

# Quality Vegan Food on University of Rochester Campus

Melody Jaros



The Student Association of Vegan and Vegetarian Youth (SAVVY) has been a student organization at the University of Rochester for over ten years. In the past three years, it has transformed from a small social club for vegetarians to an empowering, active vegan advocacy group. During this time SAVVY has taken on many new endeavors.

One of SAVVY's goals is to improve the quality and accessibility of vegan food on campus. One of the concerns I often heard from students pursuing a more plant-based diet was that vegan or vegetarian options are limited or difficult to find. As a vegan, I knew that there were, in fact, plenty of vegan options on campus, but that they just weren't centralized or clearly advertised.

Periodically, I like to browse through websites of other college vegan clubs to gain new ideas and perspectives. I stumbled upon one club that had posted a veg dining guide online. I knew I wanted to create one here.

My first step was to approach Dining Services to see how we could work together to make this dining guide official. I met with the marketing manager and we came to an agreement: I would design guides for each of the main dining halls in exchange for Dining Services printing and distributing them.

With that, I set out to the dining halls. I visited each location multiple times and took note of which stations served vegan or vegetarian options, and to what frequency. I noted extra options like nondairy milk and vegan desserts. I asked dining staff for a copy of their menu rotation, and I went through

ingredient listings to verify if items were vegetarian or vegan. I also recorded a list of items that were commonly mistaken as vegan or vegetarian that actually contained animal products. For example, the fish sauce is in a popular tofu dish.

After the basics were covered, I went and asked my fellow vegan and vegetarian students if they had any tips for when they ate on campus. I learned all sorts of fun tricks, like marinating tofu in salad dressing, adding beans to bulk up vegetable soups, and combining orange juice with soymilk to make a liquid creamsicle!

My final step was to gain Dining's perspective and their advice for vegan or vegetarian students. Their response was clear—they wanted student interaction and timely feedback. Unsure if an item is vegan? Just ask. Want a meat dish customized to be vegetarian? Just ask. Love a dish? Hate it? Have a recipe you wanted them to try? Send them an email!

Equipped with all the information I needed, I set to work on creating the pamphlet. I took pictures of the different dining halls and their food, mocked up a brochure on Word Publishing Layout, and sent it to Dining Services. We went back and forth updating and refining the trifold and then finally released it during SAVVY's 30-day Vegan Pledge campaign. SAVVY members handed out pamphlets to challenge participants and Dining posted pamphlets at their cash registers and on their homepage!

It was very exciting to see everything come together, and overall the guide received positive feedback. In the future, I hope to expand on this project and allow students to submit their own feedback online: favorite dishes, dining tips, or even recipes using ingredients that can be found on campus! All that is yet to come, but nevertheless I look forward to making vegan dining on campus ever more accessible and ever better!

**Melody Jaros** completed her bachelor's degree in mathematics and American sign language. She is now enjoying a fifth-year scholastic study of veganism tuition-free, courtesy of the University of Rochester. Photo above is the "hummingbird" cake Melody created for her birthday.

SAVVYRochester.wix.com/vegchallenge  
Facebook.com/SAVVYRochester  
SAVVYRochester@gmail.com



American Vegan Society  
commends

**Noah Henri Adams**

of Boy Scout Troop 150, Gibsonia PA,  
on his achievement of the rank of  
EAGLE SCOUT.

We are proud of his demonstrated concern for the creatures of the earth as shown in his Eagle Scout project and his personal life choices.

Noah has been vegan for two years.

At his court of honor he offered only vegan food. Noah's project was building a nesting tower for chimney swifts in Richland Community Park.

"They're really cool birds. They eat one-third of their weight in insects every day," says Noah.

"Their natural habitat is threatened. Most houses are not being built with chimneys."