disclaimer: Please verify the plant you harvest with multiple sources before consuming.



300 E 39th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111



(816) 800 - 0884



contact@foodequalityinitiative.org

WWW.FOODEQUALITYINITIATIVE.ORG