

## A Healthy Recipe For Success

By Kinjal Dagli Shah

Pleasing the palates of everyone in the family with a single, healthy meal can often be tricky. Perhaps that's why there seems to be a surge in the number of women, and men, taking workshops and consulting nutritionists to help them prepare quick, yet wholesome fare.

*We get up, go to work, come home, cook meals, clean up, go about bath-time and bedtime routines and then we start all over again.*

Stouffville resident Eilla Bartels' eye caught a posting on an online group about a freezer meal workshop. The mother of three decided it was time to attend one and see what changes the experience could bring.

"The workshop was a great lesson in recipe planning and meal prep and (teaching people) how doing those things could make everyday meals less of a challenge," she said, adding that the tips have increased her efficiency in the kitchen.

"It took us three hours to prepare eight meals. They were all crockpot meals including a stew, a

soup, pulled pork, ribs, chili, and meatballs in sauce. When applied in our own homes, these ideas could work great on a meal-by-meal basis," she noted.

"It was more of a challenge during the workshop because we were learning eight meals, which is good for future planning but not something you would do all at once, especially with children around. But the best thing I learned was how to make up a grocery list based on the recipe and doing the preparation separately, so that putting everything together is more efficient."

Linda Kontosic, who conducts the workshops, said the sessions are about creating memories and saving time. "We are all so busy with our families and work that we rarely have a lot of free time," she said.

"We get up, go to work, come home, cook meals, clean up, go about bath-time and bedtime routines and then we start all over again. The benefit of a freezer meal workshop is to allow us more time to spend with families by setting aside a couple of hours to prepare healthy, home-cooked meals that are ready to go on busy nights."

Linda, who is a Stouffville resident and a mother of three, points out that the workshops are gaining more exposure. "Freezer meals are an easy way to have a healthy homemade meal," she explained.

"Attendees are provided with a menu of eight meals and a detailed shopping list of items to bring to the workshop. While enjoying the company of other women, we all work together to create the meals. At the end, you have eight great meals, all packaged and ready to freeze."

Melissa Seguin, a holistic nutritionist, believes the healthy living trend is on the rise and that people are increasingly questioning what they put on their dinner tables.

"My clients over the years have come to me with a broad spectrum of needs: from weight loss to cleansing; diabetes to colitis; and IBS to food sensitivities." And over all, she said, a desire just to eat healthier foods.

"I would say women tend to want something healthy and tasty on their dinner tables. I haven't personally noted a want for one thing or another, just as long as it is healthy. Moms are the same; however, they also want to make sure their children are eating well, so I often get requests for making kid-type food healthier, like homemade chicken fingers."

Shana Daniels, another holistic health practitioner who specializes in nutrition, also helps people with dinner menus based on personal requirements and goals.

"I advise clients on what they should and shouldn't include in their menus," she said. "For instance, I don't always tell my clients to stay away from fat. There is such a thing as healthy fats, and I especially advise new and pregnant mothers to incorporate butter into their diets. I prefer educating

my clients about the benefits of healthy fats rather than having them go for low-fat, genetically modified options. I am also a huge proponent of olive oil and coconut oil."

A mother of two herself, Shana has also educated parents at

Harry Bowes Public School lunches for their kids.

As she points out, "I tell my clients — if you control 80 per cent of what you eat, you can indulge yourself in the remaining 20 per cent."

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A group of busy women attend a freezer meal workshop run by Stouffville resident Linda Kontosic.

Kinjal Dagli Shah photo

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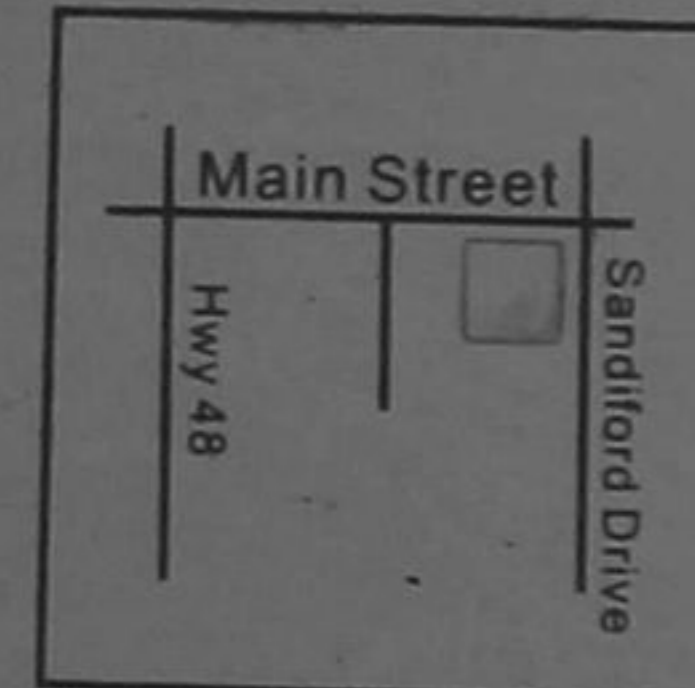
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