



*Photo courtesy of the Kingsbauers*

**Above: The Kingsbauer Family at the finish of their 2,193-mile hike along the Appalachian Trail.**

## **A Family's Plant-Based Journey**

*Article by Auriana Koutnik*

Imagine... training for an Ironman race and learning that vegan athletes recover faster than omnivores. Imagine... battling cancer and discovering that a plant-based diet increases your odds of beating the disease. Imagine... seeking healthy, sustainably produced food and reading about the industrialization of our food system. Imagine... finding evidence-based nutrition facts that suggest eliminating meat and dairy from your diet can heighten your wellbeing and potentially extend your longevity.

This was the “perfect storm” that family medicine physician Matt Kingsbauer and his wife Trish Kingsbauer, both members of the Eugene Plant-Based Providers group,

*Continued on page 2*

# A FAMILY'S PLANT-BASED JOURNEY

*Continued from page 1*

experienced in 2008 when they were living in Tennessee. It was life changing.

"That's when we woke up and went vegan," Trish said. They never looked back. Sixteen years later, the couple's two children, now ages 22 and 25, as well as the family's dogs – are all still vegan.

"It's like an amazing secret that you want to tell everybody, but the medical industry is not very interested," said Matt, who works as a physician for Kaiser Permanente in Eugene. He first began working for Kaiser in Hawaii, before the family moved to Eugene, in part because Kaiser encourages its physicians to recommend their patients adopt a healthy, plant-based diet and active lifestyle.

The Kingsbauers practice what they preach, and follow a plant-based diet and active lifestyle. In fact, they were enjoying van life, hiking and rock climbing all over the northwest, when they first came to Eugene after Matt accepted a temporary locum tenens position for a traveling doctor. They came back to Eugene the following summer. And the next, for a six-month assignment that lasted 16 months due to the COVID virus pandemic. That's when they learned about the Eugene Plant-Based Providers (EPBP) group.

*Continued on page 3*



*Photo courtesy of the Kingsbauers*

**Above: Trish and Matt Kingsbauer enjoy their volunteer work at the Elephant Nature Park in Thailand, the first plant-based elephant sanctuary of its kind in Asia.**

# A FAMILY'S PLANT-BASED JOURNEY

*Continued from page 2*

"We were so excited to learn about the plant-based providers group," said Trish. The group's Live Lifestyle Medicine mission – to change lives, one plant-based kitchen at a time – aligned well with the Kingsbauers' values and mission. In 2015, after they moved to Rutland, Vermont, Matt and Trish helped begin a citywide program called Health Care Shares – now known as The Farmacy Project – that featured Matt and other doctors offering patients "prescriptions for vegetables" and connecting them with local farmers who grow fresh produce.

Meanwhile, Trish, a microbiologist who was conducting biotechnology research for the pharmaceutical industry, didn't know how to cook plant-based, so she began attending vegan cooking classes, first with PBS chef Christina Pirello, and then with plant-based chef Mark Reinfeld. Eventually, she earned a Plant-Based Studies Certificate from the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies.

The Kingsbauers have traveled extensively and worked in various locations including New Zealand, where Matt worked as a general practitioner for a year on the north island in 2013 and later a year on the south island in 2023. The couple also volunteered for a week at an elephant sanctuary in Thailand. At the Elephant Nature Park, the food for both elephants and humans is plant-based. The first elephant sanctuary of its kind in Asia, according to its website, the park has rescued and cared for elephants who were once subjected to cruel practices such as street begging, elephant riding, and circus shows.

"It's one of our favorite places in the world," said Trish. "We recommend everyone visit." In 2021, the Kingsbauers and their children, Madison and Griffin – along with



*Photo courtesy of the Kingsbauers*

**Above: Trish and her son Griffin take a cooking class with award-winning chef Mark Reinfeld, the founding chef of the Vegan Fusion Institute, with over 25 years experience preparing innovative vegan and raw food cuisine.**

*Continued on page 6*



## MAPLE BAKED TEMPEH

*Recipe by chef Mark Reinfeld*

**Number of servings: 4**

With origins in Indonesia, the powerhouse veg protein tempeh provides the base for a solid and satisfying main course. In addition to easily fulfilling protein needs, tempeh is known also to reduce cholesterol and increase bone density. As a fermented food it is easily digestible, allowing for high absorption of nutrients.

Top with a sauce or chop into cubes and toss with Ranch Kale Salad (see below).

### INGREDIENTS

8 ounces tempeh  
2 teaspoons wheat-free tamari or other soy sauce  
2 tablespoons water  
1 ½ teaspoons pure maple syrup  
1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lime juice or balsamic vinegar  
2 teaspoons coconut oil, melted  
¼ teaspoon liquid smoke (optional)



*Photo by Trish Kingsbauer*

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven or toaster oven to 375°F. Slice the block of tempeh in half, then slice each piece in half to yield four cutlets.
2. Place a steamer basket in a pot with about ½ inch of water over high heat. Cover and bring to a boil. Add the tempeh cutlets, lower the heat to low, cover, and cook for 3 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, place the remaining ingredients, including the 2 tablespoons of water, in a small baking dish and whisk well. Add the steamed tempeh and allow to marinate for 6 minutes, flipping each cutlet after 3 minutes.
4. Place the baking dish in the oven and cook for 20 minutes, flipping the cutlets after 10 minutes.

You can leave out the steaming step if you wish, and for an oil-free option, replace the coconut oil with water or vegetable broth.

