

Our Vegan Story

Bruce and Becky Roberts

Becky: We became vegan on Feb. 25, 2011 -- right after our first Food for Life class. I had also taken a class a couple of years earlier, but for various reasons, it wasn't a good time to make the change. This time I took it with my husband, Bruce, and we dove right into it. Our kids are now out of the house,

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and both of us were ready to make the commitment to a healthy, vegan diet. I cleaned out the freezer, cupboards, and pantry and gave everything away that we no longer wanted to eat, and then we stocked up on the healthy foods which have become staples in our diet. I'd always hated buying meat and fish -- didn't like touching it -- and used bleach to wash down my counters. When I stopped buying meat, it was one of the best days of my life!

Bruce: My main reason for taking the class was that I have diabetes. I'm not a typical diabetic. It doesn't run in my family, I'm not overweight, and I'm very active, physically. Even so, I was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in 2001, started on oral meds, and progressed to insulin. I could see it was just going to continue getting worse, and I wanted to do whatever I could to stop that from happening.

Becky: I was also looking for a high performance diet for Bruce because he was training to climb Denali in

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May. That's a real challenge for anyone, but for someone with diabetes...!

Bruce: We climbed for two weeks, up to the 16,500 foot level. I was climbing with four other people, all under 30, including my son and daughter, ages 27 and 23. We do a lot of things together, which is really fun. We ate a lot of

starches for energy and nuts for calories, and I did very well.

Becky: Our kids are very supportive of our vegan diet, although they haven't made that choice yet for themselves. I'm hoping they'll learn to take charge of their health so they can live long, active lives.

Bruce: I saw an improvement in my health almost immediately. After just one month, my cholesterol dropped from 194 to 150. My

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blood sugar levels started evening out and I've been able to greatly reduce the amount of insulin and other medications I take. I'm hoping to be able to get off them altogether. I also lost about 5 or 10 pounds right in the beginning, which I didn't mind at all, and now I can just eat as much as I want and my weight stays the same. And I actually find this diet a lot easier than how I ate before because I used to have to weigh and measure everything in my head. Now I just eat until my stomach is full!

Becky: I also lost weight at first, felt more energetic, my vision improved, and my brain fog disappeared. I took something called "turkey rhubarb" for years, which is an herbal laxative, and I sure don't need that anymore! I usually drive the support vehicle for Bruce and the kids when they are on a long hike or bike ride. Now I just need to start increasing my own exercise level and start watching my

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intake of nuts and other high fat foods so I can lose more weight and join them.

Bruce: I was actually told previously by a dietitian that a vegan diet would be the best choice



for me, but she said it in such a way that I got the message, “Good luck with *that!* You don’t stand a chance.” It was ob-vious that she wasn’t a vegan herself and couldn’t imagine anyone being able to eat that way. So even though she knew it was the best, she didn’t actually recommend that I do it.

Bruce: And we’ve always been environmentally conscious. Now we know this diet is the best thing we can do for the planet. It just takes it up to another level.

But you know what? This has been so easy! I really love the food. We learned in our very first *Food for Life* class that the food was delicious, so I don’t miss my old diet at all. Of

course, it helps a lot that Becky is a good cook! And we love attending the monthly potlucks. The food is great and it’s really helpful to feel the support of the

vegan community. I’m sure it would be harder without that. But we almost never miss the potlucks -- I put them on my calendar!

Becky: I’ve always been interested in nutrition and had thought we were eating well, but as I keep reading and learning, we keep ratcheting our diet up to higher levels of nutrition. And I keep buying books and giving them away to help others learn how they can take charge of their health. Even our house and yard plants are benefiting from our diet. After a tip from the VitaMix demonstrator, we’ve started blending up our veggie and fruit scraps and feeding them to the plants.

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