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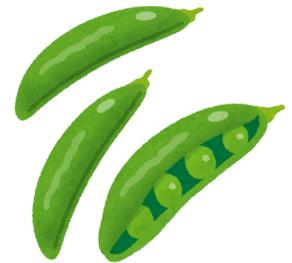
NEWSLETTER



**TEACHERS COLLEGE
PROGRAM IN NUTRITION**

**MY MATCHA JOURNEY
BY VY PHAN - PG. 11**

Letter from the Editors



Dear Students, Faculty, Alumni, and Staff,

Winter has been upon us, and as we slowly thaw from this past cold and snow, we can look forward to the warming weather and the coming of spring.

Our first year students have been placed into their community rotation placements of the program, and our second year students are starting to see the finish line of graduation in the distance. To everyone reading the Grapevine, we encourage you to talk and write about your personal experiences from the program, as it shifts and changes with new instructors, preceptors, and structures!

As you read through this issue and go into the next semester or chapter of your life, we hope you have relaxation and growth alongside the new season.

Warmly,



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BY SARDE GUMALO

STREET FOOD CITY



THE SIGHTS, SMELLS AND SOUNDS OF NYC

This past Valentine's Day, my husband knew the way to my heart was, of course, through food. But before our dinner reservation, we were drawn to the [Museum of Food and Drink](#) in DUMBO where its latest exhibit, Street Food City, could not be more timely in the current period of immigrant vulnerability in our country

Upon entering, I was flooded by the feeling that NYC food carts play a quintessential part in the cacophony of sounds and smells that make the greatest city on Earth sing. From the sizzling of halal meats grilled on a flat-top, to the intoxicating, sweet smell of nearing a Nuts 4 Nuts stand, street food vendors have been woven into the sensory tapestry of NYC since the 1600s and their stands have stood as doorways to diversity ever since.



Street food has also consistently embodied the immigrant struggle to make a living in response to the sociopolitical climate of the time. In the 1800s, selling oysters paved a path to the middle class for many Black families. In 1925, Jewish people worked as traveling peddlers when antisemitic laws spread across Eastern Europe, a trade many took with them upon immigrating to New York. In lieu of factory work, which required working on the Sabbath, Jewish folks opted for peddling which allowed them to choose their own work hours. NYC pushcart markets were also reminiscent of Eastern European open-air markets, which further gave them a taste of home. While Jewish immigrants brought knishes, Greek vendors dominated the street food scene in the mid-1900s and brought gyros, followed by halal carts which got their start by serving Muslim taxi drivers on the go.

Today, street food vendors face a host of modern problems. Many came with advanced degrees from their home countries but pursued food vending to avoid requirements for additional education and to support their families, as 45% of vendors have 2 or more children at home¹. Nearly half of all street vendors are women, but only 27% of these women have permits, while 73% of men have permits. Moreover, becoming a food vendor is a more expensive endeavor than ever before. Gone are the wooden pushcarts of the 1800s. Today, mobile kitchens contain restaurant-grade equipment costing hundreds of thousands of dollars to construct.

Reference:

1. Museum of Food and Drink. Street Food City. Brooklyn, NY. Accessed March 25, 2026.

We were introduced to the start-up process firsthand through a virtual reality demonstration that allowed us to be fully immersed “inside” a modern day food truck. We mimicked the choreographed dance of making tacos in a space so tight, every extension of the arm and every footstep mattered.

We were also plunged into the chaos of setting up a food stand in Smorgasburg, the largest open-air food market in America, where we learned how weather rarely derails operations, but affects every decision to the point that vendors must master the art of improvisation. A drizzle of rain won’t cause a stand to close up shop, but it’s enough to cause a slower lunch rush, setting off a cascade of new decisions such as whether to cover and store remaining food to prevent waste or prepare for increased production if the rain clears and a new flood of people appear. If food stand vendors were the lead singers in a band, they remain constantly in tune and in beat with the rhythm of the weather and other happenings in the city for that day.

