



THERE'S A LOT OF LOVE IN THIS FOOD!

In mid-June, **Powered By Plants RI**, a group that is part of the PlantPure Communities Pod Network, launched the 14-day Providence Oasis Jumpstart Pilot. Thirty people in one of the “unhealthiest zip codes” in Rhode Island participated, and it is estimated that over 100 lives or more were permanently changed by this project.



Pod leader Ella Rodriguez is all smiles!

The **Powered by Plants RI** group, which includes over 800 people in the Providence area, is part of the PlantPure Communities Pod Network, which is leading a grassroots movement of independent local groups (also known as ‘Pods’) and people who promote the benefits of a whole foods, plant-based (WFPB) lifestyle. As part of the Pod Network, **Powered by Plants RI** meets monthly to foster community, education and engagement. After watching the *PlantPure Nation* film, one of the Pod leaders, Kim Anderson, was inspired to bring the health message of plant-based food and nutrition to her community. She realized there were many in Rhode Island who would benefit from plant-based nutrition education, including professionals. “I loved the Jumpstart

example in the film and felt we needed to have a local ‘proof of concept’ here, to share with the wider medical, governmental, corporate and nonprofit community,” Kim explained.

Kim led the Pilot with the help of several other community leaders from the **Powered By Plants RI** Pod. A professional chef ran the kitchen and food preparation for the 14-day meal program, while other Pod members arranged shopping trips to procure ingredients, served meals, cooked with the chef, and delivered food to events. “This was truly a grassroots community effort! Over 25 people from the Pod participated in a range of activities from shopping, preparing food, teaching participants how to cook, and more, representing well over 350 man-hours of work!” said Kim. “Everyone stepped up in a very big way. We were all thrilled with the opportunity to share this information with others.”



Carts and cars filled with food on our three shopping excursions. Usually 4 carts and three cars full!



Chef Dan scooping out the homemade cashew sauce!



Edgar stirring up a big pot of Thai curry veggies

Many of the participants expressed a desire to participate in the program because of personal health struggles, such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure and digestive problems. “Before starting the program I was frustrated with my acid reflux, that I was not able to control with pills to alleviate the discomfort. It was making me cranky and unhappy all the time,” explained Edgar, a participant who was having difficulty sleeping and now feels like a “new man.”

The Pilot was kicked off with the biometric testing, which provided a baseline for participants to gauge the effects of a plant-based diet. “The bloodwork on day one was a real wakeup for many of our participants,” Kim explained. “Most had something that concerned them-- from weight and blood pressure to sugar numbers and cholesterol, or a combination of these issues. (After the 14 days) they were so pleased with the results and how they felt, and the science, that most expressed interest in eating this way going forward!”

Over the course of the Pilot, doctors and educators taught participants how to shop in a grocery store, prepare simple, nutritious meals, and understand the science behind why this lifestyle is optimal for long-term health. “Having tasty food, proper nutrition information and education, and good support was important,” Kim said. “Our team did an amazing job - label reading, preparing foods together, watching important films – all important resources for continuing success. We also offered each participant a mentor from our Pod for the duration of the program and that was important for compliance and ongoing support.” Kim believes the Oasis Program provided the tools and knowledge that will allow participants to implement and continue their health journey even now that the program has concluded.



Angel and Barbara helping Terri and Christie Jeffries, Pod Leader, packaging the meals they will be eating

It was also a rewarding experience for those participants who helped with the food preparation. Those who worked three-hour stints in the commercial kitchen preparing the meals learned a lot about cooking and developed a deeper appreciation for what was being done for them, claiming there is “a lot of love in this food.” By the end of the program, participants saw significant positive changes.

Many experienced large reductions in their cholesterol and blood pressure numbers. In addition, most were able to lose weight, while symptoms like fatigue, irritability, and constipation were also diminished or eliminated.

High points of the program include:

- **LDL (low density lipoprotein – aka ‘bad cholesterol)** - 7 participants were able to move from “above optimal/borderline high” (100-159) to “optimal” (below 99) LDL range.
- **Blood Pressure (BP)** – 3 participants were able to lower BP enough to move a whole category, from hypertension – (above 140/90) to pre-hypertension (120/80 -139/89)
- **Fasting Glucose** – 4 participants were able to move from high (above 126) to moderate. And 2 “moderate” (110 -125) participants were able to move to “normal” (below 100).



Chris O'Dowd and Lisa Browning, pod leader, help Terri on the prep line



Pod leader Terri Leary on "chop duty"

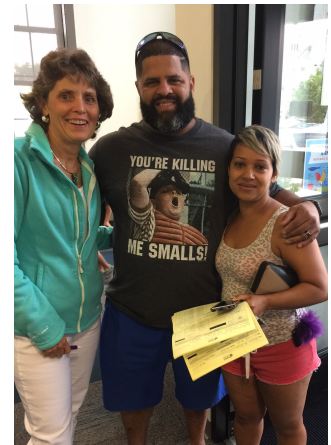
"I am sticking with this! I am so happy with my results. My blood pressure went down. My LDL went from 159 to 110. My triglycerides went from 360 to 158. My fasting blood was 186 and is now 123," said Pat, who is 69 years old. "I feel much, much better. And I haven't forgotten where my keys are for weeks. I can't wait to freak out my doctor with these numbers."

