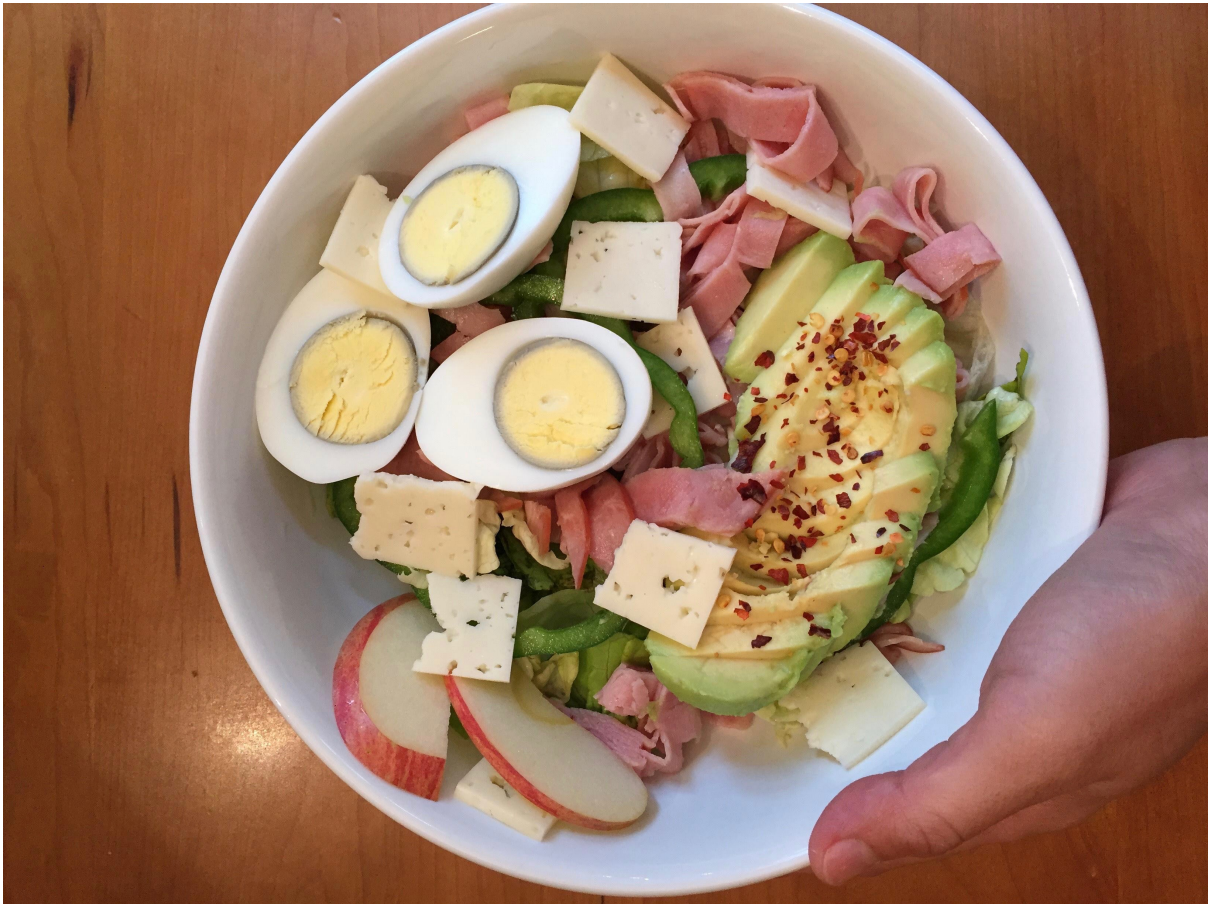


It's Never Too Late

--by Sueyeon Uhm



“In my country, Korea, it is very unusual to go to college at a later age.”

Community college attended: Manchester Community College

Location: Manchester, Connecticut

Date success story was submitted: 3 October 2018

Community college sponsor/mentor and college affiliation: Alina Ciscel, ESL
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Key search terms: Returning adult student, changing careers, retraining, immigrant,
English as a Second Language, ESL, Korean, parent

Academic major: Culinary Arts

Everyone has a dream in his or her childhood. Some may have made the dreams come true; some may have changed their dreams for some reasons. There are many options in life, and nobody knows which one will be the perfect choice. People who have spent a long time to set their goals might think it was a waste of time. So did I. However, after realizing that the earliest time to start something new is when I think I am late, I made up my mind to start studying at MCC. I believe it may be late, but it is never too late.

My dream was to be a violinist when I was little. I was an introverted and very shy girl (actually I am still shy), and violin was my best friend. I liked to play the violin rather than be around people. However, unfortunately I got into a severe car accident when I was 18 and could not practice violin anymore. Although I had several surgeries on the right shoulder and elbows, pain still bothered me occasionally, and it made me suffer from depression for a long time. Even worse, other health problems kept following me after giving birth to two children. I suffered from postpartum depression and some chronic diseases, and I got another surgery in my early 30s. After the surgery, I realized how important healthy life is, and I began to

dream of living in US to give a better environment to my children. In 2012, my family immigrated to the United States, and it's been six years already.

I have a friend who already took some classes at MCC and recommended me first to go to this school. It was last year, and my answer was "No, I can't." I did not even know what a community college is, and thought I was too old to start studying something new, because in my country, Korea, it is very unusual to go to college at a later age. Even worse, I am a working mother with two little children. I just thought going to college in the USA was impossible for me. However, my friend kept encouraging me and told me that at a community college, there are many adult students who are even older than me; besides, the tuition is more reasonable than in a four-year college. Without her encouragement, I would not be here today studying to become a chef.

I have been enjoying cooking at home since I was little. When I was 23 years old, I worked in a Korean restaurant kitchen for about 10 months. My friend's parents owned the restaurant, and she suggested to me to work there since they were hiring for a part-time kitchen helper job. Working in a restaurant kitchen was much harder than I ever imagined, but it was fun. Working as a kitchen helper is a hard and a simple job, so I decided to go to school to study to become a professional chef.

After enrolling in a certificate program in Culinary Arts at MCC, I had a tour of Culinary Arts Center, which has an amazing kitchen, and it made me eagerly want to learn



Chive dumplings

many things at the kitchen to make my dream come true. I had to start with only one ESL class this semester because I was not eligible for other classes until I pass ESL. I made up my mind to go slowly, gradually, to improve my English for college level, and now the semester is almost finished. Time flies! I remember the first day of class when I was nervous. I had not been in a classroom for almost 20 years, and I was not sure if I was ready. As time went on, I

could adapt myself to the class, but I have been struggling with managing my time between studying, working, and taking care of my children. Between my roles as a mother and a student, everything has been challenging, and I did not know how I managed to devote as much time to studying. However, I believe in myself and managing my time has become easier.



Grilled salmon and sautéed vegetables with low-fat Hollandaise sauce

After I graduate from MCC, I want to open a small and cozy bakery café serving bread, dessert, and brunch. I want to make food that makes people happy. I know it will be a long journey, but I will keep doing my best.

“Age is just a state of mind” – this is my favorite famous saying. If I give up thinking that it is too late to start something new, I will regret it 5 or 10 years later just like I was envious of twenty-year-old people when I was in my thirties. To have something you have never had before, you must make every effort you have never done. Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.



Creole style Jambalaya