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The Full Plate

The Newsletter for Pace University's
Coordinated MS in Nutrition and Dietetics Program



A Note From the Chair

Greetings Students, Alumni, Preceptors and Colleagues-

We are so pleased to kick off 2024 with some very exciting news!

The Pace University Teaching Kitchen has been formally accepted into the Teaching Kitchen Collaborative (TKC), a leading invitational network of educational, research, and community organizations with teaching kitchens aimed at improving personal and public health (www.teachingkitchens.org). Effective January 1, 2024, Pace University's Teaching Kitchen has joined organizations including Google, Compass Group, and Cleveland Clinic, leading the teaching kitchen movement to improve health outcomes in the United States and around the world.

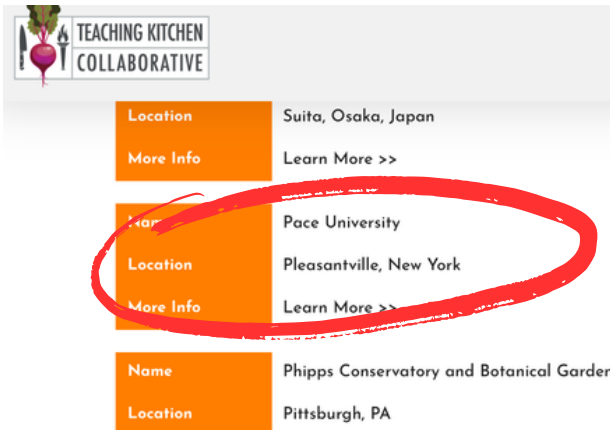
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Announcement

We are incredibly proud of the work Prof. Mary Opfer has done to expand our Teaching Kitchen initiatives throughout the Pace community. From our graduate courses at Zwilling JA Henckels cooking studio to the mobile kitchen cart and cooking demos on campus, the Teaching Kitchen has something to offer for all Pace students, faculty, staff, and members of the surrounding community. Take a look at the Student Happenings section below to see Prof. Opfer and our student volunteers in action!





In other exciting news, our MS in Nutrition and Dietetics Program has been featured in BecomeANutritionist.org's list of the Top 35 Registered Dietitian Schools in the US. We are honored to be included in this compilation of top-notch dietetics programs across the country. Check out our feature **HERE**.



Wishing you all a great start to the new year and the spring semester.
We are looking forward to another fantastic year ahead!

Welcoming Cohort 6 at Orientation.



Students from Cohorts 5 and 6 in the Zwilling Cooking Studio.









Students from Cohorts 5 and 6 at the Mentorship Holiday Party at the end of fall semester.







Student Happenings

Pace University Teaching Kitchen Activities

Wellness Wednesday

Prof. Mary Opfer performing a Clean Eating cooking demonstration for Wellness Wednesday.





A Taste of Pace Mobile Market

By Kasia Lopez-Gos, Cohort 6

Over the course of the 2023 fall semester, I worked with Prof. Mary Opfer and other cohort 6 students on a new series of cooking demos with ingredients from the Pace Mobile Market. We would pick out healthy ingredients from the campus food pantry and turn them into a 30-minute meal such as stir-fry, lentil stew, homemade hummus, apple and banana slices with nut butter, sausage and pepper skillet, a variety of fresh salads with homemade dressing, and many more! The idea was to promote easy, healthy recipes with simple ingredients to Pace students and faculty. We shared our recipes with the school pantry coordinator so they are readily available to the users in both English and Spanish. This has been an amazing experience, and we're hoping to continue our Pace Nutrition cooking series next semester!











HR Wellness Fair

By Isha Patel, Cohort 5

I volunteered at the HR Wellness Fair this past semester, where we got to use our mobile kitchen cart to present a short education session on diabetes prevention and prepare delicious meals for the HR faculty at Pace. Everyone was so engaged in discussions on diabetes and cooking!

