

The Uprooted Kitchen in Gilbert to Host Healthy Cooking after Brain Injury Class

Thanks to a partnership called Project Independence and Empowerment (P.I.E.), funded by the Barrow Neurological Foundation, a dozen survivors of brain injury will learn about the tasty benefits of some brain and heart-benefiting, plant-based cooking at the East Valley eatery, The Uprooted Kitchen. Chef Erin has been introducing people to tantalizingly healthy eats for years. Her husband and business partner Chad used to work as a pediatric occupational therapist. BIAAZ is pleased to partner with The Uprooted Kitchen and recently spoke with Erin and Chad to learn more about what our survivors of TBI, stroke, concussion, and spinal cord injury can expect during their two-hour cooking class.



Q Erin, what is your background?

A I am a graduate of the Scottsdale Culinary Institute. Before becoming a plant-based chef, I worked as a pastry chef in restaurants in Scottsdale and Phoenix. My

East Valley Entrepreneurs Erin and Chad will hold a plant-based sauce class at their eatery, The Uprooted Kitchen, for a few lucky individuals this summer. Erin is a chef, and Chad is a former occupational therapist at Banner Cardon Children's Medical Center in Mesa.



current menu items and recipes are based on trial-and-error and years of experience in the kitchen.

Q What's in store for those who attend the cooking class?

A During our sauce class, I will demonstrate six plant-based sauces. There will be plenty of time for questions/answers about recipes and other aspects of plant-based cooking, and of course, we will get to try some of our creations.

Q Why is it particularly important to eat healthily after an accident, illness, or injury?

A Our immune system and ability to heal has so much to do with what we are feeding our body. Nourishing your body with healthy food is an ideal way to assist your body in healing.

Q Can you tell us how the restaurant came to exist?

A We created The Uprooted Kitchen because we saw a lack of options in our community for the types of healthy foods we were eating in our own home. Our eatery started as a food truck in 2012, as a bit of an experiment to see if others in our community were interested in whole foods, and organic, plant-based options. After four successful years as a food truck, we found we needed to expand into our current brick-and-mortar location.

Q Chad, you're a former pediatric occupational therapist. Can you tell us about that?

A I was a pediatric OT for 17 years; all out-patient rehab. Eight of those years was in private clinics and nine years were at Cardon Children's Medical Center in Mesa. I treated infants, children, and teens, empha-



sizing on children in the three-to-eight-year range. Diagnoses I worked with included autism, ADHD, sensory processing disorders, developmental delays, prematurity, cerebral palsy, genetic disorders, TBI, cardiac, etc. I knew I wanted to work with kids since I was one myself, and I absolutely loved being an OT. There's nothing more rewarding than helping children and their families grow and develop skills that will guide them into their future. As much as I loved being an OT though, my path started to take a turn when Erin and I started our food truck. I was working full-time as an OT and operating our food truck part-time, which began to take a toll on me. When the opportunity arose to open a permanent location in Gilbert, I took this as a sign for me to end my career as an OT. I had given my heart and soul to the kids and their families for 17 years, and it was time for me to start a new chapter of my life. The opportunity I've had to work with my wife Erin and be more available for our own children has been amazing.