

THE DISH

The Community Meals Newsletter--
connecting community to issues big & small



FOR OUR MENTAL HEALTH

Seeking a good nutritional environment for kids-- and all of us-- during the pandemic

Did you know that there are specific foods that scientists have identified that help with our mental health--those that lower inflammation? This week, we take a glimpse at children, the pandemic, and their health, including nutrition.

We're all hoping for the next period of time when we can return to normal, when kids can play freely without masks, when parents don't feel stressed about the virus and kids don't either.

The childhood of kids has been in complete upheaval. School online, not as many friends, losing dear family members.

Many children are living with their "stress response" activated (Burke Harris, The pandemic has taken a big toll on the mental health of children NPR,) and this can negatively affect their mental and physical development. But also, "Safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments are healing and...can help the body biologically be able to weather these stressors in away that is much more healthy for kids in the longterm.

One aspect of their environment is food. So, we endeavor to feed our community and perhaps you endeavor to feed your children, consider adding in more foods that lower inflammation throughout your body and promote good mental health!

THIS WEEK'S MEAL INSIGHT:

FOODS THAT FIGHT INFLAMMATION

Chronic inflammation has been linked to cancer, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, depression, and Alzheimer's. Fight inflammation with a healthy diet.

ANTI-INFLAMMATION FOODS



Tomatoes



Fruits

Strawberries, blueberries, oranges and cherries.



Nuts

Almonds, walnuts, and other nuts.



Olive oil



Leafy greens

Spinach, kale, collards, and more.



Fatty fish

Salmon, mackerel, tuna, and sardines.

INFLAMMATION FOODS



Fried foods



Sodas



Refined carbs



Lard



Processed meats

THIS WEEK'S MEAL FEATURES THE FOLLOWING FOODS THAT ARE GOOD FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH: SPINACH, STRAWBERRIES, BLUEBERRIES, WALNUTS, OLIVE OIL

THERE & HERE

A little column about life "back there" and how it intersections with life here

Guastataya Department, Guatemala



We were peeling shrimp and prepping Creamy Chickpea Soup last week when I asked our kitchen crew, "Was salad something you ate in Guatemala?" Of course! was their answer.

"We grew everything in our gardens," Helen told me. "And we got the shrimp from the river."

"We had the most delicious tomatoes," said Jesus, who is from Oaxaca, Mexico. Now, though, access to such delicious food--organic, without destructive pesticides--is only available to the richest among us, we mused as a team.

This spring, Community Meals is starting up a small Community Garden to grow ingredients for the food we make. Do you have a green thumb? Can you help us make it happen?



FROM HELEN ABOUT HER HOME:

"I AM FROM GUASTATOYA DEPARTMENT, A VERY BEAUTIFUL AND COLORFUL VILLAGE WITH A LOVELY PARK, VERY EDUCATED PEOPLE, AND A UNITED COMMUNITY"

LEFTOVERS = SMILES

BEHIND THE SCENES @ COMMUNITY MEALS

At the end of the evening, sometimes there's a few meals that haven't been picked up by donors (who have, perhaps forgotten). We try to reach out to these people, but when we can't get a hold of them, we often drop off these meals to people in the community we know cannot drive and pick them up.

One night, a kitchen volunteer had an extra dessert as she was riding home. She saw a teenage boy asking for food as she was parked at a traffic light, and she opened her window to offer him a box of the Chocolate Chip Banana Bread. Apparently, he was quite happily surprised when he opened it because a huge, wide smile came across his face.

Do you regularly come across someone who is hungry? Let us know. Maybe we can help you get a meal to them!