

*a lifestyle resource from Food Equality Initiative*

# Free-From MAGAZINE



2

Recipes by FEI  
Family Members

**ZESTY  
CORNER -  
BIRTHDAY  
PARTIES**

A template for birthday  
party safety

**FEI  
ADVOCATES**

Representing FEI Family  
Members on a national  
scale

**TEAL  
PUMPKINS**

Taking  
Trick-or-Treating  
to a new level

**FEI'S 7TH  
BIRTHDAY**

FEI is turning 7 on  
October 22nd!



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

On October 22nd, 2021, Food Equality Initiative will turn 7 years old. I interviewed our founder, Emily Brown, to reflect on how far FEI has come and where she envisions FEI to be in the next 7 years. This is what she had to say:

"I started Food Equality Initiative from lived experience, as a person in need and that has been at the core of all the work that we do. I believe everybody deserves to have an opportunity to be healthy and to have the right foods that they need, so our work is truly centered around the clients. They are the center of our work; they are why we get up every day, and we do the things we do.

I've always wanted our work to have a significant impact, to change systems. I've always dreamed that one day, people with food allergies and celiac disease or really any special dietary needs would be able to get the foods that they need in their communities, on their own time, and it wouldn't be such a struggle; that's always been my

vision. FEI is making that vision come to life.

Seven years from now, FEI will continue to be a leader in the food allergy and celiac disease space in terms of advocacy and education and really pushing the field forward, and acknowledging that food is medicine. I think there is always going to be a role for philanthropy to play in subsidizing access, but I hope that seven years from now, that won't be FEI's only role. Seven years from now, I hope that all of our research efforts and partnerships with academic institutions will have paid off with some high quality data. I hope that this data will really push policy-makers and decision-makers to have these free-from foods covered under insurance, and that there will be some sort of supplemental benefit that will be available to all families who have these conditions.

To me, it's not enough just that we support people with accessing food. I hope that we're creating a grassroots movement, that people are empowered to take control of their own lives and their own health, that they become advocates for themselves.

I think that's the power of community and recognizing that you're not alone. Being able to see Nehgar and Dawn share their stories at the EL-PFDD meeting (pg. 12) was just so inspiring and I hope that continues to bleed over. I love seeing the clients in the Facebook Community group share recipes or support one another, that's always encouraging.

When we share those stories, we encourage one another and we help each other. We reassure each other that it is going to be okay, that you've got this. So I hope that, beyond this access work that we're doing, that we're creating a community and inspiring a group of people to take positive actions."

Emily Brown  
CEO and Founder  
Food Equality Initiative

Sofia Gillespie  
Editor in Chief,  
Free-From Magazine



@FOODEQUALITY  
#FOODEQUALITY

# Free-From MAGAZINE

a lifestyle resource from Food Equality Initiative

## In This Issue

### BRAND SPOTLIGHT

Patch Organics Pumpkin Seed Milk

### ZESTY CORNER - BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Sending your food-allergic child to a birthday party takes a few extra steps to prepare

### THE TEAL PUMPKIN PROJECT

How one family celebrates food allergies on Halloween through the Teal Pumpkin Project

### THE FEI ADVOCATES

Two representatives from FEI went to Washington, DC to tell their story to the FDA

### MEET THE ENCISO-RODRIGUEZ FAMILY

Caring for multiple people with multiple food allergies is far from easy

### MINDFULNESS

Some techniques for slowing down and re-centering this season

### RECIPES\*

Two recipes submitted by our very own Family Members

04  
06  
09  
12  
17  
20  
24

\*Disclaimer: The recipes included in the Free-From Magazine are suggestions. They may not be free-from all Top 9 allergens. 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.



## BRAND SPOTLIGHT

### Patch Organics Pumpkin Seed Milk

## My name is Patricia Trongone, the Founder of Patch Organics Pumpkin Seed Milks.

**M**y beverage-producing business journey began several years ago in a local Westchester commercial kitchen making green juice cleanses. Gradually, the menu offerings at the kitchen expanded to include whole food snacks, soups, salads, and other juices for a small but loyal following. But I wanted to reach a larger audience, and for that, I needed something new.

In 2016, my business partner, Gil Kernan, and I were given an opportunity by a NYC coffee roastery & café to create a more sustainable milk alternative, as opposed to almonds and soy. This was the spark that started Patch Organics Pumpkin Seed Milk.

Pumpkin Seed Milks (PSM) have become our hero products for so many reasons. Many of the plant-based milks on the market are not sustainably sourced/produced, are lacking in protein, or are not allergy friendly. We are proud to say Patch PSMs are top nine allergen-free. Our Pumpkin Seed Milks have many health benefits, including 5.75 grams of protein in one serving. Pumpkin seeds are readily available and grown in many regions of North America, Europe, and Asia, so sourcing them is not a problem.

Furthermore, less water is used to produce pumpkin seeds, making PSMs more friendly to the planet than cow's milk, soy, or almond milk.

# PATCH<sup>™</sup> Organics

Some good news for the consumer is that Patch Pumpkin Seed Milks do not require refrigeration until opened. We only use low glycemic sweeteners, such as dates and coconut sugar, which do not spike your blood sugar and also provide minerals such as iron, zinc, calcium, and potassium. Plus, PSMs provide a good source of electrolytes for hydration. The vitamin D is 100% plant-based from powdered button mushrooms.

Our Pumpkin Seed Milks have the added benefit of being free-from lactose, gluten, and cholesterol. Plus, they taste great in a variety of settings: hot or cold beverages, cereals, overnight oats, chia puddings, and smoothies as well as in vegan baking.

