

Vol. 3

# HEALTHY WORLD, HEALTHY YOU

Growing Our Food and Community



Story and Illustration by Valeria Menéndez, MPH

Tips for a Healthy Environment by Sarah Evans, PhD, MPH





# HEALTHY WORLD, HEALTHY YOU

Growing Our Food and Community



My name is Isabella, and I'm walking to the park with my brother and our friends. Last time we were there, we organized a community health fair.

We wanted to help make our neighborhood healthier, so we got doctors, teachers, farmers, and more to help! Everyone learned a lot.



# WELCOME to Unity Gardens

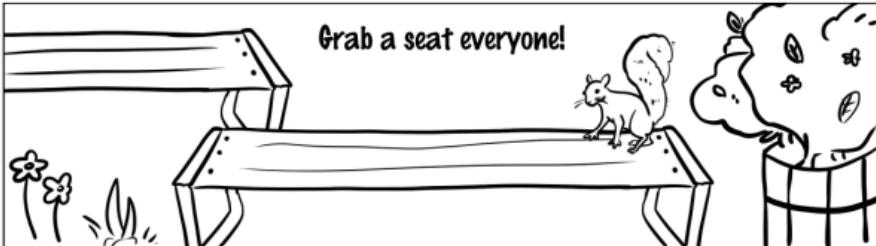
Here's the park -  
we made it!

Oh, look!  
What's all this?

Let's check it out!



**The urban farmer workshop is about to start-**



Grab a seat everyone!

We are from the Sixth Street Community Center and today we are going to teach you to be an urban farmer.

Community gardens bring fresh foods to neighborhoods that may lack access to fruits and vegetables.

A community garden is also a great way to get to know your neighbors and build new connections.

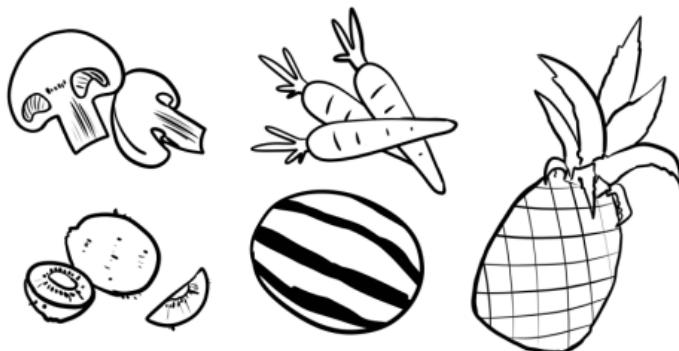
It's all about teamwork and collaboration!

## Eating fresh, locally grown foods is good for your health and the planet!

Shipping foods from far away contributes to pollution and can worsen climate change.

Growing foods without synthetic chemicals makes soil healthier. Healthy soil helps fight climate change by absorbing carbon from the air!

Chemicals from food packaging get into many of the foods we buy at the store. Freshly picked fruits and vegetables have more vitamins and minerals than foods that sit on store shelves for a long time.



### Science Time!

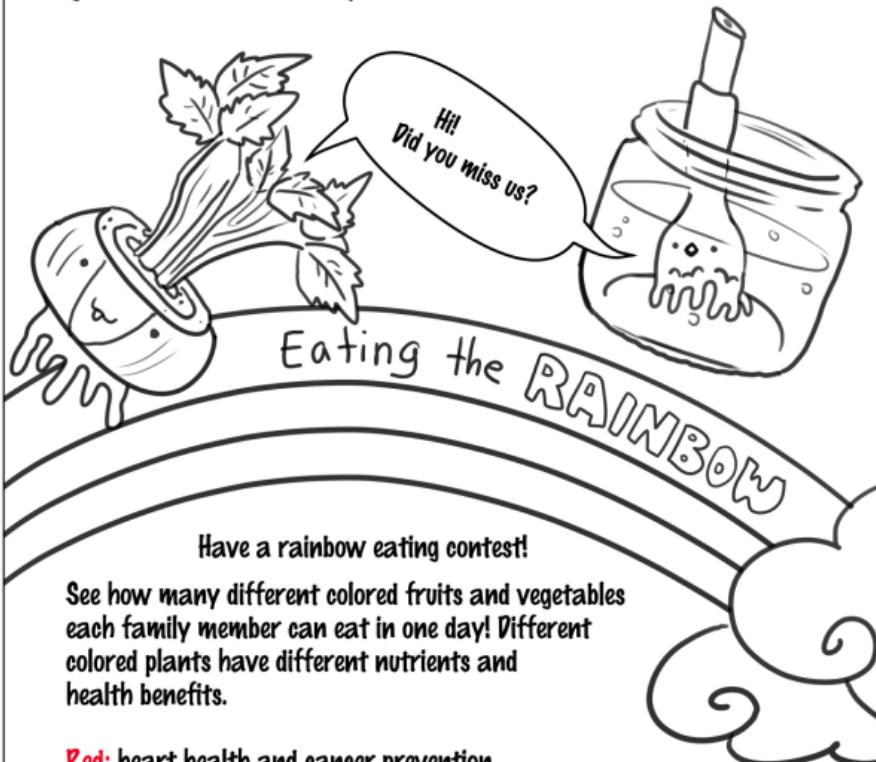


Gardening can make neighborhoods healthier! 1 in 8 children in the United States do not have enough food to eat. Community gardens help provide fresh, affordable, or even free food to families.