Student Happenings

Fighting Against Food Insecurity on Campus

By Kayla Cooke, Cohort 6

Having access to foods that support your mental health and well-being is a human right. However, some Pace faculty, staff, and students may have varying levels of food insecurity. Students especially end up running low on dining dollars towards the end of the semester, which could lead to skipping meals to prioritize paying for tuition, rent, or healthcare. Whatever the case is, students ultimately feel they need to sacrifice nutrient-dense foods to instead buy cheaper, more processed foods for nourishment. This is alarming because students with food insecurity are more likely to have lower GPAs, class completion, and attendance rates. (1)

To provide students with more food options and access to nutritious meals and snacks, Pace University offers a recurring food pantry and community fridge on PLV campus. The pantry receives leftover food from local grocery stores and the campus garden, while the community fridge is filled with leftover food from the cafeteria. These services not only reduce food insecurity among people on campus, but also reduce food waste in the overall community, benefiting the environment.

To support access to more nutrient-dense foods on campus, I volunteered at the campus garden with supervisor Professor Kate Fink. Some classmates and I helped harvest the remaining fruits and vegetables before the first frost, and cleared out vegetable beds to plant garlic for the winter season. We were able to take some of the harvested food home and donated the rest to the food pantry. Crops that are more recently harvested contain more nutrients compared to the same foods that sit for a longer time in room or fridge temperature post-harvest (e.g. during transportation to store). Therefore, taking advantage of this locally grown, recently harvested food from the campus garden promotes nutrient intake!

Every week we held one of our classes in the Zwilling Cooking Studio in Pleasantville, where we had the chance to cook nutritious meals. While we got to personally enjoy eating some of the food, we would unfortunately always have leftover food that would be thrown out. After learning about the community fridge from a Food Justice Week presentation, I thought it would be a great idea to donate our leftover freshly cooked meals to the community fridge since we were right off campus anyway. I got in touch with the Pace Dining Manager Kevin Henriquez, who approved this effort and even donated food containers for us to package the food in. As a result, every week cohort 6 had class at Zwilling, we packed and labeled (with the recipe name and allergens) containers of our leftover food to put in the fridge. After the first week, I was pleased to see that most of the meals I put in the fridge were picked up!

Thus, food insecurity is a nationwide issue that especially affects many college students. As our program continues to grow, we are always thinking of more ways to support food waste reduction on campus and tackle food insecurity!

[1] McCoy, M., Martinelli, S., Reddy, S., Don, R., Thompson, A., Speer, M., Bravo, R., Yudell, M., & Darira, S. (2022). Food Insecurity On College Campuses: The Invisible Epidemic. Health Affairs Forefront. https://doi.org/10.1377/forefront.20220127.264905





Student Happenings

Interprofessional Lab Session with Nursing: Nasogastric Tube Placement

By Christa Vasile, Cohort 5

As the field of Nutrition and Dietetics continues to gain more traction in healthcare, the required skills and competencies for entry-level RDNs continue to expand. One of the new competencies that is now included in the RDN scope of practice is to know all the steps needed for nasogastric tube placement. Although NGT placement is typically a job for nursing, I realized through this activity how important it is for dietitians to have this knowledge when we enter the field because of how involved we are in tube feeding.

We met with Dr. Liz Berro from the nursing program at CHP in the simulation lab, where she led a discussion on nasogastric tubes and their purpose in the clinical setting. We went through the NGT placement checklist thoroughly and she even demonstrated on a simulated patient mannequin in a hospital bed. Watching everyone place the tube as well as doing it myself really reinforced all this new information in my mind. In addition to the NGT, Professor Tosto also brought in some other feeding tubes, such as G-, J-, and PEG-tubes, all of which are commonly used in clinical settings. We practiced using the tube feeding machines and spent time going through all the indications and contraindications for each tube.



I am so glad our cohort had the opportunity to collaborate once again with nursing this year. Having seen all the different types of feeding tubes and learning how to properly place an NGT is very helpful for me, as I will be starting clinical rotations in the spring. I am still a bit nervous about beginning my clinical journey, but I am confident that when I encounter patients with feeding tubes and NG tubes, I will not be dumbfounded. I am grateful to our professors who put in the time and effort to organize this collaboration with nursing to enhance our clinical skills in the midst of our dietetic internships!

