



Mary Jane's Cooking School, Inc.

Wooden Spoons

Volume I, Issue 2

Spring 2004

Mary Jane's Cooking School, Inc. provides education in nutritional home cooking and home-making in harmony with individual, community and cultural traditions, with respect and care for the environment. *Mission Statement*

“Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out her seven pillars: she has prepared her food; she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table; she has sent our her maidens, she calls from the tops of the heights of the city....” Proverbs 9:1-3

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

OF SHARING--AND WIDENING--THE CIRCLE

A few years ago, the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples described the “Classical Aboriginal Concepts of Health and Healing” as “balance and harmony among the elements of personal and collective life.... The circle is used to represent the inseparability of the individual, family, community and world.” Such a holistic vision of health and well-being has been fundamental to Mary Jane’s Cooking School from our beginnings, and in 2003 we proclaimed it more widely throughout the community than ever before, to aboriginal and non-aboriginal people alike.

Our medium of “shouting our message from the rooftops” (as our late mentor Wilhelmina Howes had suggested) was through our first ever newsletter this summer, and even more through a half hour program aptly titled “Wooden Spoons”, on the University of Winnipeg-based community radio station, CKUW, 95.9 FM. Aired Mondays and (continued on page 2)

FEEDING THE CHILDREN AND SHOPPING IN A DREAM STORE

Several years ago, I read an article in the *Winnipeg Free Press* about a professional woman’s account of her first experience in a sweat (an Aboriginal spiritual healing ceremony, much like a sauna that takes place inside a tent). During the sweat, this woman received a message from spirit: “Feed your children”. The words, which came as a surprise to her, had a serious if not somewhat stern tone that was meant to be obeyed. She had apparently not expected this message. If she expected any message at all, it would be obviously more portentous or spiritual in nature. She was perplexed by its meaning, for after all did she not feed her children and provide food for them? While she begrudgingly conceded that yes, she should perhaps give food preparation consideration, the journalist left the question hanging somewhat uneasily for the reader to mull over. I was one reader who would have liked to probe a little more deeply and ask what was she feeding her children? Did (continued on page 3)

Message from the President

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repeated on Fridays the program brought the School a step further in providing education in home making and environmental protection to people throughout the community. In engaging and informative interviews Mary Jane, her guests and I (as 'Laura Leah Allan' in a minor, supporting role) explored interests and shared perspectives on topics ranging from aboriginal health and spirituality to naturopathy, massage therapy, community economic development, and eliminating pesticides in the urban environment, to name a few of the more than twenty shows. Each one required hours in designing, taping and editing the program interviews and musical selections chosen by the guests. Through this opportunity to join with the circle of staff and volunteers at CKUW, Mary Jane's Cooking School gained new friends and supporters of all ages. As we prepare for another year of programming we look forward to meeting more guests involved in teaching and learning ways of living "in harmony with individual, community, and cultural traditions" of the people of Winnipeg.

That same message of cultural sensitivity is central to another program priority for the coming year: the training of home support workers in home cooking and environmentally friendly home cleaning. Over the coming year, as we look for funding support for this program to meet the growing needs of elderly and disabled citizens we will also be acknowledging the importance of this work to society, and emphasizing the need for training and personal development opportunities for home support workers.

Many of these workers could come from the circles of students at Mary Jane's Cooking School over the years since we first opened our doors. They include aboriginal and non-aboriginal women and men from Canada, as well as recent immigrants from Africa, Asia, and Europe, in sponsored, private and special topic

classes. The scope of the classes they attended in 2003 shows the wide range of skills and interests that such students would bring to training in the Home Support curriculum. As we go into 2004, the circle of our school is steadily expanding. It is a circle of balance and health, of hospitality and welcome. With thanks for the enormous efforts and great gifts of our Program Coordinator Mary Jane Eason, with gratitude to each and every one of our funders, volunteers, members and students let us continue the learning and sharing that is the heart of Mary Jane's Cooking School, Inc.

Laura Steiman, President

HEALTHY FOODS FOR BETTER HEALTH

Mary Jane's Cooking School recently completed a three month program funded by the Government of Manitoba through Neighbourhoods Alive to address the problem of diabetes in the community. Recognizing that the best defense against type 2 diabetes is a lifestyle approach emphasizing healthy foods and physical exercise, the school offered classes using the Aboriginal Medicine Wheel model (one that is inclusive and holistic) to inner city residents. Held at the Magnus Eliason Recreation Centre in the Spence neighbourhood, the classes included nutritional instruction and hands-on cooking led by program coordinator Mary Jane Eason, assisted by volunteers.

