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### **Plant-based Pittsburgh @ MCL**

March is National Nutrition Month, an ideal time to recognize the relationship between Plant-Based Pittsburgh and the Murrysville Community Library (MCL).

Plant-Based Pittsburgh is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization with a mission to provide education and support about how to adopt and sustain plant-centered eating habits. The founder, Sally Lipsky, is a Murrysville resident. Following diagnosis and treatment of late-stage cancer, she began to investigate the science behind food choices and chronic diseases. Her curiosity and knowledge grew, and she soon earned a Certificate in Plant-Based Nutrition from the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies.

As a career educator, Ms. Lipsky began offering adult education classes, cooking demonstrations, and helpful resources about plant-centered eating; this included a number of free classes at the Murrysville Community Library starting in 2015. Upon release of her book, *Beyond Cancer: The Powerful Effect of Plant-Based Eating*, Ms. Lipsky participated in the library's local author event in 2017. Notably, Ms. Lipsky credits her embrace of plant-based eating as a major reason she has been in remission for 13 years.

In 2014, Ms. Lipsky established Plant-Based Pittsburgh as a means to provide regular learning opportunities, monthly support meetings, and community outreach among the growing numbers of people interested in maintaining healthful lifestyles. Based in Murrysville, the organization has created a community of health through educational classes, hands-on workshops, and an informative monthly newsletter that covers local events, recent research, educational opportunities, as well as a source of recommended recipes and meals.

As an enhancement to its adult programming, Murrysville Community Library has provided a welcoming space for Plant-Based Pittsburgh monthly meetings and classes, all of which are free and open to the general public. Meetings cover a wide range of practical topics, such as the role of food choices during COVID-19, how to read food labels, simple yet delicious holiday meals, and starting a spring vegetable garden. Numbers of attendees have ranged from seven the first year up to as high as 36 people before Covid-19. Currently, all our twice-monthly events are virtual and can be viewed on the Plant-Based Pittsburgh YouTube channel.

In return, as Plant-Based Pittsburgh events draw an increasing number of participants, more and more people have taken advantage of the library's myriad resources—obtaining library cards, borrowing books and media, and using online services. In addition, a local benefactor donated a dozen plant-based resource books and cookbooks to the library. To demonstrate support of the library's Summer Adult Reading Program, Plant-Based Pittsburgh has donated a theme-filled basket each year.

For more information about Plant-Based Pittsburgh and to sign up for the monthly newsletter, visit [PlantBasedPittsburgh.com](https://PlantBasedPittsburgh.com). Sally Lipsky can be reached at [PlantBasedEatingHub@gmail.com](mailto:PlantBasedEatingHub@gmail.com).

Sally Lipsky