

## It's How You Eat and Move Your Feet!

An Essay by [REDACTED]

My family and I have only lived in the United States for six years, but we have always eaten healthy foods and been a very active family. I serve as a leader in my home because my parents have limited English. I am proud to share the lessons I have learned each day with my family and know that they want me to get a good education and live a healthy life.

Almost every day, I am asked to interpret food labels, recipes and other nutritional information for my mother. While she is an excellent cook, she sometimes has trouble finding the right ingredients at the grocery store. She depends on me to help locate certain foods or ask for assistance from store employees. When buying groceries each week, my brother and I look forward to being allowed to select our favorite box of breakfast cereal. I help him choose cereals which have high vitamins and low sugar.

At home, I help my mother in the kitchen by reading the printed English directions on food boxes and from recipe books. During the Thanksgiving holidays, my mother wanted to try making a pecan pie. Because she had never made one before, this presented many problems that I was able to help her solve. The pecan pie turned out delicious!

While traditional Mexican foods are often served in our home, we also enjoy many American favorites. Some healthy snacks we keep at home are fresh guacamole, colorful pico de gallo, and spicy salsa served with home-made tortilla chips. I help with washing and chopping vegetables used in these recipes. I know these vegetable snacks are much more nutritious than candy bars and snack cakes!

To stay active at home, my brothers and I play soccer almost every day. We get very competitive towards the end of each game, so it is a great work-out! Our home is near a beautiful park which has many trails for riding our bikes or taking long walks. Now that the weather is beautiful, I plan to invite my family members to join me on more frequent trips to the park for some exercise and fresh air.

One of my favorite week-end chores is helping my daddy wash his truck each week. I also help with yard work such as raking leaves in the fall and mowing grass in the summer. These activities are great exercise and give me an opportunity to spend more time with my family. We take pride in making our yard look nice.

One way that I am a nutrition leader at school is to encourage my friends to eat breakfast each morning in the cafeteria. I really like breakfast, and enjoy it even more when I have my friends with me. I also meet my friends at lunch time each day. Our cafeteria sells bottled water, and my friends and I know that this is a much better choice than the canned soda or sports drinks that some kids bring to school. It also costs a lot less!

While some students my age dread going to PE class, I actually look forward to class time in the gym at school. I complete fitness exercises such as sit-ups, push-ups, and run timed laps around the gym. I also play pitch and catch, indoor kickball and softball. Because my school is across the street from the bowling alley, I feel fortunate to be allowed to bowl every week. My highest score is 72, but I hope to break 100 this semester!

Eating balanced meals and staying physically active at home and at school are important parts of my life. I hope that I set a lasting example for my family and friends in the healthy choices that I make each day, and lead them to do the same.