

Patricia Miranda
Champion for Change

The health of my children is very important to me. My hope is that my children and I live healthy, fulfilling lives. That is why I have joined the Network for a Healthy California – Bay Area Region as a Champion for Change. As a Champion for Change I am learning and sharing all that I can about healthy eating and about physical activity for better health.

When my children grow up I want them to know how to eat and how to be healthy. The most important thing is good health. I want to provide them a good safe home, good healthy food, and enable them to have a good education and to work hard to reach their goals. However, the first thing is to be healthy. If you have money, but you are sick that is not a good thing. While I am a very low-income person, I still have the possibility to provide good food to make my children healthy.

I did not grow up knowing about healthy foods. Before I became a Champion for Change I did not know that fast foods and other foods that I was buying for my children were so bad for their health. Now I have learned that fast foods and other foods with lots of salt, sugar and fat can be very unhealthy. Now I buy more fruits and vegetables. I no longer buy fried foods, and foods that have lots of salt, sugar or fat. Before I buy something or eat something I read the label to make sure it does not have a lot of fat, sugar or salt. Sometimes after I have bought something I end up throwing it away because when I read the label I know that it is bad for my health and the health of my children,. I would rather throw away one dollar of unhealthy food than risk my children developing chronic diseases like diabetes and obesity.

Sometimes the information that I learn scares me, especially about how many children are becoming diabetic. But it is true, and we need to do something about it to prevent bad chronic diseases. When my children watch television they see an advertisement for something with lots of fat and sugar and they want it, but I say no. Instead I go into the kitchen and grab an apple or an orange, and I tell them this will help make them healthy and strong and they eat this instead.

I have also learned about the importance of physical activity for better health. Fortunately for my family we walk a lot. I have learned that this is a good activity for our health. In addition, when I hear music I start to move. My daughter Valeria likes music as does my son Eduardo. So we dance as a family. Music gives us energy and music inspires us to get more physical activity and to feel better. We also go to the park as a family and play together. We run, jump, play and dance for better health.

What I have learned from being a Champion for Change is that healthy eating and physical activity can make a difference in your life and the life of your family. It gives you hope. Nobody can stop you from having hope and from reaching your goals, only you can stop you. If you decide to stop eating unhealthy foods and that you want to start exercising, you can do it. We all need to make the best choices in our lives. These good choices are waiting for us to make a difference in our lives. You need to make those good choices. It is actually an honor to make the good choices.

Please join me as a Champion for Change. Please email me at championsforchange@barnn.org or visit www.barnn.org for more information.