Cheryl was able to bring family members along on her journey. "I am happy because my husband is on board. I lost 5 pounds and he lost 12 pounds!" Cheryl said. "WFPB has helped me with my sugar addiction because now I know other ways to solve it, and I am able to resist it. I am overwhelmed with the results, honestly. My LDL used to be high and now I am 47 and my blood pressure is better, too!"

Luisa is excited to use the techniques and recipes from the program at home with her family. She feels better able to address her needs and is positive about the outlook of her health. "I love how I feel. I have energy and I'm not sluggish. I now realize how important it is to eat WFPB," Luisa explained. "I plan to stay on this! I lost weight, which has always been hard. I am now completely off my depression meds. I thought I would have to go back on them, but I no longer need them. My kids are already on this too!"

Jackie is grateful for the education she received through the program. "I learned something different than what my doctors were telling me," she said. "My glucose improved, I went from 130 average to 100 average over a week. I was not a fan of veggies before but I figured out what I like and don't like and am more open now. I lost 6 inches on my waist and my blood pressure went from 132/88 to 128/84."

Many who participated are now eager to get others involved in the WFPB lifestyle. "I am trying to bring friends to the monthly Pod meetings because they need this!" explained Angel. "I am so excited because my triglycerides went from 372 to 272. My energy, mental attitude and motivation have improved. This was a life saver without the medication! It has been transformative to my life."



Judy Harff, pod leader, with Angel and Barbara, taken right after they got their end of program blood work results

At the end of the program, the organizers from the Powered by Plants Pod hosted a Graduation Potluck meal for all the participants and their families. The experience underscored for them the wide range of delicious foods that can be part of a plant-based diet and reiterated why a community effort makes for lasting change.

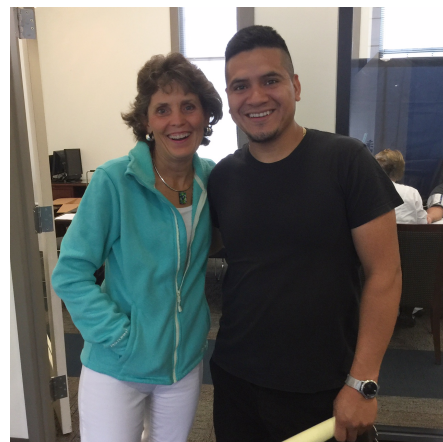


Volunteers serving participants & families at the Graduation Potluck

Lead organizer Kim is grateful for the support of PPC in making the Oasis Program a reality in their community. "People saw dramatic changes in their wellness, energy level and their bloodwork. We estimate that although the Pilot was limited to 30 people, it is likely that well over 100 lives were permanently changed by this project," said Kim. "I recently met with Angel and Barbara, pictured above, 10 weeks after the end of the program, and they report having engaged others in their community. They have already brought 5-6 into their WFPB way of eating,

including one adult son, who they thought would never go along! They look forward to educating many more. It has been a blessing, they happily shared.” Angel has lost 14 pounds already and cannot wait to be a “poster boy” for the movement. “We are huge fans of the Oasis Program as it offers a structure to democratize the sharing of lifesaving information,” said Kim.

An underlying tenet of PPC is to get the word out about important scientific nutrition research, much of which was led by T. Colin Campbell, PhD., as detailed in the book “The China Study.” Dr. Campbell serves as an advisor to PPC. Nelson Campbell, the son of Dr. Campbell, and the Oasis Program visionary and founder of PPC, noted, that while food-borne chronic disease is common in the general population, it is more acute in underserved neighborhoods. Our goal is to make sure everyone has access to healthy food and nutrition education, regardless of their background, location or socioeconomic status.”



Happy smiles of Edgar with Judy Harff, taken right after they got their end of program blood work results



Volunteers with Chef-ing experience just showed up when asked!

PlantPure Communities is inspired by Kim’s leadership and the engagement of dozens of volunteers in the **Powered By Plants RI Pod**. “We want to replicate what this Pod did nationally, and then across the globe,” said Jody Kass, executive director of PlantPure Communities. Over 40,000 people participate in PPC’s growing Pod Network. “People who understand the science and are already eating plant-based desperately want to share it with others who are in pain,” Jody explained.

The Providence Jumpstart is one of five Pilots in the first round of PPC’s Oasis program. The others are in Atlanta; Chattanooga; Salinas, CA; and Bullhead City, AZ. PPC expects to conduct a second round of Pilots in low-income communities across the U.S. in 2018. For information about bringing the PPC Oasis Program to your community, see PPC’s website: <http://plantpurecommunities.org/oasis-jumpstart-program/>.

This Pilot underscores the truth in the famous quote from Margaret Mead: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”