I walked away from Street Food City with a deeper appreciation for the great cultural contributions food vendors provide to NYC and the long histories that trail behind them. I also left with profound respect for the grit and determination food vendors bring to hungry New Yorkers, whether it’s pushing their food cart through the chaotic streets of Times Square in the pouring rain or enduring greater trepidation as immigrant identities are challenged now more than ever before. Food will always serve as a vehicle for culture, resistance, tenacity, and creativity, and a city like the Big Apple will always be willing to take a bite.

Working as an Eating Disorder Registered Dietitian: A Conversation with a TC Alumna

**Julia
Rosenbaum
Vukicevic** MS, RD,
CDN, CEDS-A

By Anna Brown

Julia Rosenbaum Vukicevic, MS, RD, CDN, CEDS-A, a dietitian well versed in supporting clients through eating disorder treatment, didn't follow a traditional career path into nutrition. Coming from a performing arts background, she made the pivot into dietetics after graduating from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. Motivated by her personal experiences with an eating disorder and her desire to help others, she eventually enrolled at Teachers College in the Program of Nutrition. Today, she wears multiple hats, including running her own private practice, serving as a mentor to other dietitians, and participating in professional organizations. Julia's career path reflects a clinical expertise in the field of eating disorder treatment, as well as a strong commitment to mentorship, collaboration, and weight-inclusive care.

Her Time at Teachers College

While enrolled in the Teachers College Program in Nutrition, Julia found inspiration both in her coursework and her internship experiences. She noted that Dr. Lora Sporny's Nutrition and Human Development course was foundational to her approach to food and feeding dynamics, as was the Program's eating disorders class at the time.



“I was so thrilled to get accepted. I really felt like TC was the right place for me.”

When Julia was a student, the internship was separate from the master's Program. She intentionally requested placements in eating disorder treatment settings, which provided her with valuable hands-on experiences.

“The direct experience in the internship was incredibly helpful,” she said. “I was able to see what the work really looked like.” That experience eventually led to her first professional dietitian position after graduation, which was at Monte Nido, which offers various levels of support, including inpatient and outpatient options – the same worksite that was part of her dietetic internship.

“I love supporting other clinicians, but I realized how much I missed working directly with clients.”

Learning Across Roles

Julia’s career has spanned multiple settings, each offering distinct benefits and trade-offs. Working in a treatment center allowed her to work closely with each client, seeing them for many hours each day. She also collaborated with other members of the treatment team, which facilitated rapid professional growth and deepened her clinical confidence.

In her leadership and management roles, including her work as the Director of East Coast Nutrition Services and the Lead Dietitian at Monte Nido & Affiliates, she oversaw other dietitians and drove program development. While the mentorship and operational aspects of these roles were rewarding, she found herself missing direct client care.

Today, Julia enjoys the benefits of both worlds. She runs her own private practice and offers consulting services to fellow dietitians. She’s able to have direct client interactions and collaborate with other clinicians, while also acting as a mentor through her consulting.

Weight-Inclusive Care and Ongoing Blind Spots

Throughout her work, Julia has remained deeply committed to weight-inclusive, non-stigmatizing care. While the healthcare field has made progress overall, she notes that assumptions about who experiences eating disorders – and what those disorders look like – still persists.

“We can’t diagnose someone based on how they look,” she emphasizes. Ensuring that individuals across body sizes and identities receive appropriate, compassionate care remains an ongoing blind spot in the field.

In recent years, she has observed encouraging shifts among nutrition students, as well as in the field overall. Julia noted that she’s seen an increasing familiarity with intuitive eating and weight-inclusive frameworks when she visits TC for her guest lectures. “It’s so exciting to see how the nutrition field has evolved and how students have more awareness.”

Preventing Burnout Through Community

Like many clinicians in emotionally demanding fields, Julia is mindful of preventing burnout. She emphasizes the importance of boundaries, whether related to scheduling, caseload, or scope of work. Equally important is staying connected to peers facing similar challenges, as “community is one of the strongest protections against burnout.” Julia is active in professional organizations, including previous leadership roles with the International Association of Eating Disorder Professionals (IAEDP), where community and continuing education go hand-in-hand.

