

## Good for the Animals, Good for Me, and Good for My Kids

Amye Wallace's Vegan Story

I'm the mother of two girls, Edison, who is almost five and Isana, who is almost three. It's really important to me that they learn to eat and enjoy healthful foods now so their lives will be easier later. And it's working! They both love hummus, cheesy sauce, and beans. Fortunately, they are attending a private preschool that also supports them in eating a healthful lunch.

I haven't been eating this way myself for too long. About four or five years ago I watched *Fast Food Nation*. That movie was very powerful and disturbing, and after that, I eliminated meat from my diet. I really wanted to

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eliminate all animal products, but found that hard. After taking my first *Food for Life* Class a couple of years ago, however, it got a lot easier. I also participated in PCRM's 21 Day Kickstart email program, which helped give me more ideas and recipes.

At first, I just started with myself and gradually began introducing vegan foods to my daughters. My girls' other mom, Nicole, grew up in the mid-west, surrounded by farms, and has had a harder time with the idea of not eating meat. However, she eats what I cook and has lost 30 pounds eating this way!

The more I read and learn, the more important I realize it is to eat a plant-based diet. The *Cancer Survivor's Guide* and *Eat to Live* by Joel Fuhrman, MD, are both really good. I



also like reading *Veg News Magazine*. The movie, *Food, Inc.* also made a real impact on me. Although I first stopped eating meat for animal compassion reasons, I now have the nutritional knowledge to reinforce my conviction that a plant-based diet is also best for humans, not just the animals. And I realize it is

my responsibility to provide a good nutritional and experiential base for my kids. The cookbook, *Vegan Lunch Box*, gave me some great ideas about making lunches for my kids.

I really like to cook, but working full time for the school district as a teacher consultant for special education and traveling between six



different schools doesn't give me a lot of time to prepare food during the week. The hardest part for me has been just learning what to fix and getting organized. I have found recipes that we all like and

have been able to adapt them to our tastes. But still, when we are feeling rushed we resort to eating out, which makes it harder to stick with the healthiest choices.

The solution for me is to first make a menu for the week, and then shop based upon the menu. Then I know just what I'm going to make and I have everything I need to make it. I also prepare food on the week-end we can eat throughout the week. When I'm really doing well preparing and eating this way, I feel good about myself and my effect on the world.

I've worked with kids with behavioral problems throughout my 15 year career, first as a

special ed. teacher and then as a consultant. I was excited to learn that there have been studies conducted that showed a whole-foods vegan diet

greatly reduced behavior problems at school. I'd love to learn more about the effects of diet on kids' behavior and work to promote positive changes in the school lunch program.

I definitely see myself continuing to eat this way in the future and know it will get easier and easier. I enjoy my food more than I used to, and I have a favorite garden cocktail made from tomatoes, celery, carrots, spinach, and hot sauce. You should try it!

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