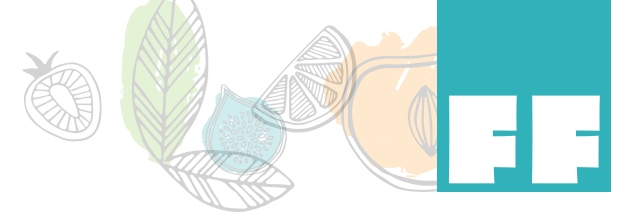
Patch is thrilled to join Food Equality Initiative to help spread awareness and raise funds for the Seven Percent Fund & Coalition. It is important to us to provide access to healthy, allergen-free food to the under-served communities that need them.

**Fun Fact: pumpkin seeds are also sometimes known as pepitas.**

Follow our journey on Instagram @patchorganics or on our website [patchmilk.com](https://www.patchmilk.com).

At Patch, we are always happy to share recipes and answer any dietary related questions, or provide samples, and we look forward to hearing from you.

You can find our 2 flavors (original and chocolate) shipped nationwide on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), [Bitewell.com](https://www.bitewell.com), [GFTOitsvegan.com](https://www.gftoitsvegan.com), [GFS.com](https://www.gfs.com), and [Patchmilk.com](https://www.patchmilk.com).



## THE ZESTY CORNER

### CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAY PARTIES:

## How to plan a safe meal for your child

Kortney Kwong Hing & Shahla Rashid



*DISCLAIMER: This is not medical advice. These tips have worked for children under the age of 8, however, they may still apply to your child. In many cases, children do not like to feel different at a party and choose not to eat.*



## Food is at the center of most birthday parties, especially the main event, the birthday cake.

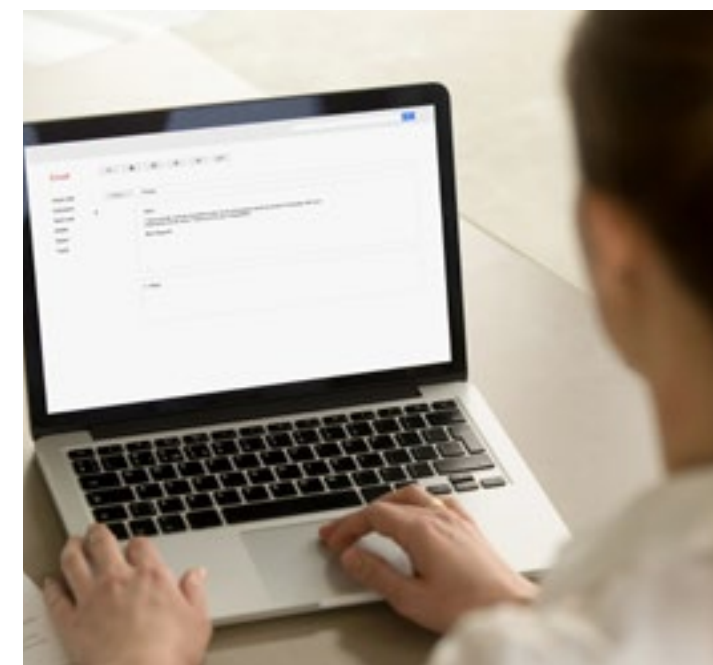
**A**s an allergy child, this can present a few challenges such as ensuring you do not come in contact with any allergens while not feeling left out.

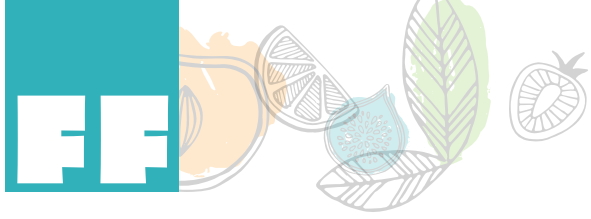
Figuring out how to attend a birthday party safely will help to instill confidence and model positive behavior in your child. With a little planning and communication, everyone can have a safe and happy time.

While most people politely ask the host what they can bring to a party, food allergy parents require the active participation from the host in order to ensure that their child can safely attend. This feels awkward at first especially when you do not know the parents. Food allergy parents do not want to seem controlling yet they need to ask these important questions in order to minimize accidental exposure.

### Steps to take when reaching out to the host

- Contact the host when you have received the invitation and explain your child's allergies. Either by phone or email, do not forget to ask what will be served.
- If food will be catered by an outside vendor, ask the host for the name. Call to discuss the menu and allergens. Based on the conversation, decide if your child will be able to eat and/or be around the food.
- If you do not feel confident the host will be able to provide safe food, explain that you will be bringing your own food.
- Pack similar food to what will be served. If your child is of an age where they are aware that they are not eating the same foods, discuss what they may want to have and make it special for them. If this is the case, or you are unable to replicate the planned meal, pack one of their favorite treats or dessert for the time the cake comes out.
- Send your child to the party with extra snacks just in case things do not go as planned.





## Sample email

Here is a sample email that Shahla uses to start the conversation. Note that she includes “contact allergy” as this is the severity of her daughter. For Shahla’s family, contact allergy means that in addition to ingesting food, if her daughter touches her allergens or someone she is in contact with (touches or eats) her allergens and in turn touches her skin, a reaction may occur. You do not have to include this in your letter if you feel comfortable with allergens around. Again, this depends on the age of your child and the level of safety you require for your child.

Dear Host,

Thank you for the invite. My son/daughter would love to attend your child’s party. I was checking in to see if you will be serving food and if so, could you kindly share the menu?

My son/daughter is allergic to (insert allergens here). That means she cannot eat these foods, but she is also contact-allergic, which means she cannot touch these foods. In an effort to keep her safe, would it be possible to refrain from serving her foods containing or touching her allergens?

We would be happy to help bring food or an alternative. If this allergen-free environment is not possible, we understand and thank you for your efforts.

Here is my phone number if you would have any questions, ###-###-####.

