



## Taylor receives 2015 Jayne Albrecht Scholarship Award

Jayne Albrecht was the Siletz Tribal Head Start teacher in Salem for many years until October 2013 when she left because of illness. She later passed from cancer.

Jayne was well-liked by her students, parents and co-workers.

A memorial scholarship fund was established through the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians by Jayne Tienken, Teacher Jayne's mother, in her honor. The \$1,000 scholarship is administered by the Tribal Education Committee and strengthened by various fundraising activities throughout the year by Ms. Tienken.

Seven students submitted essays on their education plans. The Education Committee then read and screened the anonymous essays.

The committee selected an essay written by Katrina Taylor of McKinleyville, Calif.

Katrina is the daughter of Keith Taylor and the granddaughter of Agnes Pilgrim. She is a student at The College of the Redwoods who is pursuing an associate's degree for transfer to a four-year university.

We are proud to acknowledge Katrina Taylor as the recipient of this scholarship and hope we are able to offer this scholarship again.

File photo

Keith Taylor (left) and Agnes Pilgrim (right) join Katrina Taylor as she accepts the Jayne Albrecht Scholarship, which was presented at the Siletz Tribal Restoration Pow-Wow in November 2015.

## Science tells us family dinners are great for body, brain and spirit

By Nancy Ludwig, MS, RDN, LD, Head Start Consulting Nutritionist

*In my role as a consultant nutritionist to Siletz Tribal Head Start, I offer information for families. The family dinner remains an important key to health. This article is extracted from [drgreene.com/perspectives/science-tells-us-family-dinners-are-great-for-body-brain-and-spirit/](http://drgreene.com/perspectives/science-tells-us-family-dinners-are-great-for-body-brain-and-spirit/).*

*Additional support and information can be found at [The Family Dinner Project—thefamilydinnerproject.org/conversation-2/conversation-starters/](http://TheFamilyDinnerProject.org/conversation-2/conversation-starters/). Check out the easy stew to take the pressure off preparation.*

Sitting down for a nightly meal turns out to be fantastic for the brain, the body and the mental health of all family members. Nearly 100 scientific studies over the past 20 years back up this speculation.

Here are some highlights of what science tells us about the many benefits of regular family dinners.

### Brain food

Did you know that for young children, dinnertime conversation boosts vocabulary even more than reading aloud to them at bedtime?

Young kids learn almost 10 times as many rare words at the dinner table as they do from listening to storybooks. And kids who have a large vocabulary have an early leg up on learning to read.

Young kids also can get a boost to their math skills at dinner. A very recent study found that talking about math to preschoolers – “Eat half your broccoli, Mathilda” – can improve their math skills.

For older kids, having regular family dinners is an even stronger predictor of high grades than doing homework, playing sports or doing art.

### Good for the body

Home-cooked meals, as compared to restaurant or take-out foods, are lower in calories, fried foods and soft drinks, and

higher in fruits, vegetables and nutrients. So it's no surprise that kids who eat regular dinners are less likely to be obese.

I was happy to learn that these benefits continue to pay dividends even after our kids leave home and take charge of their own meals. Kids who had regular family dinners grow up to be young adults who continue to eat more fruits and vegetables and have lower rates of obesity.

To reap any of these weight-related benefits, the TV should be off during dinner. In one study, American kindergartners who watched TV during dinner were more likely to be overweight by the time they were in third grade.

TV has a double whammy effect – the watching of food ads makes us eat more and we're more apt to eat mindlessly without paying attention to our own sense of fullness if zoning out in a front of a screen.

Some studies also have found a connection between regular family dinners and the reduction of some medical symptoms, such as asthma.

Researchers attribute this benefit to two aspects of family dinners: First, sharing a meal reduces everyone's anxiety, which can have a positive impact on asthma symptoms.

Second, dinnertime gives parents a chance to check in on a child's symptoms and medication compliance, and then make a course correction if needed.

### Good for the spirit

A pile of studies have found a strong connection between teens who have regular family dinners and a reduction of high-risk behaviors such as smoking, binge drinking, marijuana use, school problems and precocious sexual activity. This connection is more important than church attendance or good grades in predicting lack of substance use and teen pregnancy.

In one large study of Minnesota teens, researchers reported that regular family dinners were associated with lower rates

of depression and suicidal thoughts as well as higher self-esteem.

It's not just that mealtime prevents high-risk behaviors – it also promotes positive ones. In a New Zealand study, frequency of family meals was strongly associated with positive mood in teens.

Other researchers have found that teens who share regular meals with their parents have a more positive view of the future.

### What's so powerful about family dinners?

Simply put, it's the most reliable time for families to connect and check in with each other about the day's activities.

Earlier generations may have had other options – chatting with each other while pulling up potatoes in the fields or stitching quilt squares side by side on the porch. But today when teens are asked when they are most likely to talk to their parents, dinner is the most common response.

When kids talk to their parents, and better still when they feel connected to them, they are less likely to engage in risky behaviors. Or if they start to, their parents may be able to intervene before these behaviors get going.

Dinner is a daily ritual that takes us away from the hubbub of everyday anxieties and can be a stress reliever for kids as well as parents.

Of course, there is nothing inherently magical about dinner. The real power lies in the quality of the relationships around the table.

The most important ingredient for a great family dinner is a warm atmosphere where everyone is invited to talk and to listen. If family members sit in stony silence or berate one another, family dinner won't confer positive benefits. Merely sharing lasagna isn't going to transform a tense or hostile parent-child relationship.

But we all have to eat. So dinner keeps popping up night after night, offering an opportunity for families to share a story,

a joke, a challenge from the day. Dinner offers a daily possibility to build a sense of connection that can extend beyond the dinner table.

### Hearty Stew

2 pounds stew meat (beef, pork, buffalo, venison, etc.)  
5 carrots, sliced  
1 large onion, diced  
3 stalks celery, sliced  
1 28-ounce can tomatoes  
½ cup quick cooking tapioca  
1 whole clove  
2 bay leaves  
Salt & pepper to taste

Trim meat. Put all ingredients in a slow cooker. Mix thoroughly. Cover and cook on low 12-hours (high: 5-6 hours).

Stew is also good with sausage meatballs (could even mix raw mixture with uncooked rice prior to forming balls).

The vegetables above hold up well for the long cooking time. Feel free to add small potatoes – whole with skin. You might want to experiment with other vegetables in the last hour or two of cooking time.

### Applications are available for Siletz Tribal Head Start

If you have not sent in an application for your child to attend Siletz Tribal Head Start, it's not too late. Call 541-444-2532 or 800-922-1399 to request that an application be sent to you.

Applications also are available on the Tribal website ([ctsi.nsn.us](http://ctsi.nsn.us)) and at the Siletz, Salem and Portland area offices.