

# LIFEBALANCE



A newsletter from Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools Chef Michael Bauer



*Food and festivities will always be a major part of the holidays. Many people find it hard to continue with healthy eating habits during this time of year. Dinners, parties, and festivities of the season make maintaining control a big challenge. If we allow ourselves to lose control completely over the holiday season, there is a risk that we will continue to eat that way long after the holiday season has ended. Falling into this trap is a hard habit to break, despite millions of New Year's Eve resolutions to join the local gym and go on a strict diet! (Researchers at George Washington University have reported that only around 22% of New Year's diet resolutions make it to February. I notice this every year at my local gym with the new faces that frequent it temporarily.) With sincere desire to help you enjoy a healthy, happy new year, I have put together a few tips to help you strike a healthy balance during your Christmas and New Year's break:*

## **Exercise!**

Developing or maintaining your exercise routine will help burn off extra calories and fat consumed over the holiday season. Exercising before breakfast is said to be the best way to get your body burning calories first thing in the morning and revving your engine for many hours thereafter. Many local gyms have holiday specials going on. (I work out at Grand Traverse Athletic Club and they are offering \$150 per year holiday special). Strive for at least 30 minutes of cardio a day for optimum success.

## **Be assertive.**

It's very hard to say no to a loved one when they are trying to get you to eat that third helping of turkey with gravy or a second helping of pie. Don't feel as though you have to say yes to everyone that offers you food and drink. If you are not hungry, simply say so. Don't feel bullied or tempted into something that you really don't want.

## **Eat regularly.**

With lots of dinners, parties, and other festivities, it's easy to starve yourself all day in anticipation. You're in danger of arriving there feeling ravenous and eating everything in sight. This is called binge eating and is very unhealthy! The key to optimum health

is eating smaller, healthy meals throughout the day. This will keep your blood sugar levels consistent and prevent insulin spikes which can contribute to premature aging and other health detriments. Remember to balance your plate out with fruits and vegetables when available instead of the typical calorie-fat laden foods we associate with the holidays.

## **Review methods and ingredients.**

Being a culinary graduate, my basis for cooking comes from a French foundation. I did an internship in Greenwich, Connecticut at a New York Times three-star restaurant under a Parisian Master Chef. The French have arguably the best cuisine worldwide, also calorically the highest. A lot of their food staples have heavy cream or butter used in sauces and accompaniments. Their center of the plate offerings are stewed, sautéed, or fried in fat. I changed my perception on food when I met my wife. She was a student getting her Dietetics degree. She is also a vegetarian which greatly influenced my culinary philosophy. These days, I utilize many healthy cooking methods: Grilling instead of frying. Steaming vegetables or fish to retain nutrients and flavors. And using old favorites like the crockpot (see related story at right). The holidays are here. Make them happy and healthy by taking care of yourself through healthy eating and living.

## **Save Time. Save Money Savor Your Family Time. Slow-Cookers Are A Healthy and Budget- Savvy Way To Cook**

Crockpot cooking is a delicious and healthy way to feed your family. It can be a meal ready to serve when you walk in the door from work, running errands, or picking up the kids from school or sports. The slow cooker can be a great help in preparing wholesome, nutritious meals that are veggie-rich, packed with complex carbs like potatoes or rice, and low in fat and calories using water or broth. The long cooking time on low heat allows meats to tenderize and develop flavor. The slow cooking time or braising allows one to use meats that are not as high in fat or as costly. An example would be using top round or brisket instead of a filet of beef or strip steak. The possibilities are endless! Dust off that crock pot and start slow cooking for healthy, worry-free dinners.



## FUN FACTS

About the  
Fruit and Vegetable of the Month



## PEARS

1. Pears are one of the most popular fruits in the U.S. and are actually related to the apple.
2. There are more than 3,000 varieties in the world.
3. Homer referred to the pear as "Gifts from the gods".
4. Pears have no cholesterol, sodium, or saturated fat.
5. Pears offer a lot of dietary fiber in the form of pectin.



## SPINACH

1. Spinach is believed to be of Persian origin.
2. Spinach is available fresh, canned, and frozen.
3. Spinach can be eaten raw or cooked.
4. Spinach is one of the healthiest foods on earth and is great for the heart, eyes, brain, skin, bones, and immune system.
5. Popeye's favorite may help in the reduction of cancers of the liver, ovaries, colon, and prostate.
6. Spinach is high in oxygen which when entering the blood stream helps make the body's pH more alkaline.



## A SUCCESSFUL GLADHANDER REQUIRES A LOT OF "INGREDIENTS"

This year's Gladhander was a resounding success, but the phrase, "Many hands make light work" was never more true than in the kitchen before, during and after Gladhander. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Life Balance Initiative team members, the volunteers, and all those who attended this year's event. Serving a multi-course meal for 608 people is a creative challenge that I look forward to each year, but only because I know I can count on so many people to help wherever, whenever needed. In case you're curious, here's a look at the massive amount of food consumed during Gladhander 2011, Seuss on the Loose:

Beef tenderloin.....	350 pounds
Shrimp.....	30 pounds
Bibb lettuce.....	180 heads
Mini portabella mushrooms.....	800
Belgian endive.....	20 pounds
Fingerling potatoes.....	200 pounds
Zucchini/yellow squash.....	40 pounds
Garlic cloves.....	20
Michigan carrots.....	50 pounds
Michigan celery.....	40 pounds
Yellow onions.....	50 pounds
Red onions.....	25 pounds
Diced tomatoes.....	200 pounds
Purple edible orchids.....	700
Michigan soybean oil.....	70 pounds
Batard loaves.....	300
Butter roses.....	1200
Unsalted butter.....	180 pounds
Heavy whipping cream.....	27 gallons
Goat cheese.....	24 pounds