Many thanks,  
Your Name

If you are looking for more tips on living with food allergies check out [www.thezestfull.com](http://www.thezestfull.com)



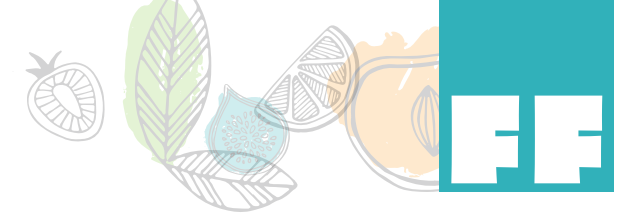
### ABOUT KORTNEY

Kortney was diagnosed with food allergies before she was 6 months old. She manages multiple food allergies, asthma, eczema and OAS. She wants to spread joy in a community that can easily see the hard side of life with atopic disease and believes that you can have a full life with food allergies.



### ABOUT SHAHLA

Shahla is a mom of two girls who live with environmental allergies such as asthma and eczema. Their food allergies include tree nuts, peanuts, sesame and other seeds. Shahla wants to share the comfort that cooking has brought her family. She believes that everyone, regardless of dietary requirements, deserves a plate full of color and flavor.



## Halloween has always been one of my favorite holidays to celebrate with my children.

Our tradition, which started with my oldest, Jayden, includes dressing up in our costumes and cooking an array of delicious fun foods like nachos, mini hot dogs, and mini meatballs. Then I would surprise the kids with a delicious dessert that we would all make together. For example, we would bake and decorate themed cookies and cupcakes, or the playful dirt cups. This would be followed by trick-or-treating, of course. Once Peyton was born and diagnosed with multiple food allergies, our tradition of celebrating Halloween became rocky territory.

Starting out, after we found out we had a child with allergies to peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish, egg, and dairy, I remember thinking, “She can’t possibly go trick-or-treating. How can I make sure that the candy that she receives is safe for her to eat?” The only thing I could think to do to keep Peyton safe was to not let her partake in the full Halloween celebration; she dressed up in a costume, but she did not go trick-or-treating.

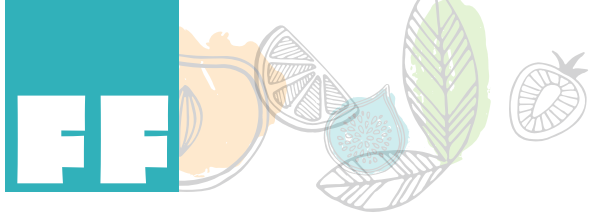
When Peyton started kindergarten, and started forming friendships with her peers in her class, we decided to let her start going trick-or-treating with a friend group. At an early age, Peyton understood the concept that she always had to check her candy before eating it. I remember Halloweens of the past (and not so of the past), Peyton would come home from trick-or-treating, dump her bag out in the middle of the living room floor. All the unsafe candy, often the majority of her bag, she would give to her grandfather, uncle, and brothers. It started off as being FUN to share her candy with



## TEAL PUMPKIN PROJECT

Kamisha York

PEYTON'S ALLERGY SHIELD OF HOPE



everyone. But the older she got, the more she realized how much less candy she had than everyone else. That made her upset. Rightfully so.

It wasn't until much later that I found out about the Teal Pumpkin Project and Halloween started to take on a new tradition at our house.



**The Teal Pumpkin Project was started in fall of 2012 by Becky Basalone (the director of a Tennessee food allergy support group). The goal is to bring awareness to food allergies during this season by displaying teal-painted pumpkins (the color for food allergy awareness), and handing out non-food items, and allergy-friendly treats.**

Every year, my best friends and I host a Halloween party with our daughters where we paint teal pumpkins. We proudly display them on our porch on Halloween night, as we serve allergy-friendly treats to trick-or-treaters. Peyton loves the Teal Pumpkin Project because of the awareness that it brings to food allergies on a holiday that affects food allergy kids so much. She can spot a teal pumpkin on Halloween at a front doorstep and know that the treats at that house are safe for her to take. The Teal Pumpkin Project gives me, a mom, a sense of security when my daughter is out trick-or-treating. Also, to see that my neighbors took the time and

energy to provide safe Halloween treats for the kids with food allergies gives me comfort to know that people do care.



There was a time when I didn't have anyone to advocate for my daughter and my family, someone who I could turn to with questions. That's the reason why I turn my yard teal every year in October. I fill my porch with teal pumpkins for all those parents, teachers, and neighbors who have questions but don't have anyone to turn to. The Teal Pumpkin Project allows me to continue to advocate, educate, and spread inclusion for all with food allergies.

I often get text messages from friends and family members during the month of October asking me what some safe Halloween options for children with food allergies are. First of all, I recommend staying away from chocolate as much as possible. But, there are many other options! Unlike 10 years ago, thanks to the advocacy that the Teal Pumpkin Project and others have done for the food allergy community, we now have options as consumers when purchasing safe Halloween treats. This is a list of the kind of things I pass out on my teal porch on Halloween.

**Candies that are generally free from the top 9 allergens (always read the label to double-check):**

- Enjoy Life Halloween Chocolate Minis Candy Variety Pack
- Dots
- Ring Pops
- Skittles
- Dum Dums

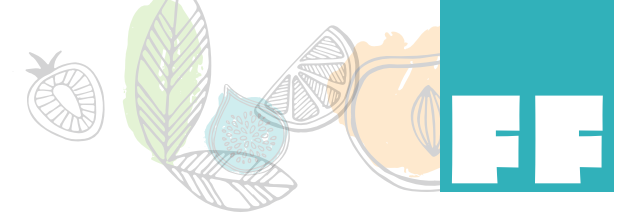
**Non-food treats to pass out on Halloween:**

- Themed Mini Stamps
- Halloween Pencils
- Foam Spiders
- Mini Note Pads
- Mini Stickers
- Slap Bracelet
- Slime
- Crayons
- Bracelets

You can visit FARE's (Food Allergy Research & Education) website to learn more about the [Teal Pumpkin Project](#). If you visit in the month of October, you will see a Teal Pumpkin Project Map, that will allow you to map across the country where your child can find safe non-food options for Halloween.