“Every time I do a new training, I come back reinvigorated,” she says. Learning new approaches and connecting to equally passionate individuals, both locally and virtually, help keep her work sustainable and fulfilling.

Julia’s Advice for MS-RDN Students

- Slow down and notice the human moments – these are what last.
- Stay open to unexpected interests and opportunities.
- Build community early and intentionally.
- Trust that your past experiences add value to your work.

While reflecting on her own journey, Julia reminds students that no experience is wasted. The skills she developed in theater, such as deep listening and emotional awareness, continue to help her as a dietitian today.

“Everything you’ve done before is building what you do now,” she says. For students navigating demanding classes, internships, and career planning, Julia reminds us to remain curious, present, and open.



A CONVERSATION WITH DR. GRAZIOSE: CURIOSITY, CLARITY, AND THE POWER OF LISTENING



**By Jerran
Boyer**

As part of my exploration into the many career pathways in the field of nutrition, I had the opportunity to interview Dr. Graziose about his career journey, philosophy, and perspective on the field. What stood out most was not only the breadth of his experience, but the grounded, practical lens through which he views nutrition science.

From Food Network to Food Systems

Dr. Graziose's interest in food began early. Growing up, he was an avid watcher of Food Network with his aunt and loved both cooking and eating. For a time, he even considered becoming a chef, until a firsthand experience in a commercial kitchen shifted that aspiration.

He entered his undergraduate program intending to become a physician. Nutrition science served as his pre-med track, and he quickly realized he preferred it to traditional biology coursework. What began as a strategic academic choice became a genuine intellectual passion. He describes being drawn to science broadly, particularly the use of tools to observe patterns and predict behaviors in the world. Over time, he recognized that this analytical curiosity could be a career in itself.

After earning a PhD and spending over a decade in industry, Dr. Graziose reflected that food and nutrition intersect with nearly every sector imaginable – healthcare, agriculture, policy, law, and beyond. The field offers endless opportunities for impact, and even now, he still sees fascinating career paths he might one day pursue.

Nutrition: Simpler Than We Make It

When I asked how his perspective has evolved, Dr. Graziose shared an insight that feels especially relevant in today’s information-saturated world: nutrition is not as complex as we often make it.

As a student, he was deeply interested in mechanisms, optimal nutrient levels, and the intricate science behind food and physiology. Over time, however, he has come to appreciate that the foundational principles of a healthy dietary pattern do not need to be overly complicated or hyper-specific. Even small behavioral shifts can meaningfully improve health outcomes. The greater challenge lies not in biochemical complexity, but in helping people think differently about food and behavior.

If he had to summarize his approach to nutrition in three words?

“Don’t overthink it.”

Beyond the Classroom and the Lab

Outside of nutrition, Dr. Graziose is passionate about gardening, hiking, cooking, and traveling. His love of travel and cooking often intersect—he enjoys discovering regional and cultural foods and then recreating them at home. Sourcing the right ingredients can be tricky, but he sees that as “part of the fun.”

Professionally, after completing his doctoral degree at Teachers College, he began working at Chobani and has remained there since. In his role, he serves as a voice of the consumer and of public health within the company. He helps ensure that products are safe, wholesome, and that any health claims are truthful, understandable, and grounded in high-quality science. His work highlights an important dimension of nutrition careers: influencing food systems and public health at scale through industry and regulation.

Advice for Future Nutrition Professionals

Dr. Graziose emphasized one recurring theme: **stay curious.** He believes that asking questions of friends, family, mentors, instructors, and peers opens doors to unexpected knowledge and new perspectives.

He also identified an often-overlooked but critical skill in nutrition: listening first. Every individual approaches food with their own values, beliefs, and moral frameworks. Effective nutrition professionals must slow down and understand those perspectives before sharing scientific expertise. In a field frequently driven by data, this human-centered skill may be one of the most powerful tools we have.

