

The HERALD-NEWS

Author to discuss super powers of vegetables in Plainfield

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PLAINFIELD – Step aside Superman, Spider-Man and Captain America and make away for the Rootlets and their magic super powers – rootabilities.

Created by Chicago certified health coach and plant-based chef Vicki Marquez to show children vegetables are good for them, the four Rootlets – Brocc, Carrotina, Cornelius and Kaley – live with their Grandma Yammy and their dog, Basil, in the town of VeggieVille on Planet Planted.

On Saturday, in honor of June’s National Fresh Fruit & Vegetables Month, Marquez will be at Peter Rubi in Plainfield, where she will sell and sign copies of “The Rootlets: Super Rootabilities,” answer questions about veggies and characters and distribute samples of super-healthy snacks.

Feedback so far on the book Marquez self-published in October 2014 has been positive, she said. Marquez has done school readings, received favorable reviews from “mom bloggers” and is so busy building up the Rootlets brand that she no longer is accepting new clients.

Mostly kids are enjoying the story’s message, she said, and that’s what Marquez wants.

“Adorable little fans have written to me saying, ‘I now love broccoli’ or ‘I want to try kale,’ ” Marquez said.

Seeds of inspiration

When Marquez began coaching clients two years ago, she noticed many of their unhealthy eating habits began in childhood. Marquez believed if she could make vegetables cool and exciting for kids, it could lead them to make better wellness choices as adults.

“So many people don’t know what to do with vegetables,” Marquez said. “They think they’re boring and that there’s only one way to cook them. They don’t know you can grill and roast them.”

Marquez’s original vision for the Rootlets was not a book. She wanted to create a Rootlets cartoon for YouTube or television, but industry people told her that writing a book and building a brand was a better first start, so that’s what she did.

When Marquez had an opportunity to speak at an Institute for Integrative Nutrition conference in New York City, she said, she decided to self-publish her book.

“I wanted to get it out as soon as possible,” Marquez said.

Marquez likened her path to wellness to a long trail of bread crumbs. Ten years ago, she was overweight and determined to change, the right way. So she read volumes on nutrition.

As she progressed, Marquez realized others could benefit from her knowledge.

Fruits of her labor

Marquez earned a nutrition degree from Ashworth College in Georgia in 2012 and her certificate in coaching from the Institute for Integrative Nutrition in 2013, the same year she launched her coaching business, Inner Figure.

Now Marquez's mission is for kids everywhere to explore the fun world of fruits and vegetables.

"I hope the Rootlets can play a role in that," Marquez said.

Kim Perry, who manages business development for Peter Rubi, said she reached out to Marquez on Facebook. Perry liked the idea of an event built around Marquez's book at a venue that sells locally grown produce.

"Getting our customers healthy, that's what we want at our store," Perry said.

Marquez is working on developing an interactive website that will include games and learning activities, as well as writing more books. Marquez said the process is "slow and organic," no pun intended.

"I'm having so much fun with it," Marquez said.

Grammy's Greened Up Milkshake

Shake-up your veggie misconceptions and your taste buds with Vicki Marquez's fruit and vegetable shake.

Ingredients:

1 banana

2 heaping handfuls of spinach

2 to 3 pitted dates

1 1/4 cup of almond milk (or coconut milk)

1 scoop of maca powder

1 scoop of cacao powder

1 tbsp of raw crunchy almond butter (or sunflower seed butter)

3 ice cubes

A sprinkle of love (optional but highly recommended)

Add all ingredients to a blender, blend until smooth and enjoy.

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Book Signing and Meet the Author

WHEN: 10 a.m. Saturday

WHERE: Peter Rubi, 15412 S. Route 59, Plainfield

VISIT: www.peterrubi.com

CALL: 815-733-6025

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