SNAP Challenge

By Kasia Lopez-Gos, Cohort 6

Our cohort participated in the SNAP challenge to experience the financial obstacles that often get in the way of consuming a healthy, well-balanced diet. Being on a $7 daily budget was hard to keep up with, especially given the rising cost of food. If it wasn't for the food I already had access to at home, food from the campus pantry and from cooking classes, I would have failed this challenge miserably. I cannot imagine how hard it must be for individuals and families to buy essential food staples and make a living on $49 a week. It is almost impossible to buy all fresh ingredients and produce on this budget and get all of the essential nutrients through diet. While participating in the SNAP Challenge, I had to eat less animal protein than I normally do, which made me hungrier quicker and caused more cravings. Since I am an active person, I quickly saw the difference in my energy levels at the gym due to the lack of protein in my diet. I found it helpful to visit the campus food pantry and get some of my food supplies there, as it helped to save money. I encourage others who are SNAP recipients to explore food banks/ pantries around them so that way they can add variety and more nutritional value to their diet. Joining the SNAP challenge was a humbling experience as it enabled me to appreciate the food I have access to on a daily basis, and not having to worry about where my next meal comes from. This challenge made me look forward to working with my classmates in the future to tackle food waste and food insecurity happening right under our noses!

Notes From the Field

SBH Teaching Kitchen - Community Rotation

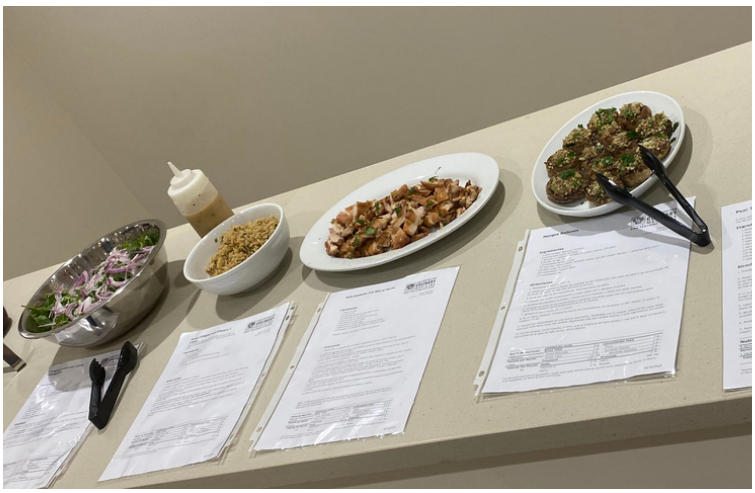
By Sofia Lopez, Cohort 5

In the fall, I completed my community rotation at St. Barnabas Hospital's Teaching Kitchen in the Bronx. The goal of the teaching kitchen is to educate the community and medical professionals on how to create affordable delicious and nutritious meals. The classes were only $5 per class, which included a variety of classes like brunch, one pot meals, breakfast, meal prep, and more. I was lucky to be there around the holidays because I got to participate in special classes like leftover thanksgiving meals, appetizers for thanksgiving, and my personal favorite, holiday cookies. My weekly tasks involved inventory of the fridge/pantry, discarding expired items, preparing and measuring the ingredients for the meals for the class, preparing the cooking stations, putting away the dishes, cleaning the dishes, cleaning the kitchen after a class, and helping out with the classes, where I was able to interact with participants across all ages.

Beside community classes, the teaching kitchen also hosted some private classes to varieties of groups. The groups were a cooking club from a local high school, HAYNES, VIP community services, Montefiore doctors, and patients with gestational diabetes. It was especially refreshing to work with teenagers because it reminded me of how invincible I thought I was at that age. Getting through to young participants was a challenge because they are often set in their ways and plagued with peer pressure. Even if my simple cooking games and nutrition label reading activities seemed silly to them, I know I was able to successfully teach them basic nutrition that they likely did not get in school growing up.

What I loved most about these classes was how fun and engaging they were. I enjoyed being a part of helping others learn new cooking styles and ways to modify their eating habits. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with my preceptor Abby and the staff, Yanir and Wanda. They really let me get creative with adding and changing their ingredients and recipes, which helped me think outside the box from a culinary aspect. If I was a regular participant of the SBH Teaching Kitchen, I would certainly go back for more classes!