Gardening is also a proven stress reducer and a form of physical exercise!

## Veggie Magic!

Some vegetables, such as scallions and lettuce, can be regrown from scraps. Just place the bottom of a chopped scallion in a jar with water and watch it grow back after a few days.



Have a rainbow eating contest!

See how many different colored fruits and vegetables each family member can eat in one day! Different colored plants have different nutrients and health benefits.

**Red:** heart health and cancer prevention

**Orange:** vision, immune support, cancer prevention

**Yellow:** skin protection, healthy joints

**Green:** immune support and cancer prevention

**Blue and purple:** brain health

**White:** energy and strong bones

To finish up, we'll be having our weekend potluck tomorrow at noon right here. Everyone who wants to participate can come forward and pick their main ingredients from the baskets we've prepared - all grown right here!





Later...

MOM! There's going to be a potluck at the park tomorrow, and we've got ingredients. What can we make with this? Help!



Contents:  
1 red onion, 1 bell pepper,  
2 zucchini, 1 big cauliflower,  
2 tomatoes, some cilantro

You two were on quite the adventure just now, huh?

I'd love to help - just give me a moment.  
Hmmm... Let's see...

*NANA's  
Recipe  
Book*

Let's check your grandma's recipe book. I'm sure there's a perfect recipe in here.

# Cauliflower Buffalo Tacos

## Ingredients:

3 T butter	1 c cherry tomatoes, halved
3 T hot sauce	1 avocado, pitted and sliced
1 large cauliflower, cut into florets	1/4 c cilantro, chopped
1 T olive oil	1 lime, cut into wedges
6 corn tortilla shells	
1 c red cabbage, shredded	

## Preparation

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking pan with parchment paper.

### Buffalo Sauce

In a small saucepan, melt the butter and transfer to a bowl. Add the hot sauce to the bowl and stir until combined.

### Buffalo Cauliflower

In a large bowl, toss the cauliflower florets with olive oil and half the buffalo sauce. Toss to coat.

Spread the coated cauliflower florets evenly on the baking pan. Roast in the oven for 20 minutes, or until fork tender and browned on the edges. Remove from the oven and toss again in the bowl with the remaining buffalo sauce.

### Taco Assembly

Heat or toast the corn tortilla shells. Layer on a serving platter or individual dishes. Cover each shell with shredded cabbage, buffalo cauliflower, cherry tomatoes, avocado, and cilantro.

You can actually use any veggies to make your tacos.  
See what's around you and get creative!

Some cooking methods are healthier than others. Help Isabella and Joel prepare the recipe they picked by choosing the better ways to cook:

*When cooking it is better to...*

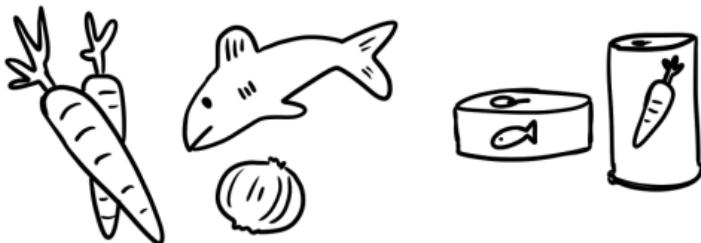
Fry

or

Bake

*It's better to pick...*

Fresh ingredients    or    Canned ingredients



*It's better to store your food in...*

Plastic containers    or    Glass containers



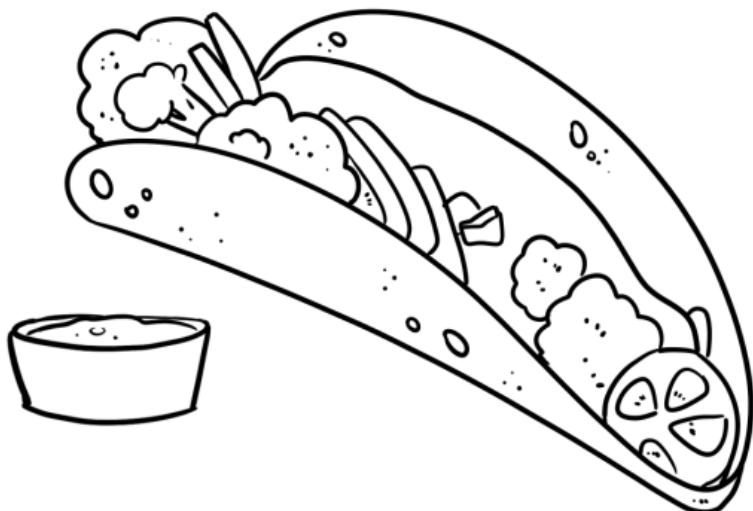
## Science Time!

