

Jurado graduates from Home Visiting

Congratulations to Kim Jurado for graduating from Siletz Home Visiting!

Kim entered the program in November 2017 prior to the birth of her son, Saul Jr, and continued until he turned 3 this February. Kim's loving concern and attentiveness for her children was apparent as she fully engaged in the program, participating in the lessons and eager for any information that helped her be the best mother she could be.

Kim, Saul and their children, Eva and Saul Jr., often attended Home Visiting family events, sharing in the activities and community connection. While in the program, Kim completed her BS in interdisciplinary studies, purchased a new home with Saul, and she and Saul got married.

Kim says she "liked the lessons and adult conversation; the lessons were very informative and all good. Our family, as a whole, appreciated our home visitor Lori and the program over the last three years."

When asked if she would recommend the program to other Siletz families, she replied "Yes, I would!"

Congratulations, Kim!

For information about Home Visiting, contact Jessica Hibler at jessicah@ctsi.nsn.us, 541-484-4234 (Eugene Area Office) or 541-337-2285 (cell).

Need Rental Housing?

The Siletz Tribal Housing Department encourages you to apply for the Low-Income Rental Program waiting list in Siletz (1-4 bedrooms) and Lincoln City (2-3 bedrooms – Neachesna Village).

Applications can be obtained at any Tribal area office (Eugene, Salem, Portland, Siletz) or online from the Tribal website – ctsi.nsn.us; follow links – Tribal Services-Housing-Low Rent Apartments & Home Ownership.

Questions? Call 800-922-1399, ext. 1322, or 541-444-8322; fax: 541-444- 8313



Courtesy photo

Saul, Kim, Eva and Saul Jr. Jurado

Why do I reach for that specific food? Is it a craving or am I truly hungry?

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

How has our relationship with food changed during the COVID-19 pandemic this past year with stress, various forms of quarantine and grief? In my role as consultant nutritionist to Siletz Tribal Head Start, I offer information for families. Today's nutrition topic asks us to look at why we reach for specific foods.

Earlier in the year we looked at an exercise examining how we feel when we eat certain types of foods (specifically around composition of protein, carbohydrate and fat). Those of you who did the kitchen science may have learned that some foods keep you full longer than others and some cause changes in mood. Sometimes there is a high followed by a crash. With that awareness, let's go a little deeper and look at what is behind our habits to consider the role of cravings in our health.

When I reach for a food, am I experiencing a **craving** or is it **true hunger**? How would I know?

Usually a craving feels urgent and perhaps includes the thought, "I gotta have this now." Often, it is related to wanting to change how we feel. Our heads tend to drive this behavior and if we were able to go into slow motion, we might notice that we feel it in our heads more than in other parts of our bodies. True hunger tends to be less specific and it tends to come on more gradually.

To explore this, when you think of reaching for a snack between meals, consider setting the timer for 15 minutes. During that time, allow yourself to notice if there is a location in your body that is trying to tell you what to do.

Is this an attempt to self-soothe or change your mood? Are you trying to calm yourself or to relax? Are you trying to boost your energy because you are

tired? Or are you genuinely hungry? You may also consider, are you actually thirsty?

If you realize you are trying change or shift your mood, there could be other non-food choices you might want to consider to find balance. If you are trying to calm yourself or relax, you might want to pet your dog, listen to calming music, sit in nature or if the time is right, take a soothing bath.

If you are actually attempting to boost your mood or energy level, you might consider moving to energetic music or a brisk walk outside in the sunshine. The point is that if you are reaching for food to change your mood and not because you are hungry, a non-food activity makes sense, especially if the food you might have reached for is not a nutritious or truly balancing choice.

For most of us, when we do not feel balanced, safe or centered, we are more vulnerable to sweets. When we eat sweets frequently to influence our moods, our nutrition often suffers. In the long run, our moods can also suffer because they are linked.

Let's face it. Many children (and adults) experience chronic illness. Frequently, some of our food habits and choices play a role in the development of illness. Conversely, our food choices can support our health in powerful ways.

So let's consider a writing exercise to get clear about the risks and benefits of our specific snack choices. The purpose is to support self-discovery of possible hidden motives and mysteries that are "behind the scenes" in our food selections. This awareness can then be included in conversations with children to assist in their own discovery using targeted and age-appropriate questions.

The following questions are for the adult or older youth to consider directly before guiding discussion with a young child:

- What are the rewards or benefits?
- What might I lose if I continue this behavior?
- Do I have blocks or negative associations with healthy foods?
- Do specific foods, such as gluten or dairy, cause problems or symptoms for me (or my child)?
- Am I eating because I'm bored?
- Is snacking associated with a specific activity, such as TV?
- If I eat food that I'm sensitive or allergic to, how do I feel and how does that change my health and function?
- Is that a choice I want to make if I don't feel well?
- Even though I might like the way it tastes, do I feel poorly afterwards?
- Does my discomfort last longer than the pleasurable time of eating it?

In time, when those associations are clear, the question can be reframed from "I can't eat that" to "I don't want to eat that because I want to feel good." When adults demonstrate these healthy choices and explain why we make them, we help children see the relationship between what they eat and how they feel. In so doing, we empower our children to take responsibility for their choices.

The advanced benefit of taking personal responsibility for our food choices with knowledge of our hidden motives is that our behaviors and choices play a role in our vagal tone function.

The vagus nerve, also called the wandering nerve, is the two-way communication pathway between our brain and gut (as well as many other body functions). Scientists and health professionals are actively exploring this emerging field. Expect more information in the future.

For now, I'll share that low vagal tone is an epidemic and it is behind many health problems. The stress we place on our gut (digestive system) can decrease

this function. When we do not feel safe, balanced or centered, our vagus nerve becomes less active.

When we eat more sweets or foods that we may be sensitive to or intolerant of, such as gluten or dairy, our messages to the brain turn toward survival and digestion slows, leading to other possible problems.

We can support or stimulate healthy vagal function with mindfulness, compassion, finding our calm center, giving gratitude or feeling grateful for finding the tools to feel better and improve our relationship with food.

Some of the benefits include stronger immunity and digestion – including our flow of digestive juices (stomach acid, pancreatic output) and muscle contractions (peristalsis) for bowel movements to support less inflammation and fermentation (or gas) in the gut. Oddly, this further supports our mood in the full cycle where multiple systems work together to restore and balance.

In summary, awareness of what our body is asking for is at the core. By being willing to listen and reflect on questions to help us identify what we truly need, our subtle shifts can support our health in profound ways.

Epidemic health issues are our wake-up call, requiring personal responsibility. As parents and community members, when we step into this role and model these behaviors, we support our children and strengthen our entire community (which, of course, ripples out to changing our world at this critical time).

Siletz Tribal Head Start offers nutritional support at no cost to Head Start families. This usually occurs over the telephone. If you have nutrition concerns about your Head Start child or want to discuss family nutrition concerns, please contact your teacher or the director and ask to speak to the nutritionist.