Healthy Foods for Better Health was only the first of many anticipated programs bringing the school together with other groups concerned about diabetes. This spring, in collaboration with the National Aboriginal Diabetes Association we also produced a bookmark for distribution across Canada, using the Medicine Wheel model to promote understanding of the importance of natural foods in preventing diabetes and maintaining blood sugar balance.

Feeding the Children...

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they get breakfast of cooked cereal or did they get the devitalized kind of empty sugary illusions of cereal? Were they given food prepared from scratch or did they get fast foods for the main? Did they have fruit juice or were they given chemically flavoured fruit drinks or soft drinks instead? Were her children being fed whole foods or were they given convenience foods? Were her children being deprived of the experience of real food and being brought up to be junk food addicts?

It is a sad fact that while two thirds of the world's people go to bed hungry, in our society we have a glut of poor foods. That strikes me as an obscenity. I would love to see the day when I could go into any store and not be inundated by isles and isles of junk foods or highly processed foods of questionable value. How wonderful it would be if the shelves would display only fresh produce, whole grain baked and dry goods, natural juices, cheeses, oils, vinegars and condiments and banished to some remote place

would be the pop, colas and Pepsis, the sugar cereals, potato chips, cake mixes, Kraft dinners and other refined overly packaged wonders. These foods would no longer take center place in Safeway and other stores. They would be relegated to their deserved spot as being not important to health. Shoppers coming to purchase food would actually see real food first and foremost, a very pleasurable sight. The ambiance of such a store would be totally refreshing and a sign that people value good food and honour the responsibility and opportunity to practice and develop their home cooking skills. Such a store would offer beauty and cleaning products that were "clean" because they are not made from dangerous or polluting chemicals and were cruelty free. At the present time, such a store remains a dream store, but perhaps some day will become a reality, as a reflection of a more gentle and humane world.

Submitted by Mary Jane Eason, Community Nutritionist and Program Coordinator

BEAN CASSEROLE WITH TOMATOES AND SPINACH 4 servings

An easy and flavourful dish featuring legumes and spinach. Accompany with rice or whole grain flatbread, breadsticks or bun and a salad.

1 tablespoon oil or non-hydrogenated margarine
1 clove garlic, minced
2 onions, sliced
1 can (14 oz/398 ml) tomatoes
1 can (19 oz/540 ml) red kidney beans, drained
1 can (19 oz/540 ml) romano beans, drained
1 pkg. (10 oz/284g) fresh spinach, stems removed

1 teaspoon basil
1 bay leaf
½ teaspoon oregano
freshly ground pepper
squeeze lemon juice to taste
Salt and pepper to taste
Finely chopped parsley for garnish



In a large heavy saucepan, heat margarine over medium heat; cook garlic and onions, stirring occasionally for 3 minutes, until softened.

Add tomatoes, breaking up with back of spoon. Add kidney and romano beans, and oregano; bring to simmer.

Add spinach; cover and simmer until spinach is wilted, about 2 minutes. Season with pepper to taste. Add lemon juice and parsley and adjust seasonings to taste

Diabetic Food Choices: 2 Starch 2 Protein ½ Fruits & Vegetables

**Spring / Summer Class
Schedule 2004**

THE ASIAN TABLE

Wednesday afternoons, 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.
April 7, 14, 21 & 28

Thursday evenings 6:00 – 8:30
April 8, 15, 22 & 29

**BREADMAKING
WORKSHOPS**

Saturday 10:00 – 5:00 p.m.
April 2

**COOKING WITH DIABETES
IN MIND**

Tuesday afternoons, 1:00 – 3:30
May 4, 11, 18 & 25

Thursday evenings, 6:00 – 9:00
May 6, 13, 20 & 28

**GOING FLAT OUT FOR
FLATBREADS**

Friday afternoon, 1:00 – 3:30
May 21 & 28

COOKING WITH HERBS

Tuesday afternoons, 1:00- 3:30 p.m.
June 8, 15, 22 & 29

Thursday evenings, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. June 3, 11, 17 & 24

Mary Jane's Cooking School

**252 Arlington Street
Winnipeg, MB
R3G 1Y8
Phone/Fax: 775-2522**

I want to support the work of Mary Jane's Cooking School Inc.

With donations of \$10.00 or more you become a member of Mary Jane's Cooking School Inc. Your contribution will promote nurturing today for a healthier tomorrow.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Bronze Spoon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Silver Spoon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Gold Spoon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ |

Cheque or money order enclosed payable to Mary Jane's Cooking School Inc.
(Please print)

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