Notes From the Field

Northwell Health Cancer Institute at Northern Westchester Hospital - Community Rotation

By Keri Fisenne, Cohort 5

This past semester, I was given the opportunity to work alongside a RD at the Cancer Center at Northern Westchester Hospital. Starting this internship, I had no idea what to expect, as I have never had experience working directly with patients going through cancer treatment, nor have I really had any experience with cancer at all. We have covered oncology topics in class, but here I was pushed beyond the classroom and into the real world. Nutrition is such an important aspect of cancer treatment and recovery, so I was excited to learn about all the dietary interventions and how to interact with this population. Jackie Horne, the RD at the cancer center, was more than helpful in acclimating me to the facility, the staff, different types of cancer and treatments, and their nutritional implications and recommendations.

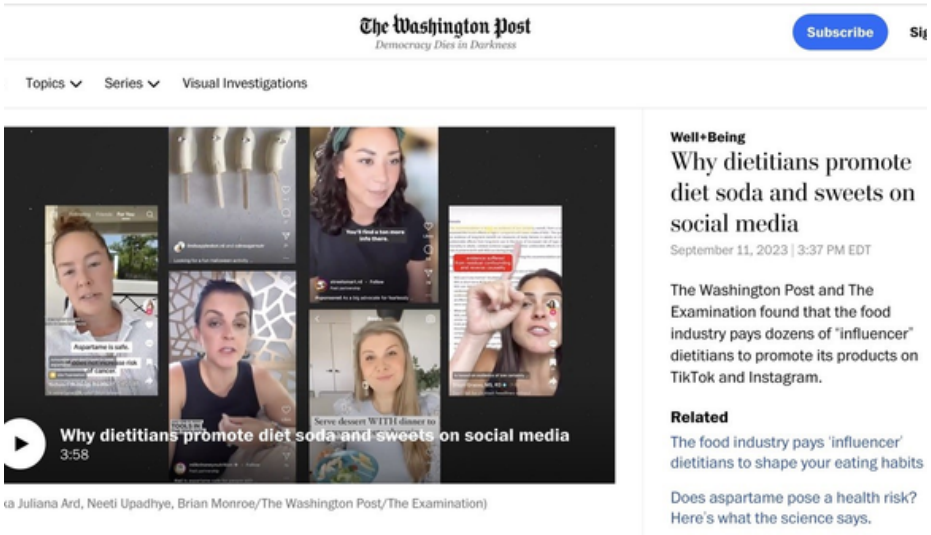
I came to learn that cancer is not just a physical battle, but an emotional and mental one as well. When diagnosed with this disease many things may seem out of your control, but nutrition is one of the few things during treatment that patients can control. Creating plans with these patients provided them not only with the knowledge they needed to fuel their bodies to fight their battle, but also gave them a sense of comfort and empowerment when going through such a difficult time.

During my time there, I was in charge of preparing an education presentation and presenting to a group of caregivers and cancer survivors undergoing treatment. I focused on preventing breast cancer using nutrition and lifestyle changes. Along with a presentation, I also performed a cooking demonstration for two plant-based meals. Through my presentation and cooking demo, I aimed to have participants take away the importance of reducing alcohol and red meat intake, increased physical activity, while also highlighting the benefits of a more plant-based diet and some functional components of foods, including antioxidants in fruits.

My experience at the cancer center has been more than rewarding. Although developing and preparing for this presentation was challenging, I left the internship with so much more knowledge and understanding of the cancer treatment and recovery process from a nutritional standpoint. Not only was I able to dive deeper into the clinical side of creating a cancer nutrition plan, I was also able to create supportive relationships with patients that caused me to gain an appreciation for the empathetic side of healthcare. This internship has shaped me as a future practicing dietitian and instilled in me a commitment to continue learning, educating, and making a meaningful difference in the lives of those navigating the challenging path of cancer treatment.

Research Literacy, Ethics and Responsibility in Nutrition Communication: A Growing Challenge for the Modern RD

Opinion Article by Dr. Christen Cooper



(a Juliana Ard, Neeti Upadhye, Brian Monroe/The Washington Post/The Examination)

If this image looks familiar to you, you have probably read the September 13, 2023 Washington Post article challenging the transparency of RDs engaged in paid sponsorships to create posts and reels about the potential carcinogenicity of aspartame, an artificial sweetener found in low-calorie foods and beverages such as Diet Coke, Equal and Sugar-Free Jello. Aspartame has been around since the early 1980s, so why the controversy now? On July 13, 2023, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) issued a statement on the current body of research on this food additive. As has been reported for years, there is still "limited evidence" on whether aspartame is carcinogenic in humans. The report states that the acceptable daily intake remains at 40 mg/kg of body weight—equal to between 9 to 14 cans of diet soda per day for a 150-pound adult. Few people are likely to ingest that amount.

