

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).

Lisa & Clayton McCarl Millersville, MD

My husband, Clayton, is a dentist in a large family group practice. I became a travel agent 15 years ago and love helping people explore the world! Previously, I was an open-heart recovery nurse, earned a Master's Degree in health policy, and worked in hospital administration as a Director of Quality Assurance.

Like many others, a health scare brought us to a plant-based lifestyle. In 2010, at age 56, Clayton injured his back weightlifting, and an MRI revealed more than just herniated disks. We received news that Clayton had a 10-centimeter tumor in his right kidney. The kidney was removed within the week and his lymph nodes were clear.

Further, more in-depth tests revealed coronary calcifications. The cardiologist told him the hardened plaques were "age-appropriate," thinking this would make Clayton feel better. Nothing could have been farther than the truth. Clayton and I were both shocked that he, a person who always felt and looked healthy, could have developed a potentially fatal cancer and heart disease. This began our journey to seek a greater truth about health.

Fortunately, we saw *Forks Over Knives* in 2011. The science was undeniable. We sought every educational source possible: books, other documentaries, conferences, Meetups, lectures, and more! We went on to consult with doctors who believed in a different route to recovery (and ultimately health) than pills and surgery. We have been blessed to meet so many inspiring plant-based luminaries, who have dedicated their lives to helping others learn how to prevent and reverse disease.

We are life-long students and health advocates, and are very motivated to help people by sharing information and resources about the benefits of a plant-based diet.

Plant-based food preparation can feel labor intensive at first, and can feel like an obstacle. We are blessed to have found April's Table, a catering company in Severna Park, Maryland, who includes WFPB (whole-food, plant-based) menu items without added salt, oil or sugar in her weekly Dinner Club Program. We help provide plant-based recipes and clients, which has contributed to the growth of our local Plant Based Dinner Club.

Plant-based eating can also feel socially isolating at times. Fortunately for us, several of our closest friends have also become plant-based!

We live a half hour from an extraordinary plant-based health coach and Food for Life instructor, Sharon McRae, who, with her family, has created a wonderful community of friendship and support. The McRae Family's Columbia, Maryland *Forks Over Knives* Meet-ups are a highlight of our month. Sharon's Eat Well, Stay Well one-day immersions are spectacular, and she also partners with Gwyn Whittaker, NHA member, and founding owner of GreenFare Organic café, to host the quarterly "Lecture with Buffet Lunch."


Two years ago, while visiting TrueNorth, we read *Health Science* and immediately joined the National Health Association. We attended our first NHA conference in Cleveland last summer. It was fantastic! Mark and Wanda Huberman masterfully organized an educational weekend that brought a clarity to natural health, science, and the mind-body connection. We were impressed with every aspect of the conference, from the interesting diverse lectures, like-minded people and fellowship, to the delicious food.

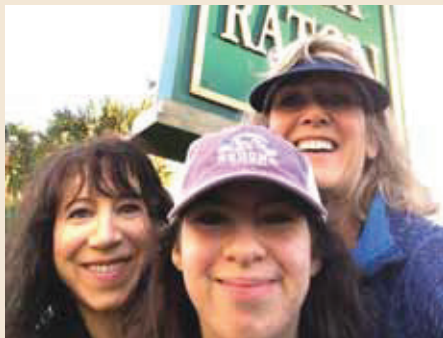


Lisa and Clayton McCarl

The idea for an NHA River Cruise with plant-based meals with no added salt, oil or sugar was born at that conference. Wanda does such a spectacular job working with chefs that I approached her and volunteered to find a cruise company that would work with the NHA.

We are amazed with the level of attention Avalon Waterways is giving our food requirements. Wanda and I recently discussed strategies to implement whole-food, plant-based meals without added salt, oil, or sugar in a phone conference with the top leadership at Avalon Waterways. We reached consensus with the Managing Director of Avalon Waterways and Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the Globus family of brands, the Director of Hotel Operations, the Director of Operations on Ships and our regional Avalon advocate. They are working hard to make it fabulous!

Avalon has limited our first NHA SOS-free, Plant-based Cruise to a group size of 38 people. We sold out quickly and have a waiting list. We are hoping to charter ships in the future with all plant-based menus. We have several fabulous destinations in the works! Please check the NHA website and Facebook Page for healthy plant-based travel opportunities. The NHA will also send out an email when they are ready to book reservations for future cruises. (You may contact Lisa McCarl at lisa.mccarl@gmail.com to be placed on the 2019 Avalon Rhine River Cruise waitlist.) 



Lisa with Sharon (left) and Marcie McRae at the 2019 Balance for Life Conference



Mark Huberman with Lisa and Clayton McCarl at the 2018 NHA Conference in Cleveland



Ann and Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn, with Lisa and Clayton McCarl