When asked what excites him about teaching, he spoke about exposing students to the food industry as a legitimate and impactful career path. Through evidence-based regulation and policy, nutrition professionals can drive meaningful change at scale. He hopes to help build a shared understanding of the food system so students are equipped to advocate for thoughtful improvements.

If he could **eliminate one piece of nutrition misinformation**, it would be **the myth that dairy causes acne**. He noted that only a small number of low-quality studies support this claim, yet it persists widely on social media.

MYTH-BUSTING AND RAPID FIRE

Most Underrated Food:
Oatmeal



Nutrition idol:
Professor Barbara Rolls

Desired superpower:

Reading faster – there’s simply too much to learn!

Dream dinner party guests:

Martha Stewart, Dolly Parton, and his partner
(who he insisted must be included)

Go-to meal:

Noodles of any kind
with “literally
anything” added.

A surprising fact:

He may want to
become a lawyer
someday.



My Matcha Journey

Why I'm into matcha:

BY VY PHAN

For a long time, my mornings were fueled by a love-hate relationship with coffee. I craved the energy, but I hated the heart-racing jitters and the 2:00 PM coffee crash. I needed something better, so I tried matcha.

At first, I bought matcha lattes at cafes. But it was expensive and usually tasted like green water. It was disappointing! I knew I could do better at home. I have always loved and respected Japanese culture, so I began to learn how to make matcha in the most traditional way possible. I also started collecting the traditional tools, such as *chawan* (a special ceramic bowl) and *chasen* (a bamboo whisk). Using these tools makes me feel connected to the history of tea. It turns a simple drink into something very beautiful and special.



Now, making matcha is more than just a drink for me. It is a quiet, peaceful moment that helps me feel calm before my busy day starts. There is something so grounding about the texture of a handcrafted ceramic bowl and the rhythmic sound of a bamboo whisk against water.

What I learned about matcha:

Matcha powder is made from ground green tea leaves after harvesting and drying. In 2025, I tried about 80 different matcha powders from over 40 brands. I learned that every powder tastes different. The flavor depends on where the tea is grown, how it is harvested, and the type of tea plant (the "cultivar") used.

I always choose high-quality matcha for my drinks. In stores, look for labels like "ceremonial grade" or "first harvest" to find the best quality. Traditionally, ceremonial grade matcha is made from the first-flush green tea leaves harvested starting in the first week of May. This will give the highest quality with the most vibrant green color, smooth texture, and balanced umami. Culinary grade, on the other hand, is for baking. It tends to look more dull with yellow-hue, and it tastes more bitter and grassy. However, please note that ceremonial grade is often just a marketing term.

Keep in mind that not all matcha labeled this way tastes good! Through my journey, I discovered many different tasting notes in matcha. Some common flavors include: umami, nutty, creamy, floral, grassy, vegetal, seaweedy, earthy, bitter, and/or astringent.

My Daily Iced Matcha Latte Recipe:

Ingredients:

- 4g high quality matcha powder
- 45ml hot water at 80°C/176°F
- 6g agave syrup
- 110ml milk

Steps:

1. Pour hot water into your bowl and soak the bamboo whisk for 30 seconds. This softens the bristles and prevents them from breaking.
2. Sift 4g (~ 2 level teaspoons) of matcha powder into your bowl to remove any clumps.
3. Add 45ml (~3 tbsp) of hot water.
4. Whisk in a zigzag motion (like the letter "W" or "M") using a bamboo whisk for 20 seconds. Note: Use your wrist, not your whole arm, to create a better foam.
5. Then, whisk slowly on the top layer for another 10 seconds to break any large air bubbles. This creates a smooth, creamy microfoam.
6. Fill your favorite glass with ice and add 6g agave syrup (or your favorite sweetener)
7. Add 110ml (~½ cup) of milk. I personally love using oat milk!
8. Pour your whisked matcha over the milk and enjoy your fresh latte!





