

spotlight on members

Spotlight on Members gives us the opportunity to hear about what our members are up to today, as well as how they found their way to the NHA Health Program. If you're interested in sharing your own story, we'd love to hear from you. Please email essays of around 500 words, and one or two photos, to info@healthscience.org.

Carla Golden Hilton Head Island, SC

In 2008, a mighty seed was planted when I learned for the first time about factory farming, inspiring me to consider whether I could live without consuming animal products. I was dumbfounded that I had been clueless for 40 years and angered by the truth of the information. I quickly became vegetarian, and over the next seven years I inched closer and closer to wholesome veganism.

While I contemplated moving my family toward a fully plant-based diet, I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Holistic Health and Healing from the University of Natural Health in order to make certain that I wouldn't jeopardize my family's health. It was through this program that I learned about the principles of Natural Hygiene and the immense healing power of plants and a wholesome, simple lifestyle.

In November 2015, in response to the film *PlantPure Nation*, I founded the Palmetto Plant Eaters Club in Bluffton, SC, to teach and support whole-food, plant-based eating. The club is free, open to the public, and is for everyone from beginners to seasoned practitioners. Each month I arrange guest speakers to present different topics, such as gut health, growing microgreens, the abundance of plant protein sources, and the various benefits and uses of ancient whole grains.

I believe strongly in the importance of continuing education, so the club hosts a quarterly WFPB potluck meal and book discussion to explore classic and new titles about WFPB eating and veganism. Additionally, twice a year I arrange with a local chef to host a three-hour cooking class to help newbies learn basic skills and for experienced cooks to learn new reci-

pes and discover new ingredients. My biggest event is hosting an annual VegFest, replete with a celebrity speaker, WFPB and vegan food options, and many nonprofit and for-profit vendors supporting a healthier, more compassionate, and more sustainable lifestyle.

While I don't have an impressive before-and-after health transformation story from having adopted a WFPB diet, I do have a remarkable emotional and spiritual transformation story. While I certainly feel physically healthier, I know that my mental and emotional health have improved significantly. I'm happier, more balanced, sleep well, and look forward to exercising and being outside as much as possible. Eating and living this way has given me a profound sense of purpose in life: to share what I have learned with others so that they can liberate themselves from suffering through learning basic nutritional information to help reverse, halt, and prevent major chronic diseases. I feel that being healthy is the greatest gift that I can give my beloved family and friends.

Teaching myself how to adopt this lifestyle and sharing it with my husband and daughter has been an extension of the deep love and care I have for them. Nothing warms my heart more than watching my teenage daughter prepare a delicious plant-based meal and knowing that this knowledge will be carried into the future for the benefit of younger generations.

It thrills me to see this movement



Carla Golden enjoys a delicious green smoothie as part of her colorful, nutrient-packed lunch.

growing year after year. I am thankful for the National Health Association, for it continues to educate me and introduce me to new medical professionals and practitioners. I'm proud to be a supporting member of this valuable organization.

"You can learn more about my work at CarlaGoldenWellness.com and PalmettoPlantEaters.com."

