



Healthy Mind, Healthy Body

COALESCE JUICERY & WHOLE FOODS SEEKS
TO NOURISH FROM WITHIN By Rachael Carnes

“Food is my heart and soul,” says Coalesce Juicery & Whole Foods Kitchen’s chef and owner Karina Wolford. “It’s what makes me happy.”

Wolford, who opened her food truck in April, promotes healthy eating as one way to combat serious health issues, including her own bout with multiple sclerosis.

She learned to cook from her dad, a chef in the Navy. “My dad taught me to cook *huevos rancheros*,” Wolford says. “My mom had a baby when I was in high school, and soon I was cooking for the family every night.”

Wolford pursued her dream of culinary school, attending the prestigious Western Culinary Institute Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Portland. She learned the classics and began working more than 90 hours a week in high-end restaurants, doing what she loved.

Then, in 2008, Wolford experienced a sudden onset of numbness and tingling, first in her toes and fingers. Soon the sensation crept up her limbs. She became distracted, foggy and easily fatigued.

Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, a disease in which the immune system eats away at the protective covering of the nerves, “I became a liability in the kitchen,” Wolford says. Unable to carry a pot of boiling water or stand all day, the 28 year old was forced to quit working.

“I was on 20 medications, and I was at a point where it was either go down that dark tunnel or change what I was doing,” Wolford says.

Wolford turned to food for healing, adopting a raw- and whole-food diet, and she felt better almost immediately, she says.

“I was getting around more, I was less tired,” she says. “I lost 65 pounds in the first six months, and my clarity and capacity started to come back.”

Wolford’s change in diet, away from the processed foods she was accustomed to and towards healthier, nutritionally dense options, is a journey she likes to share. And with her new food truck, Wolford has the opportunity to introduce customers to tasty, developed flavors.

Coalesce offers breakfast items, like a toasty granola made from sprouted buckwheat and sweetened with dried fruit. Lunch items include a raw “chicken” salad that tastes remarkably like something made from actual chicken meat, with the savory and sweet crunch you’d expect.

Also on the menu is a fresh carrot nori wrap with avocado and organic sriracha sauce. Wolford serves fresh-pressed juices, such as the Green As It Gets which, Wolford points out, in its 16-ounce cup is the nutritional equivalent of eating four large salads.

“We’re 100-percent gluten-free, so we’re safe for people who have celiac disease,” Wolford says. “And we’re 100-percent organic. We’re also 100-percent dairy-

and soy-free. We’re uncompromising on that.”

Everything at Coalesce, from plates to forks and straws, is compostable. And it’s clear from the line of smiling customers that Coalesce fills a niche.

Wolford recently had an MRI, and she says her neurologist was amazed to see that there had been no progress in her MS over the past six years.

“I like to share my story and share my recipes,” Wolford says. “I like to come out and talk to people, and show them that you can have more exciting things to eat.” ■

Coalesce Juicery and Whole Foods Kitchen is located in the M.Jacobs parking lot at 8th & Charnelton, and is open 7:30 am to 3:30 pm Monday through Friday and 9 am to 5:30 pm Saturday. Online orders at mkt.com/coalescejuicery.



PHOTOS BY TODD COOPER

KARINA WOLFORD
PREPARING GLUTEN-FREE
MEALS AT COALESCE