Helpful Tips:

- **Storage:** I always store my matcha powder in an airtight container, to prevent moisture, and keep it in the fridge to help extend its freshness.
- **Water Temperature:** Green tea is very sensitive to water temperature. If the water is too hot (boiling), it will burn the leaves and make the matcha taste bitter. However, water that is too cool won't bring out the full flavor. The ideal temperature for a smooth, delicious cup of matcha is between 70-80°C (158-176°F).
 - If you don't have a temperature-controlled kettle, you can microwave room-temperature water for about 1-1.5 minutes.
- **Taste Preferences:** It is completely normal to experience matcha taste differently. What tastes nutty or sweet to me might taste bitter to someone else. Some people are "supertasters" who can even differentiate whether the matcha has pistachio or cashew-like notes.
- **Bamboo Whisk:** I personally prefer using bamboo whisk (chasen) instead of spoon or mixer. I find it breaks up clumps more gently and creates a smoother texture.
- **Train Your Palate:** I usually take a sip of straight tea after whisking before adding milk (for latte). Over time, it helps me train my palate to pick up on noticeable sweetness, umami, and other different flavors among matcha varieties.



HOME COOKING

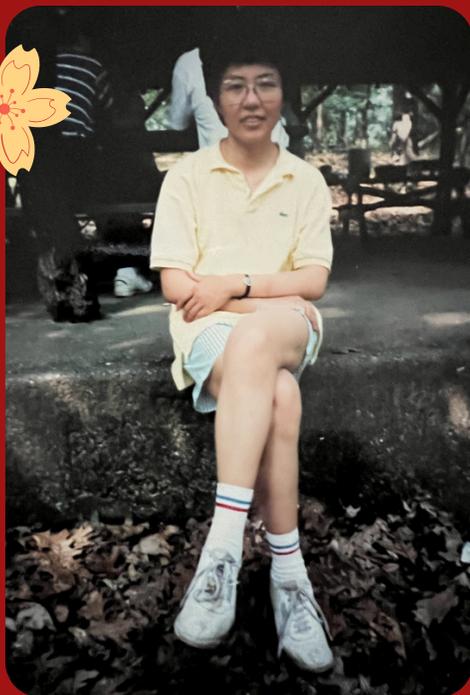
By Christine Cheng



From left to right: my grandma, my mom, my sister, me, and my brother.



My biggest influence and North Star when it comes to food and family has to be my mom. As someone who was born in the United States and was only cognizant of living in California, I've gotten some of my own history mixed up. When I heard my parents talk about big cities in both the U.S. and China, I often said I was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (incorrect: Johnstown, Pennsylvania) and my parents are from 北京 - Beijing and 上海 - Shanghai (incorrect: 沈阳 - Shenyang and 山西 - Shanxi).



In San Jose and Cupertino in the Bay Area, we had access to lots of Chinese vegetables that my mom commonly had growing up, meaning that she cooked a blend of both Chinese and American fare, based on what was on sale that week. So when I asked her about what foods she had in Shenyang growing up, a lot of it matched with what I had in my own childhood:

馒头 - mantou: steamed buns

包子 - baozi: the steamed buns with filling (usually pork for us)

饺子 - jiaozi: dumplings (of course)

饼 - bing: in our house, a flat, panfried dough, usually with green onions and fivespice

As for treats, my mom always requests that 驴打滚, or ludagun, always be brought back if someone was going to China. It's not quite the same when you buy it in the United States. Literally translated as "donkey rolling down the hill," it consists of rice cake and red bean paste, all dusted with soybean paste, to make a sweet, sticky, and chewy treat. I feel fortunate to have learned how to cook by helping my mom as I was growing up, to the point where I can confidently make dumplings with my friends at home, which we did for this Chinese New Year! However, there were still multiple text messages with my mom to confirm a few steps, such as how long the dumpling skin dough needs to rest, or how hot the water temperature should be when adding it to the water. Cooking together with my mom really taught me the skills, culture, and self-care that goes hand in hand with making food at home, and I appreciate that I can always go back to her with any questions, both in cooking and in life, for some reassurance.