The nutrition and dietetics profession as a whole was called out not only in the Post's print article, but in a video by a Post reporter. The video names specific RDs and includes links to their Tik Tok and Instagram posts, featuring pithy statements urging consumers to eschew warnings about aspartame. Not a bright day in nutrition and dietetics lore for sure, but certainly one to be analyzed and discussed within our RD community.

The article accompanying the video includes the transcript of three RDs' social media reels. The RDs' names were stated in the original report, but are withheld here to respect our colleagues' privacy. A registered dietitian from Oakton, Va., told her 2.2 million followers on TikTok that the WHO warnings about artificial sweeteners were "clickbait" based on "low-quality science." Another dietitian reassured her Instagram followers not to worry about "fear mongering headlines" about aspartame because "the evidence doesn't suggest there's a reason for concern." In a third video, a Houston-area dietitian, who specializes in diabetes care, sipped from a glass of soda and told her Instagram viewers that artificial sweeteners "satisfy the desire for sweetness" without affecting blood sugar or insulin levels.

In my view, the essence of the information our called out colleagues have put forth is, in its purest form, technically accurate. What they assert is stated nearly verbatim by the WHO and joint organizations: Research is inconclusive. The bigger questions may be more about ethics. Exactly how and in the name of whom do they make their declarations? I believe we need to consider the following:

- The participation of RDs in contractual relationships with companies selling low-nutrient foods that we know, despite all foods fitting into a healthy diet, are a source of sugar, fat and salt that is underlying our most expensive and deadly chronic diseases (as supported by research).
- Some RDs' non-disclosure of corporate relationships that may be reflecting personal financial gain disproportionate to the ethical interpretation of research on aspartame.

As an active researcher who is also a research methods and research ethics teacher, I worry about the impact that short, punchy social media clips by RDs may downplay the realities of how complicated and nuanced nutrition research is. By jumping on any bandwagon without evidence, we are also ignoring the emerging research that demonstrates differences between individuals on nutrition's impact on long-term health. In my classes, students and I pour over articles and assess/criticize methodology, sample size, authorship and funding sources. In a busy career, this level of rigor is not always realistically possible, but also should not lead us to simply blast out what we "think" to be true instead of what we "know" to be true according to evidence or equivalent lived experience. Our trade journal, Today's Dietitian and others of its ilk, are great resources that offer articles that condense recent research into digestible, easy-to-read summaries scrutinized by highly experienced editors.

I encourage all dietitians, especially our Pace alums, to assert our RD knowledge and worth as we adhere to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Ethics code. The Code compels us to think critically and interpret studies to support and carry out true evidenced-based practice. When nutrition-related "news" hits the airwaves and e-waves, an opportunity to showcase our expertise in print or online may emerge and undoubtedly, this can be exciting and attractive. Let's remember that we represent the best, brightest and most critical thinkers on food and nutrition. Let's challenge ourselves to do the work necessary to keep our profession evidence-based and increasingly, highly respected.

Events

ASAHP Conference

In October, Professor Jessica Tosto attended the Association of Schools Advancing health Professions (ASAHP) National Conference in Ft Lauderdale, Florida, along with Dean of CHP, Dr. Marcus Tye, Director of Simulation, Patty Myers, and Professor Ellayne Ganzfried (CSD). Professors Tosto and Ganzfried presented their poster on Understanding and Promoting Interprofessional Collaboration and Practice at the Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions (ASAHP) National Conference in Ft Lauderdale Florida. This research was conducted along with Dr. Joanne Singleton (NSG) and evaluated student's knowledge and perceptions around interprofessional education and collaborative practice before and after participating in a college-wide IPE activity with students from other programs within CHP.





Left to right: Prof. Jessica Tosto, Dean Marcus Tye, Prof. Ellayne Ganzfried, Patty Myers

Events

Professor Cooper and Recent Graduate Carla Sanders Attend Conference in Washington, D.C.

