

Cultivating Health at NuGenesis Farm

A 'Food as Medicine' Model to Prevent Disease

by Linda Sechrist

Tick. Tick. Tick. A curious Kathy Bero watches the national health-care clock ticking away precious hours as the debate over the power of food to prevent, heal or inhibit the progression of various diseases continues between science and medicine. She wonders how many other lives, like her own, could be saved if doctors for all cancer patients prescribed angiogenic-inhibiting foods.

Bero, founder of NuGenesis Farm, Inc., in Pewaukee, says she needs no science-based evidence to know that angiogenesis-based medicine and angiogenic-inhibiting foods were major factors in the remission of the three aggressive forms of cancer—stage 4

inflammatory breast cancer, infiltrating ductal carcinoma, and a high-grade tumor in her head and neck—that threatened her life six years ago.

What Is Angiogenesis?

Angiogenesis is the body's natural process of growing new blood vessels from pre-existing vessels. It's a system that is vital for growth, development and healing, and the body controls it by producing a precise balance of growth and inhibitory factors in healthy tissues. An imbalance of angiogenesis—insufficient or excessive growth of blood vessels—is recognized by the medical community as a common denominator underlying health challenges including



Photo credit: Ron Bero

Kathy Bero harvesting in her garden at home.

cancer, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, some skin diseases, age-related blindness, diabetic ulcers and stroke, among others. The list of diseases that may have angiogenesis as an underlying mechanism grows longer every year.

Cancer and Angiogenesis

Cancer turns the body against itself by hijacking the angiogenesis process and keeping it permanently switched on, to ensure that cancerous cells receive a dedicated, uninterrupted blood supply. "To effectively prevent cancer, inflammation and angiogenesis need to be brought under control before a tumor can get a foothold," notes Bero, a walking miracle who carries her "Eat healthy" crusade banner high. She does this not only for herself, but also for the friends and family she has lost to cancer along the way. Bero's idea of preventing that foothold begins with the foods we eat every day—this is where NuGenesis Farm steps up to the plate and fills it, as well. The nonprofit organization works to prevent disease through education, sustainable organic agriculture and research.

"It is our vision that NuGenesis



Permaculture specialist Mark Shepard instructs participants on planting food using symbiotic relationships on the landscape and between plants.

Farm will be a model for global communities to incorporate ‘food as medicine’ into the daily diet and ultimately prevent disease,” enthuses Bero. She learned about angiogenesis-based medicine—an approach to fighting disease that restores the body’s natural control of angiogenesis—from a close friend that had researched the subject on her behalf. “In my opinion, it’s what saved my life,” says Bero.

Once introduced to the subject, Bero’s own intensive research led her to discover foods with anti-inflammatory and angiogenesis-balancing properties. She read several books, including Dr. David Servan-Schriebers’ *Anti-Cancer: A New Way of Life*, which she credits with kicking her off the curb to embrace the “food as medicine” approach.

After talking to her healthcare providers about the role that food could play in helping to prevent cancer from re-entering her life, Bero had an insight. “It occurred to me that with a better understanding and practice of incorporating the correct foods into not just my daily diet, but that of our entire community, we would all have the opportunity to improve overall health, reduce health care costs and improve disease outcome,” she recalls.

Helping Doctors Understand the Research

As Bero’s discussions progressed, she realized that the information she had uncovered in her research was not widely understood. It was this lack of knowledge and understanding about food as medicine among the medical community and general public that became her impetus for the creation of NuGenesis Farm. “In my opinion, true healthcare reform begins when people start looking at foods like kale, collards, garlic, red onions and leeks as more than just food and fuel for the body,” explains Bero, who has abided by her beliefs and eaten a diet heavy in angiogenic-inhibiting foods. After

“The farm is dedicated to growing foods with the strongest disease prevention properties.”



After learning how food is grown, students pick food to put on the pizza they will make with Dietitian Betty Holloway.

six years, she has not had a recurrence of any cancer.

Today, her healthcare providers, still largely influenced by medical science-based results, are paying attention to Bero’s anecdotal results. “I’ve captured their attention simply because women who have what I had—the rare inflammatory breast cancer—don’t carry a high survival rate, and don’t generally scream it from the rooftops,” she says.

Bero is sensitive to the reality that physicians want proof in the form of hard facts and published clinical studies. “When research results are still in a petri dish inside a laboratory, it’s challenging to get doctors to recognize the value of specific foods in managing or preventing disease,” says Bero, who notes that funding resources for whole food research are few and far between, because such foods cannot be patented, put in a pill and sold for billions of dollars.

Bero’s Bigger Picture of Healthcare Reform

Another factor that fuels Bero’s quest for the Holy Grail of prevention is her belief that understanding the big picture of healthcare is necessary to drive reform. “We’ve got to shift our focus to prevention, a far less expensive approach to healthcare, by educating ourselves and accepting that true economic stability in our communities will come about when we reduce the cost of healthcare, so our neighbors don’t go bankrupt paying for health insurance, treatment and hospitalization,” she emphasizes.

“A healthier population translates into higher productivity at work, healthier kids at school and healthy people investing in their community, feeding the growth of the local economy.”

Bero’s grassroots approach includes enlightening the public through a strong educational component, supported by NuGenesis Farm’s nutritionists and chefs. Community outreach is currently accomplished through cooking classes, education in school classrooms and visits to the farm. Dietitian Betty Holloway and Cardiac Nutritionist Margaret Pfeiffer are joined by Chef Jack Kaestner, from the Oconomowoc Lake Club; Culinary Advisor Gary Chitwood, from Quad/Graphics; Chef Phil Haseker, from Waukesha Memorial Hospital; and Chef Wayne Roe, from Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin. Other outreach efforts include reciprocal partnerships with area schools, presentations to medical practitioners and service groups, and small group field experiences on the 35-acre farm.

NuGenesis Farm is working to make their successful model simple, so it can be replicated throughout the U.S. and around the world. Managed by Brian Gifford, formerly the director of programs and sustainable agriculture program manager for the Mountain Retreat & Learning Center, Inc., in Western North Carolina, the farm is dedicated to growing foods with the strongest disease prevention properties. Produce is sold there from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. every Thursday, and everyone is welcome to visit—the farm acts as an outdoor classroom for teaching the community about organic growing methods. Produce is also sold at the Oconomowoc Farmers Market every Saturday morning.

Precious hours continue to tick away as the medical community debates and researches the healing and preventive powers of angiogenic-balancing foods, but Kathy Bero is not wasting time. With her team at NuGenesis Farm, she is growing a practical solution for better, more vibrant health.

For more information about NuGenesis Farm, call 800-969-3588 or visit NuGenesisFarm.org.