Non-food treats found at [www.orientaltrading.com](http://www.orientaltrading.com)



**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](http://www.foodallergyjourney.com)

Food  
Allergy  
Collaborative

## FEI ADVOCATES

Sofia Gillespie

FOOD ALLERGY  
EXTERNALLY-  
PATIENT-FOOD  
DRUG DEVELOPMENT  
MEETING

Interactive Live Stream · Sep



### PART 1



### Dawn Grabs

**“I remember in college one time this couple invited me over for dinner, and they were having pork chops. I’m allergic to pork, but I was too embarrassed to tell them that I couldn’t eat it.”**

**R**ecounted Dawn Grabs, a representative from Food Equality Initiative, about her experience advocating for her food allergies. On September 9th, 2021, Dawn and 3 other FEI representatives attended the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) Externally-Led Patient Drug Development Meeting (EL-PFDD) for Food Allergies in

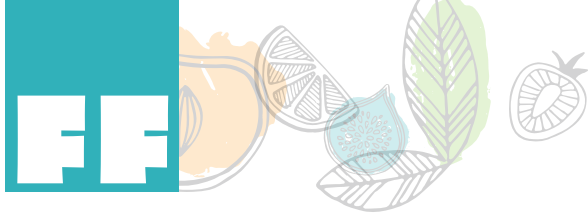
Washington, DC. The purpose of these PFDD meetings is to **“more systematically obtain the patient perspective on specific diseases and their treatments.”** And for food allergies, that means hearing the experiences of individuals with or caregivers of individuals with food allergies.

Dawn does not classify herself as an advocate. She has lived with food allergies for the majority of her life, but she did not want to inconvenience or burden anyone with her dietary restrictions, which sometimes put her in a dangerous situation. “I went to the dinner and I just tried a little bit. I thought maybe I can do it this time: nope! I ate a little bit and then my throat started swelling. I took a Benadryl and I took my inhaler and it slowly stopped, but I was miserable all night, all because I was too embarrassed to turn down what my friends were fixing.”

Dawn was raised on a farm in Iowa and, ironically, is allergic to the items she ate a lot of as a kid on the farm: pork, dairy, and eggs. “I also have other food allergies to nuts, corn, wheat, beef, and oats, which I can eat in small amounts, but will break out into hives or eczema.” She also has pretty severe environmental allergies, which was hard to deal with as a farm kid. Growing up, Dawn did not know anyone else who had allergies like she did, so she never talked about it and instead worked to hide her conditions to fit in with those around her.

She is now 42 and advocating for food allergies for the first time, and she is doing it on a national scale. “I feel like there are no treatments that are effective for food allergies. I hope to encourage the FDA to support new research.” But, just like in her college experience with her friends’ dinner party, Dawn was hesitant to attend the EL-PFDD when Emily Brown, founder of Food Equality Initiative, asked her to go. At first, she said no.

**The purpose of this EL-PFDD meeting is hearing the experiences of individuals with or caregivers of individuals with food allergies.**



## So, what changed her mind

“Emily said it would be really important to have someone who has allergies themselves as an adult. So, then I thought about it and a couple weeks later I woke up in the middle of the night and said,

**‘I need to go. Someone can benefit from my story.’”**

People need to know what it is like to be an adult with food allergies. That narrative is not as common, even though for Dawn it had become second nature. Dawn participated on Panel 2: Patients’ Perspectives on Food Allergy Prevention and Treatments.

“The main thing that I know that I noticed was how having food allergies is very stressful; I don’t think about it this way for myself really because I’ve just learned to live and cope with what I have. But listening to other people made me realize that I’m not alone, and this does affect my stress levels and overall well-being,” Dawn reflected.

## Did attending the EL-PFDD help Dawn become a better advocate for herself?

“I think before, like most of my life, I’ve been embarrassed by my allergies. I don’t talk about them, I just try to avoid events with food. I don’t like to ask for help, I don’t like to ask people to cook special food for me or accommodate, or not go to a certain place. But now, I feel more empowered

to share my story and that it is okay. It’s not embarrassing, it’s just my reality. There are a lot more people out there than you realize that have food allergies and we cannot get support if we don’t talk about it.”

Dawn is glad that she went on the trip to testify in person, not only for the chance to tell her story, but for the opportunity to hear others’ stories and feel a sense of kinship and validation that she did not know she needed. “It was pretty powerful. I feel like this conference validated my experience and empowered me to encourage other people to talk about their struggles, too.”

## PART 2



**Nehgar Goudat**

Nehgar Goudat is a mother of a young child with food allergies. Her son, Nile, is allergic to coconut, wheat, dairy, soy, tree nuts, peas, and eggs. “It is a lot because I cannot give him normal food. It is so hard.” At the store, the foods Nehgar finds that she can give her son are all very expensive. “Yesterday I was just trying to find him a snack. Every box I picked out either had nuts, or milk, or eggs. All of the processed foods had these ingredients in them.” Nehgar’s son was diagnosed with food allergies when he

was 7 months old. He is now 2 years old, and Nehgar is still learning how to find foods that are safe and healthy for him.

“Tonight, we are having pizza. He is not old enough for us to tell him, ‘You have allergies, you cannot have that.’ What can I do? The only thing I can give him is chicken breast with some rice. I can see it on his face, it is stressful.” After her son’s first trip to the emergency room after an allergic reaction, she was told to take her son to see a food allergy specialist. Her family is still paying off the bills from that visit.