By Dr. Christen Cooper

Dr. Christen Cooper and recent graduate, Carla Sanders ('23), attended the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior's International 2023 conference in Washington, D.C. on July 20-23, 2023. Carla, who is interested in community nutrition, and particularly food and agriculture met Dr. Cooper's colleagues from Teachers College including Drs. Isobel Contento and Pam Koch, authors of the seminal textbook in nutrition education used in two of our courses: Nutrition Education: Linking Research, Theory and Practice, Jones and Bartlett, 2020.

Professor Cooper presented a poster on her recent study: "Dietary Quality, Attitudes and Behaviors During the COVID-19 Shelter-in-Place Sanctions: A Social Media-Based Study." The study, which was conducted exclusively via a social media survey, was a collaboration between Dr. Cooper, Dr. Kate Burt of Lehman College, and Dr. Brennan Rhodes-Bratton of New York University.

The results indicated that nutritionally speaking, COVID-19 presented a silver lining. The majority of participants reported more frequent cooking at home and eating with family (56%), as well as a higher concern for healthy eating (83%). To determine changes in dietary quality, the researchers used a composite score to compare participants' reported diet during shelter-in-place with MyPlate recommendations. They found an overall improvement in diet quality among participants, particularly among people of color.

The study, which will be published in the coming months, suggests that although individuals consumed more low-nutrient foods and more alcohol during the pandemic, they also consumed more fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and other healthful foods and ate with family, a factor linked to better diet outcomes. The team is proud to publish this study, which is the only study to date specifically focusing on diet quality during the COVID-19 lockdown.



Left to right: Carla Sanders, M.S. and RD-to-Be, Pace Nutrition and Dietetics '23; Drs. Isobel Contento, Pam Koch and Christen Cooper

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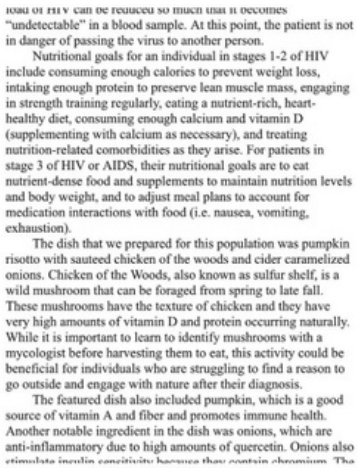
181 posts 350 followers 244 following

Pace University Nutrition Club

Health & wellness website
Official Nutrition Club of @PaceUniversity
★ Healthy Living🍎🥦
★ Mindful Choices 💡
★ Better Self 💪
★ #RD2be
youtu.be/cvATeZ8yuzc

Recipes | Lifespan Re... | Lifespan Lab | Nutrition Quiz | Campus Eve... | Field Trips

POSTS REELS TAGGED


load of HIV can be reduced so much that it becomes "undetectable" in a blood sample. At this point, the patient is not in danger of passing the virus to another person.

Nutritional goals for an individual in stages 1-2 of HIV include consuming enough calories to prevent weight loss, intaking enough protein to preserve lean muscle mass, engaging in strength training regularly, eating a nutrient-rich, heart-healthy diet, consuming enough calcium and vitamin D (supplementing with calcium as necessary), and treating nutrition-related comorbidities as they arise. For patients in stage 3 of HIV or AIDS, their nutritional goals are to eat nutrient-dense food and supplements to maintain nutrition levels and body weight, and to adjust meal plans to account for medication interactions with food (i.e. nausea, vomiting, exhaustion).

The dish that we prepared for this population was pumpkin risotto with sauteed chicken of the woods and cider caramelized onions. Chicken of the Woods, also known as sulfur shelf, is a wild mushroom that can be foraged from spring to late fall. These mushrooms have the texture of chicken and they have very high amounts of vitamin D and protein occurring naturally. While it is important to learn to identify mushrooms with a mycologist before harvesting them to eat, this activity could be beneficial for individuals who are struggling to find a reason to go outside and engage with nature after their diagnosis.

The featured dish also included pumpkin, which is a good source of vitamin A and fiber and promotes immune health. Another notable ingredient in the dish was onions, which are anti-inflammatory due to high amounts of quercetin. Onions also