## RANCH KALE SALAD

*Recipe by chef Mark Reinfeld*

**Number of servings: 8**

"It's all about the sauce" is a well-known phrase in the culinary world. That rings true in this dish, where the rich, creamy, and tangy ranch sauce imparts its magic of the earthiness of kale, affectionately known as the king of the leafy greens.

In addition to flavor, the ranch ingredients provide B vitamins, protein, and alkalinizing, immunity-boosting, and cleansing benefits. You may feel your vitality increase with every bite. Experiment with the different ways to vary this dish and you will become a kale believer for life!

*Continued on page 5*

## RANCH KALE SALAD

*Continued from page 4*

### INGREDIENTS

#### RANCH SAUCE:

½ cup chopped raw cashew pieces  
 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice  
 2 to 3 tablespoons water  
 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast  
 2 teaspoons coconut vinegar or raw apple cider vinegar  
 2 garlic cloves  
 1 teaspoon paprika  
 ¾ teaspoon sea salt, or to taste  
 ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
 1 tablespoon minced fresh dill, or 1 teaspoon dried  
 ¼ teaspoon chipotle chile powder  
 ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper

#### SALAD:

6 cups stemmed, rinsed, drained, and chopped curly kale (½-inch pieces)  
 ½ cup hemp seeds or sesame seeds

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prepare the sauce: Place the cashews in a bowl with at least 1 cup of water. Allow to sit for 20 minutes, or up to 3 hours. Drain and rinse well. Place in a blender with the remaining sauce ingredients, including the 2 to 3 tablespoons of fresh water, and blend well.

2. Place the kale in a large bowl.

3. Pour the sauce over the kale and toss well. Garnish with the hemp seeds before serving.

### VARIATIONS

**Raw Kale Ranch Dip:** Transfer the kale with its sauce to a food processor and process until creamy.

**Ranch Kale Chips:** Toss the kale with the sauce as above and place in a single layer on three dehydrator sheets. Dehydrate at 115°F for 5 hours.

## *Called to Rescue* film screening and VeganFest planning

WHEN: Saturday, December 13, 2025.

WHERE: 601 W 13th Ave, Eugene, Oregon

#### SCHEDULE:

2:00 - 3:15 pm - Film Showing

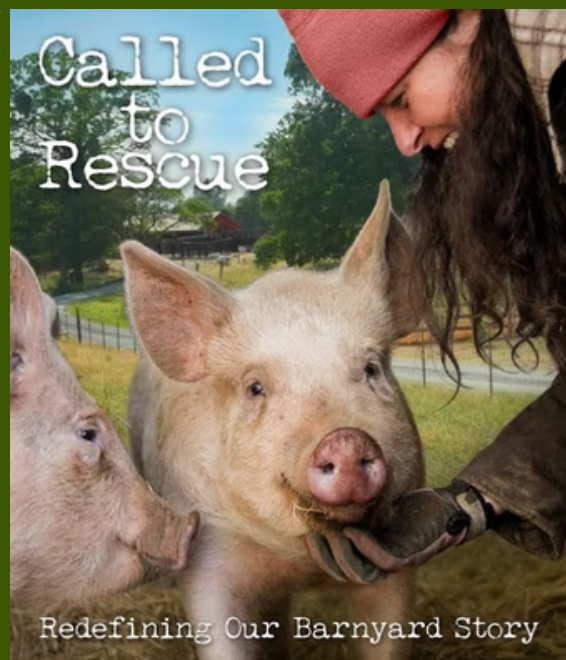
3:15 - 3:30 pm - Q&A, snacks

3:30 - 4:30 pm - Volunteer meeting for the 2026 Eugene VeganFest (optional)

Join us for the inspiring film ***Called to Rescue***, a glimpse into 15 farmed animal sanctuaries throughout the US. The rescued animals, simply by being who they are, are changing hearts, lives, habits, and beliefs. We will have a Q&A session after the film with the following panel of experts:

- Melissa Patricelli, of Blue Barn Sanctuary
- Misty Moore, of Welcome Home Sanctuary
- Hope Bohanec, of Compassionate Living

After the film, join us for our volunteer planning meeting for the Second Annual Eugene VeganFest, scheduled to take place on Sunday, May 3, 2026. The meeting is optional; you are welcome to leave after the film. For more information, contact Hope at: [hope@compassionate-living.org](mailto:hope@compassionate-living.org)



## A FAMILY'S PLANT-BASED JOURNEY

*Continued from page 4*

their dog Angie – spent six months thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail. Matt and Trish continue to live an active lifestyle in Eugene, where they returned to live last summer, enjoying rock climbing and CrossFit, a high-intensity fitness program that combines weightlifting, gymnastics, and interval training.

"Lifestyle medicine is what brings people through my front door," Matt said. "It's not just eating a healthy, whole foods, plant-based diet. You have to get good sleep and exercise, too."

Trish agrees. "We all need to add strength training to our cardio work for better health, stronger bones, and quality of life. We are big fans of strength-training for ALL ages."

Today, the Kingsbauers have incorporated animal rights activism and associated ethical issues into their plant-based advocacy, and would love to "convert the world" to adopt a vegan lifestyle. Toward that end, they are working to support the second annual Eugene VeganFest to take place next May.

**"It's like an amazing secret that you want to tell everybody..."**

**- Dr. Matt Kingsbauer**



*Photo courtesy of the Kingsbauers*

**Above: Trish and Matt ice climbing in New Zealand, where Matt worked as a general practitioner for two years.**

***Bringing lifestyle medicine to the community, to improve lives, one plant-based kitchen at a time...***

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