

spotlight on members

Spotlight on Members gives us the opportunity to hear about what our members are up to today, as well as how they found their way to the NHA Health Program. If you're interested in sharing your own story, we'd love to hear from you. Please email essays of around 500 words, and one or two photos, to info@healthscience.org.

Lin Silvan Eugene Veg Education Network Eugene, OR

For whatever reasons—tradition, habit, convenience—I never made the connection between the food I ate and the animals I loved. In fact, the meat-and-potatoes diet I was raised on continued until I was over 40. When I began to inquire (finally!) about where the food came from that I had unwittingly consumed for decades, it set me back on my heels. There was gross cruelty at every level. I was outraged! Why had no one told me? More importantly, why had I never asked? I felt guilty, horrified, and complicit, and I knew I could not be part of it anymore.

We all know that any undertaking is easier with the right information and tools at hand. Armed with first-rate evidence from renowned sources like Dr. John McDougall, John Robbins, Jay Dinshah, and Dr. Neal Barnard and with wisdom from many authors and others at the National Health Association like Mark Huberman, Dr. Frank Sabatino, and Dr. Alan Goldhamer, I began using veganism and ahimsa philosophy to wield power over the sadly uninformed, misinformed, dark-ages parts of my life. These inspiring mentors were examples of letting their light shine so brightly that others could see their way out of the dark, as the saying goes.

The year 1991 became a pivotal point in my life and “going veg” was a

major part of the process. Thich Nhat Hanh said that awareness is like the sun, and when it shines on things, they are transformed. Well, my life had been transformed!

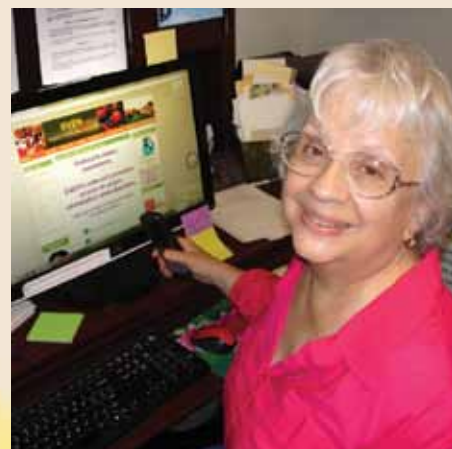
Once one has new awareness, doing what you've always done is no longer a sensible option. All of my new insights exerted profound leverage over every future meal I ate and, eventually, over every decision I made. I thrived by living in accordance with revitalized values of compassion and nonviolence. These values would stay with me, teach me, and guide me, and they continue to do so even now, well into my seventies.

As an educator with decades of experience in corporate America, I was very fortunate to be able to retire early. That gave me the time, energy, and breadth I dearly desired to be able to read and explore this bolt-of-lightning new focus. I viewed my newfound freedom of choice as more of a responsibility than merely a right, because, after all, intelligent choice must be rooted in ethical values.

It was good fortune to have my husband jump on board to join me in this exhilarating endeavor. His enthusiasm ensured the success of our life-changing new worldview, because now we shared the same single-mindedness.

Both Robert and I had an ardent desire to give back and be a voice for the voiceless. When we reflected on why we had changed, we saw that learning the facts had made a strong impression on us and allowed us to redirect our lives toward a greater purpose. As a result, we established a vegan education and outreach nonprofit in 2005, providing free support to anyone wishing to make this meaningful life change. The Eugene Veg Education Network (EVEN) was born!

Since then, with a focus on compassion, nonviolence, and sustainability, EVEN has been educating thousands about the benefits of a plant-based diet. Books, nutritional information, recipes, and more are



Lin updates the EVEN website.

all offered free to the public. Some of EVEN's activities include ongoing tabling and leafleting, publishing e-newsletters, sponsoring guest lecturers, conducting exclusive and inspiring interviews with prominent vegans, assisting college and high school students with projects on veganism, designing meal plans for families, answering hundreds of emails and phone inquiries each week, maintaining an informative vegan news blog and a comprehensive website, and hosting a vegan Peaceful Potluck every Thanksgiving. EVEN has also held vegan fairs and successfully secured a Eugene mayoral proclamation declaring 2016 Vegan Awareness Year! EVEN's multifaceted outreach has earned it an Essentials for Life award from United Way and the 24 Carrot Award from Vegetarians in Paradise.

Having seen the animal atrocities resulting from the standard American diet, it didn't take us long to appreciate veganism's impact on human health and on the planet, as well. Observing the wholistic interconnectedness of those three components was magical, powerful, and unrelenting. It added a magnificent spiritual component to our journey. Imagine that! A path that actually seemed to touch divinity by its ability to benefit all—animals, people, our earth—in wondrous harmony. What a glorious new worldview with which to be gifted!

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Lin promotes the Eugene Veg Education Network at a recent conference.