Cook healthier! Use cast iron or stainless steel pots and pans and glass when preparing and heating foods.

Cookware with a nonstick coating and plastic food containers can cause unhealthy chemicals to enter foods.

Avoid eating too much grilled or smoked meats as these cooking processes can create harmful chemicals.

The first veggie taco is ready and tasty - now on to the rest!



What veggies do you want to include in your tacos? Draw them here:



## Science Time!

Eating less meat is good for your health and the planet! Livestock farming produces greenhouse gases that cause climate change.

Eating too much meat can be bad for your heart and expose you to harmful pollutants that build up in animal fat.

Hi everyone, we've got tacos! Cauliflower buffalo tacos to be exact!



Mom helped us a lot! Turns out  
Nana's got a recipe book too!



Hi guys!  
I made soup!  
The biggest of soups!



Oh, I love tacos!  
I brought fruit tarts!

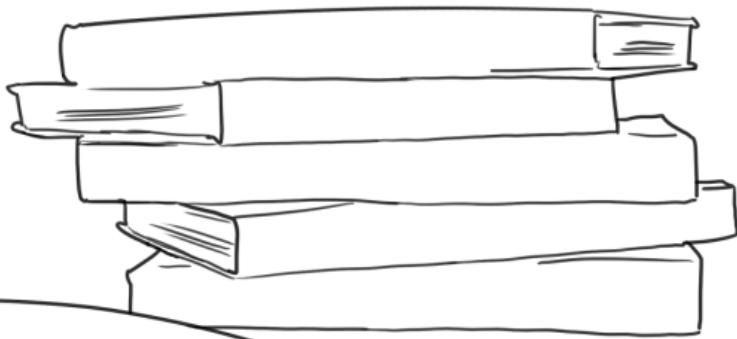
WOW! Finally! Let's eat!





Got any recipe ideas? Write them down here!

Up for a challenge? Try including some of the following:  
rice, Brussels sprouts, microgreens, beets, corn, avocado, sweet potato



Recipe:

A large, blank area designed to look like a page from a notebook. It features horizontal ruling lines and a vertical margin line on the left side. The lines are slightly curved, giving it a handwritten appearance. The area is intended for a reader to write their own recipe ideas.

Our healthy foods adventure has just begun!  
We'll make our garden the best!



## 10 Tips for Grown-ups

1. Eat less meat. Maintain a varied diet, with a variety of fruits and vegetables.
2. Choose more fresh or frozen foods, or foods that are packaged in glass. Consume fewer canned foods.
3. Avoid #3, #6 and #7 recycling symbols and choose glass or stainless steel food and beverage containers. Also choose stainless or cast iron pans and avoid nonstick cookware.
4. Avoid plastic wrap. Choose reusable snack containers.
5. Don't microwave food in plastic containers. Use glass instead.
6. Compost! Food waste in landfills is a major contributor to greenhouse gases that cause climate change.
7. Choose tap water and avoid bottled water. If you live in an older home (pre-1986) that may have lead pipes, have your water tested for lead at the tap.
8. Ask about growing practices at your local greenmarket and choose organic when possible to reduce pesticide exposures.
9. If you have trouble buying food for your family, access resources such as WIC and SNAP benefits.
10. Find a community fridge, food pantry, or community garden and get involved to help feed your neighbors!

## Authors



Valeria Menéndez is an artist. Valeria is very passionate about public health and firmly believes that everyone should be able to feel healthy, happy, and loved. Valeria grew up and studied in Puerto Rico, but now lives in New York. She loves her pets, her houseplants, and the color green!



Dr. Sarah Evans is a scientist in the Department of Environmental Medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. In addition to her research on how chemicals and other toxins affect children's health, Sarah often speaks at community events, including schools to educate teachers, parents, and kids on how they can be environmental health champions and make small changes with big impacts. Sarah loves to garden and composts at home. She has three awesome kids and lives in Connecticut.

The Sixth Street Community Center (SSCC) referenced in this storybook offers robust community programs to Lower East Side community members of all ages. SSCC programs and organizing campaigns are focused on advancing climate justice while fighting environmental racism, urban sustainability, food justice and food access. Find out more at: [sixthstreetcenter.org](http://sixthstreetcenter.org)



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"Growing Our Food and Community" is the third book in the *Healthy World, Healthy You* storybook series. It follows a young girl named Isabella and her younger brother Joel who live in Brooklyn, New York. Together, they explore the intersection of health and the environment and what they can do to protect their own health and that of their friends and neighbors.

This book was developed within the Department of Environmental Medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. It was created in 2022 by Valeria Menéndez, MPH, Communications Program Coordinator in the Department of Environmental Medicine in collaboration with Sarah Evans, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor in the Department of Environmental Medicine, with support from the Center on Health and Environment Across the LifeSpan (NIEHS grant P30ES023515).