So, when Erin Martinez, Director of Operations at Food Equality Initiative, asked her if she wanted to go to the EL-PFDD meeting to speak on behalf of caregivers of children with food allergies, Nehgar could not say yes fast enough. “I told her I would love to do anything to help families across the nation, because it is really necessary. People are struggling.”



Nehgar is advocating as a Food Equality Initiative representative, hoping to help the FDA and the healthcare industry recognize how expensive it is to treat a child with food allergies, a condition that more and more children are being diagnosed with every year. The emergency room visits, the allergen tests, the free-from food, the epinephrine auto-injectors... all these costs add up and have put Nehgar’s family in debt.

In order to add more food to Nehgar’s son’s diet, the specialists recommend testing in a controlled healthcare setting to avoid trips to the emergency room. However, the costs of these tests are high, and her family could not spare

the expense. She had to choose to feed her son only the foods they knew were safe, and not introduce new foods, to spare a severe allergic reaction. No parent wants to limit their child, no parent wants to refuse their child medical care. This is why Nehgar volunteered to go to the Externally-Led Patient Focused Drug Development Meeting in Washington, DC.

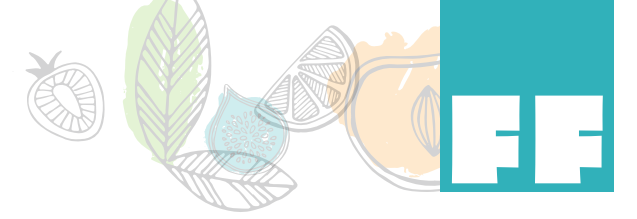
“This is so needed. I only have one child going through this, but others have 4 or 5. The government and other people need to know what they are going through. They don’t know the everyday struggle.” Food allergies are a life-threatening disease. Knowing this takes a huge mental toll on parents, who are responsible for the livelihood of their children.

At the EL-PFDD meeting, Nehgar discussed the challenges she has experienced in her multilingual background. “Where we live in the 50 states, there’s Spanish spoken, Arabic spoken, and so many other minority languages where the people don’t speak English at all. How are they able to know what exactly is in a product?”

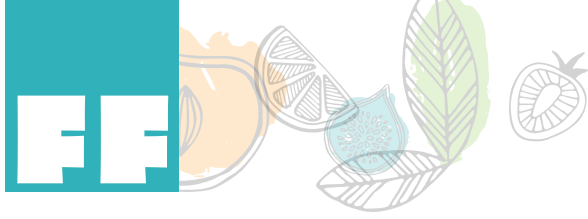
**“I would love to do anything to help families across the nation, because it is really necessary. People are struggling.”**

She suggested expanding upon the “Scan Me” function on some food labels that you might have seen around the grocery store. “It would be helpful if there was an app or QR code with ingredient lists in other languages to help all people, not just people who speak English.” The same can be said with instructions on epinephrine auto-injectors and other medications.

Nehgar found herself taking a lot of notes from the testimonies she was hearing. “There was a gentleman who was talking about how there were kids bullying him at school. He was telling them not to throw his allergens at him because that really is risky. I was just thinking “How do you go about a challenging situation like that? How do you explain to another child or individual that this is serious?” My son eventually will be on the playground in middle school and then high school and there will be people







challenging him, asking him questions like, ‘Why can’t you have this food,’ ‘why can’t you have school food,’ ‘what’s going on with you?’ I was just getting as much information as I can so that way I can learn and teach my child for the future.”

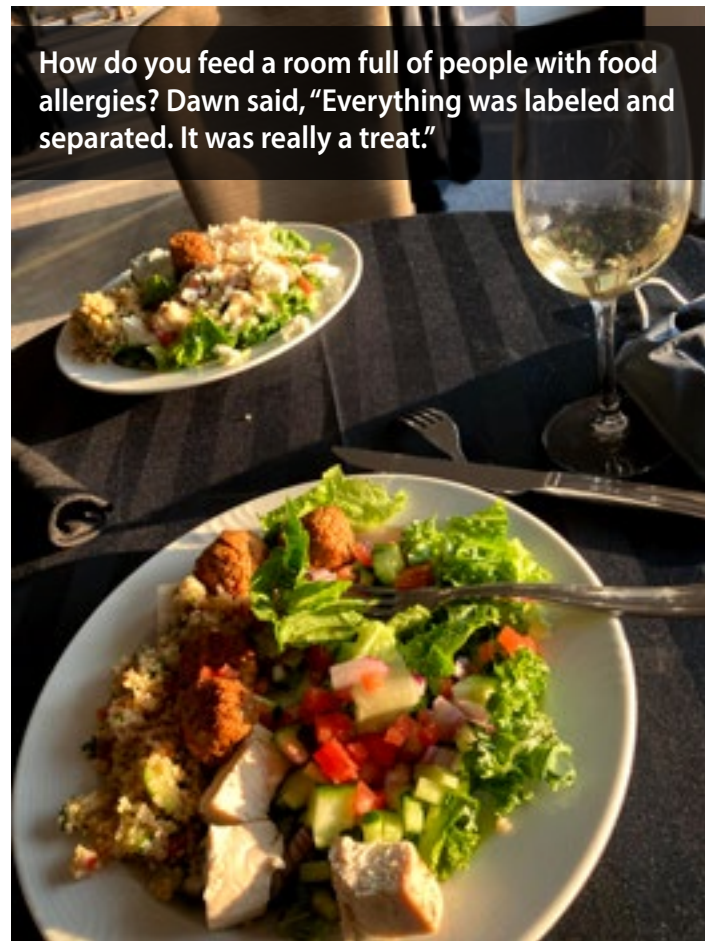
Nehgar agreed with Dawn, that the EL-PFDD meeting was an extremely educational and validating experience. She enjoyed hearing everyone’s individual experience and was surprised to hear how similar some stories were to her own. Food allergies are often an incredibly isolating disease, but this meeting helped to show that through coming together to talk about experiences, you can feel less alone. There is significant power in that realization that other people are going through this, it gives you more agency to advocate and stand up for yourself or people you love with food allergies.

