

“The Fabled Farmer” Teams Up with PS4H’s Eat Well

Humble Beginnings

With the farm-to-table concept sweeping across the nation’s restaurant scene, Mary Robertson decided to follow her heart and fill a missing niche in the small town of Fergus Falls, MN with this notion. She opened her café, The Fabled Farmer, in April of 2017 with a tagline of ‘where nutritious meets delicious’, proving to people that healthy food can taste amazing.

When PartnerSHIP 4 Health’s registered dietitian, Katrina Mouser, heard rumors of this restaurant coming, she approached Mary to become a partner of their healthy restaurant initiative, Eat Well. The partnership was a mutual and natural fit from the beginning. As a small startup, Mary appreciated the extra financial help and knowledge surrounding nutrition, and PartnerSHIP 4 Health was proud to have an exemplary partner to serve the community’s health.

The Fabled Farmer’s menu was built around fresh produce, quality grains, and sustainable protein sources. The breakfast and lunch menus offer a wide variety of entrees and sides, with the two unique features being their power bowls and fresh squeezed juices. Mary’s sister’s farm, also in Fergus Falls, provides all the café’s eggs and much of the produce, fulfilling Mary’s goal of sourcing local ingredients. All of their breads and bakery items are either made from scratch at the café, or purchased from a local bread store.

Putting Health on the Menu

Before the café opened its doors, Katrina worked with Mary and her chefs to analyze all their recipes, modifying the sodium, saturated fat, or sugar of some to fit into Eat Well’s nutrition guidelines for healthy eating. Portion size was also carefully examined, and appropriately-sized dishes for the power bowls were purchased using strategy support funding from PartnerSHIP 4 Health. “Addressing things like sodium, sugar, and portion size were areas that I really didn’t have specific education and knowledge of. Partnership 4 Health and Katrina provided the input I needed to make sure the recipes on the menu weren’t missing the recommended guidelines.”

Mary was very motivated to keep sugar-sweetened beverages to a minimum in her café and wanted to encourage all diners to drink water. “I was actually having trouble coming up with a plumbing layout that would accommodate a standard water dispenser and so Katrina’s idea of a water decanter was beneficial in several ways. When you start a business from the ground up there’s so much to think about—but this is one example of thinking outside



the box that really helped solve a space issue for me as well as turning the beverage focus in a good direction.” Staff keep the water decanter filled with fruit and herbs, keeping the flavors fun and fresh.

This spring, a year after opening, Mary wanted to expand her healthy beverage options and to also offer some grab-n-go foods for people to eat at their convenience, or on her newly built outdoor patio. PartnerSHIP 4 Health used additional strategy support funds to purchase a double door reach-in refrigerator to replace a small beverage cooler. Mary, Katrina, and the café’s chefs are working together to identify healthy grab-n-go breakfast and lunch items to add to the café’s repertoire.

“Overall, I think what I’ve benefited the most from in my connection with Partnership 4 health is the encouragement and education. Through Partnership 4 Health’s steady messages and efforts to promote healthy choices there’s a sense of community and awareness that others care about the same thing you care about and people really do want healthy options; that’s the kind of encouragement that makes the hard work seem worthwhile.”

Learn more about PartnerSHIP 4 Health by visiting <http://partnership4health.org>

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CONTACT INFORMATION:
Katrina Mouser
PartnerSHIP 4 Health
(218) 770-9788
realnutritionmn@gmail.com