You can watch the recording of the Food Allergy EL-PFDD Meeting online [HERE](#)

For a full report on the topics discussed, visit [foodallergy.org](http://foodallergy.org).



Dawn Grabs speaking on Panel 2: Patients’ Perspectives on Food Allergy Prevention and Treatments.



How do you feed a room full of people with food allergies? Dawn said, “Everything was labeled and separated. It was really a treat.”



## CHRISTMAS EACH MONTH

### FEI Family Members: Enciso-Rodriguez Family

Sarah Guthrie

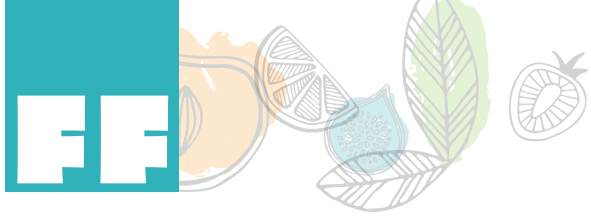
**Christmas comes more than once a year for the Enciso-Rodriguez family – it comes every month in a box of allergen-free food thanks to Food Equality initiative.**

“**T**he kids get very excited because they know they’re going to have their chocolate milk and the special treats that they don’t get every day,” said Adela Rodriguez. “I get very happy too because I think “I can create this recipe and that recipe” with the ingredients in the box!”

Three members of the Enciso-Rodriguez family, Gorki Sr., Gorki Jr. (12), and Grace (10), have food allergies. All-together, the family avoids many allergens including gluten, dairy, egg whites (they can eat the yolks), and peanuts.

For the Enciso-Rodriguez family, food allergies were a complete surprise. Neither Gorki nor Adela, who both grew up in Peru, had heard of food allergies before coming to the United States. Even then, they did not know anyone here with a food allergy.

Their journey began when Adela had to supplement her breast milk with formula when Gorki Jr. was an infant. Almost immediately he began having colic (crying for long periods of time). Then he had eczema and his dry skin started bleeding. In desperation she took him to the emergency room and there she learned that he was allergic to cow’s milk.



**“This was a wake-up call for me,” she said. “I began going to every specialist they would refer me to.”**

**The diagnoses just kept coming.**

When Gorki Jr. was 14 months old, Adela went to an allergy specialist and there learned more about food allergies. A blood test revealed that in addition to cow’s milk, Gorki Jr. was allergic to peanuts, tree nuts, chicken, fish, and egg whites. She was told that because she was eating many of these items, that her breast milk may have triggered his allergies. She was heartbroken and blamed herself for causing his pain.



Adela also learned that sometimes children outgrow their allergies. Since then, Gorki Jr. has outgrown his allergies to chicken, fish, and some tree nuts.

Soon their second child, Grace, was born. She appeared to tolerate all foods well until suddenly, at age six, she began vomiting and crying because of stomach pain. Tests were inconclusive, but Adela began to suspect dairy. When she cut out cow’s milk and egg whites, Grace got better.

Not long after Adela realized that both her children required special diets, they learned that Gorki Sr. also had food allergies. In 2019 he was injured in a car accident. However, after he recovered, he still experienced pain in his shoulders and back. He went to multiple doctors and tried physical therapy. Nothing worked to relieve his pain. Finally, it became so bad he could no longer work.

Adela, who was constantly researching the impact of various allergens on the body, suggested he avoid gluten, dairy, and sugar because they can cause inflammation in the body. He talked with his doctor who agreed that this might be the cause of his pain.

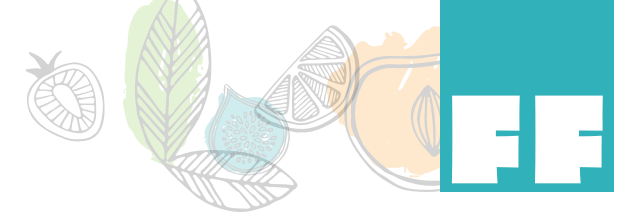
Slowly he began changing his diet and, as he did, the amount of pain he experienced began to lessen. As his health improved he was able to return to work, but the burden of the higher cost of allergen-free food was overwhelming.

“Suddenly we needed to switch everything to deal with the food allergies,” said Gorki Sr.

**“I was feeling desperate, wondering how to provide for my family.”**

Fortunately, Adela had learned about FEI at the doctor’s office. With the doctor’s referral, the family was able to receive benefits beginning in 2020.

“FEI gives us peace of mind,” said Adela. “And it gives me the resources to create recipes that my family likes.” Depending on the menu, Adela says that 30-40% of the food they eat now comes from FEI.



“It’s so easy to order – I can do it on my computer, but I prefer to order on my phone. Just click, click, click, and hit send-- and it’s done. The box is delivered in about two days,” says Adela.

**But change isn’t easy.**

She remembers that early in their food allergy journey she had a lot of failures. And disappointed children.

“The food didn’t taste like it did before and I could see it in their faces that they didn’t like it,” said Adela.

For example, changing to dairy-free foods was very hard for Grace who had already developed a taste for certain foods.

“She doesn’t like pizza with dairy-free cheese or alfredo sauce with dairy-free milk because it doesn’t taste the same,” said Adela.

One day they were at the grocery store and Grace kept asking for different foods. But each time she brought a different product to the cart her mother had to say ‘no – you can’t have that.’

She remembers seeing other customers looking at her like she was depriving her child, especially after Grace suddenly burst into tears. It was a hard day for them both.

“It’s hard when you have allergies and there are so many restrictions because you miss the food you used to have, but you have to stay strong and eat the food that won’t make you sick,” says Grace.

Her brother agrees. “I remember feeling left out when others could have birthday cakes,” he said. “But thanks to FEI there is this mix – Hungry Harry – that we make in a cake pan. It’s easy and it tastes like cake!”



**ABOUT SARAH**

Sarah Guthrie is an award-winning writer and seasoned development professional. She began volunteering for FEI in 2019, where she helps with fundraising and communications. Sarah is also a dedicated food allergy mom.

## MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

### Slowing Down This Season

Zoë Slaughter

**Somewhat counterintuitively, I've noticed that living with a food allergy often keeps positivity more available and in reach during the ebbs and flows of life.**

**S**ince I am paying close attention to my surroundings due to my allergy, I often find myself focusing on the smaller joys of life, too. Taking a moment of gratitude in small, everyday moments can really change our mindsets for the better. It takes practice, though.

Enjoy these 2 mindfulness exercises, to help you re-center whenever you need to take a break. Practice them alone, or invite others to join in with you.

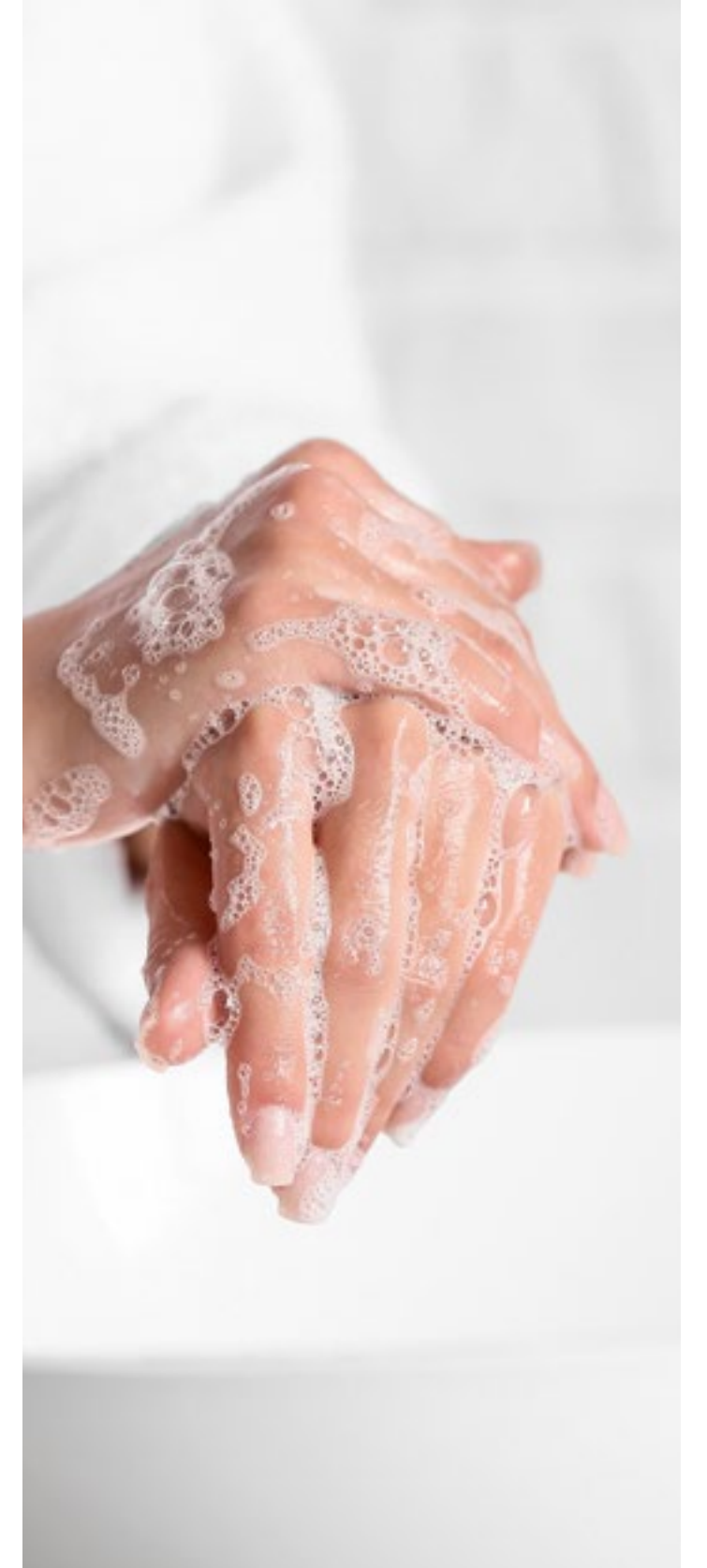


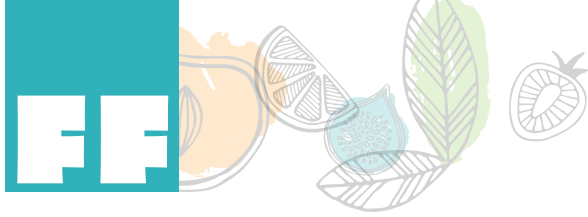
### Could washing your hands become your new favorite activity?

As we're all washing our hands more often than ever before, why not transform that time by using it as a way to benefit not only our physical health, but your mental health, too? There's no right or wrong way, but I'll walk you through my new hand washing method. First, I focus on feeling the water... What's the water pressure like? How about the water temperature? Is it warmer than my skin, cooler, or about the same? Feel the trickle of the water and take mindful breaths, actively exhaling out longer than your inhale. Note the qualities of the water.

Now, introduce the soap, noticing the qualities of the soap. Is it harsh or slippery? Watch bubbles form as you're slathering your hands. Slather your hands together in ways that feel good to you. Grab more soap if you want to. Try to get the soap to suds as much as possible. Once you're feeling ready to move on, after 20 seconds or so, watch the suds go down and melt away as you rinse your hands. Focus on the slight pause between your inhale and exhale as you're breathing.

I invite you to start allowing yourself to be mesmerized by the washing of your hands each day. If you wash your hands a whole lot, you could do this same practice while applying a rich, moisturizing lotion as well. Give yourself a hand massage while washing your hands or afterwards, taking special care to massage your palms, pulling your fingers gently, and moving up your arms as you massage and gently





pinch your wrists, and then finally gently turn and roll your wrists in each direction. Ah... relaxing!

I encourage you to savor each hand washing moment, and watch your day and mood transform a little bit by this new form of meditation. You're already washing your hands, so why not make it the most enjoyable it can be?



### Take a 5 minute "savoring exploration."

Have you ever heard of a "savoring walk?" I hadn't until last year and I'm a fan, however, I've re-named it: "savoring exploration." This concept incorporates gentle exercise with practicing gratitude in an outdoor setting. This can be any type of "walk" or "exploration" that works for you. It can be barefoot, in shoes, in a wheelchair, or stationary, but I do suggest going outdoors and getting some fresh air, even if only for a few minutes.

To start your exploration, go outside and take a nice, 5 second count breath in. Hold your breath for 6 counts, and exhale for a slow and steady 7 counts. Take a second to express gratitude to yourself for prioritizing getting away from an indoor space for a few moments. Next, you can take a walk as long as you're able to, or if you want to stay put and do the exercise from one location without walking, that's just as beneficial. I try to do mine for a couple minutes at least.

The focus is on tuning into your surroundings, feeling appreciative, and noting what's around you in a positive way. Do you feel the warmth of the sun hitting your skin, or possibly hear the sound of a bird nearby? Tuning into things like the rustle of trees, or the sensation of the wind against your face. Soaking in the simple acts occurring around you, and appreciating those things that may go unnoticed any other time. Taking time to see what you may often take for granted. Admire the sky. Admire the colors in nature around you. Thank yourself for taking time away to simply notice and to simply be.



# the FOOD EQUALITY SHOP!



Scan the QR code!

Shop at the FEI Threadless Shop today! Promote advocacy with fun and bright t-shirts, tote bags, travel mugs, and so much more!



## Lemon Pasta Chicken

FEI FAMILY MEMBER - Adela Rodriguez



### INGREDIENTS

2 skinless, boneless chicken breasts  
 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons gluten-free flour  
 1 container fresh mushrooms (about 8 ounces), sliced  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 2 lemons, juiced  
 Lemon zest from 1 lemon  
 1.5 cups of unsweetened dairy-free milk  
 3 tablespoons ghee (the Ghee Adela buys is lactose, casin, gluten, and sodium free)  
 Salt and pepper to taste  
 3 egg yolks (carefully separate eggs and do not use the egg whites)  
 1.5 cup of dairy-free sour cream or cream cheese  
 2 cups spinach  
 ½ half cup vegetable oil  
 1 cup dairy-free parmesan cheese  
 12 oz gluten free pasta – cook according to directions

### DIRECTIONS

#### PREPARE THE CHICKEN

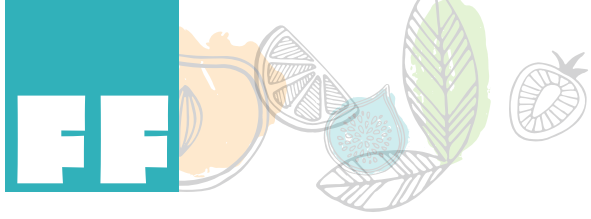
- Slice each chicken breast horizontally into cutlets. Season with salt and pepper.
- Beat egg yolks and 2 tablespoons milk and put into a bowl.

- Put flour into a second bowl.
- Dip each chicken piece into the egg yolk mixture and then into the flour. Set aside.
- Heat vegetable oil in a skillet.
- Fry chicken in the hot oil until the coating is browned and the chicken is done; cut into bite-sized pieces.

#### PREPARE THE SAUCE

- Melt the Ghee and add the garlic, stirring often so the garlic does not burn.
- Add 2 tablespoons of flour and cook for 1-2 minutes on low heat.
- Add remaining milk and sour cream (or cream cheese), cook for 1-2 minutes.
- Add lemon juice and lemon zest and keep stirring.
- Add mushrooms and spinach – stir until combined and vegetables are cooked.
- Add parmesan cheese.
- Cook the pasta according to directions
- Combine the sauce and pasta.
- Slice the chicken into strips and serve with pasta.
- Serve with salad for a tasty, healthy family dinner.





# Gluten-Free Oatmeal-Raisin Cookies

FEI FAMILY MEMBER - Ronnie King



## INGREDIENTS

- 3 eggs well-beaten
- 1 cup raisin
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup white sugar
- 2 ½ cups gluten-free flour (whichever brand you like from the Free From Market)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 2 cups quick cooking oats
- ¾ cup pecans (optional)

## DIRECTIONS

### PREPARE THE CHICKEN

- Combine eggs, raisins, vanilla and let stand for one hour. (That plumps up the raisins and gives them the vanilla flavor.)
- Cream the butter and sugars, add flour, salt, cinnamon and baking soda to the sugar mixture.
- Blend in eggs and raisin mixture. Then add oats and nuts. Note: Dough will be really stiff.



- Drop by teaspoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes or until lightly browned. Leave on cookie sheet for 2-5 minutes and then put on cooling rack.
- “This recipe makes a lot of cookies and they are so good,” Ronni says. “They remind me of my grandma’s cookies.”





300 E 39th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111



(816) 800 - 0884



[contact@foodequalityinitiative.org](mailto:contact@foodequalityinitiative.org)

**[WWW.FOODEQUALITYINITIATIVE.ORG](http://WWW.FOODEQUALITYINITIATIVE.ORG)**

