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Remembering My Grandmother

An Early Start to Mother's Day

Mother's Day is around the corner, and as I am sure is the case for many people this year, my family will be celebrating without one of our loved ones. This past December my grandmother passed away after a sudden illness. It was not related to COVID, but like everything these days, the virus and its accompanying restrictions severely impacted our experience. Her hospital stay was largely isolated, with only my mother and aunt allowed in to act as her guardians. Her funeral and service were small, masked, and socially distanced. We were more fortunate than most, however, as my grandmother recovered long enough to come home and be with the family before she passed — a luxury that so many have not been afforded this past year.

My grandmother, Evangelina Betancourt Martinez, was the glue for my mother's side of the family. "Ola" was her nickname, given by me as a toddler, after I assumed that was her name due to people greeting her with "Hola." Her home was the gathering place for holidays, birthdays, barbecues, and more. Before moving to a home that my uncle built for her in the mid-2000s, her house was a hub for inexpensive home-cooked food in her neighborhood, as she sold homemade tacos and sodas to anyone within walking distance, not because she needed the money, but because she loved to provide for others. She was the shoulder to cry on for her sons and daughters, she gave advice that only someone with her life experiences could provide, and she was as loving a person as you could ever wish to meet.

My grandmother was my role model and the most positive person I have ever met. She was grateful for every single day and loved her family more than anything in this world. She did all of this despite having a difficult background; losing her own mother at the age of 4, she and her siblings were raised by a single father who did his best but was young and often overwhelmed. After moving from Mexico to the U.S. with my grandfather, she left behind her profession as a teacher and became the breadwinner of the family, working for 13 years as a lunch lady. Every summer she and her children would travel up north to pick fruit. Her husband was not the kindest man, and she ultimately separated from him with the help of her family.



Evangelina Betancourt Martinez 1938-2020

Despite all of the hardships, she was never bitter. I never heard my Ola complain about a single thing. She loved life. She loved God. She loved us. She was selfless in a way that I can only aspire to be, even once telling my aunt that she wished we did not love her as much as we did, because she knew how much pain we would be in when it was finally her time. Obviously, that wish did not come true. We adored her, and her absence is felt every day.

This Mother's Day my heart goes out to anyone who will be celebrating with an empty seat at the table. May we have comfort in each other and may the memories of our loved ones bring us joy.

— Romeo Rendon

DON'T THINK — JUST GO GREEN!



Living a sustainable, zero-waste lifestyle is all the rage these days. Celebrities like Mark Ruffalo, Jessica Alba, and Emma Watson continue to make big waves by supporting eco-conscious causes and by boasting their eco-friendly products. Not everyone has the budget or the ability to go as eco-friendly as our celebrity counterparts, but “going green” isn’t as difficult as you may think. This Earth Day, try adapting some of these easy eco-friendly tips into your daily life!

Reduce your reliance on single-use items.

Swap out items like paper towels, plastic water bottles, shampoos and conditioners, straws, plastic bags, and other single-use products that fulfill a need for you once and then end up in a landfill. Instead, find creative ways to avoid these single-use products. You can cut up old shirts to use as rags, fill up reusable water bottles instead of buying throwaway plastic ones, and use cloth bags instead of plastic sacks at the grocery store. If you’re looking for new products, consider shampoo bars or refillable bottles for hair care products from companies like Plaine Products or EcoRoots.

Eat less meat.

We’re not saying you have to give up your cheeseburgers or ribs, but opting for fewer meat-focused meals could create big impacts on a global scale. According to the Center for a Livable Future, if just 32% of Americans opted for meatless meals one day each week, it would be equivalent to reducing the impact of emissions from 1.6 million cars each year. Swap meat for beans, tofu, cauliflower, squashes, or a vegetarian soup. Delish.com has a great selection of vegetarian-based meals if you’re ready to start.

Shop locally.

When you venture into “Meatless Monday” or search for products that reduce your single-use footprint, consider shopping locally. According to Transport & Environment, shipping could contribute to 10% of all carbon emissions by 2050. One way you can help reduce the reliance on global shipping is by focusing on locally sourced products and foods. Shop for produce at the local farmer’s market, seek out local crafters for gifts, and buy your clothes from local retailers who purchased the materials locally. Large store chains can also have local sections that make this endeavor easier! To get started, check with your local chamber of commerce for a list of shops to visit.

FROM A MOMENTARY DISTRACTION TO A LIFE-CHANGING MISTAKE

You might experience three kinds of distractions as a driver: visual (taking your eyes off the road), manual (taking your hands off the wheel), and cognitive (taking your mind off driving). Why is cell phone usage so dangerous? It’s a distraction that fits in all three of these categories.

Accidents happen when you least expect them, and it only takes a fraction of a second for life-changing injuries to occur. Even a simple mistake can cause serious or fatal injury. That’s why it’s important to keep your eyes on the road at all times. In this case, a little more attention could have helped prevent a client’s life-long injury.

Case Facts

On or about May 25, 2018, our client was operating an SUV when, as they headed down George McVay Drive in McAllen, Texas, a truck tractor failed to yield the right of way to the client. Turning left, they crashed into our client’s right rear passenger side. Although our client was clearly driving in a reasonable and prudent manner, the defendant’s driving inattention and failure to take evasive action

KEEP YOURSELF, YOUR PASSENGERS, AND DRIVERS SAFE

Each year, hundreds of people across the U.S. are involved in accidents caused by distracted drivers. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), approximately 23,000 individuals died in accidents that were caused by distracted





caused a collision that left our client with severe injuries. These injuries will not only require medical attention now, but also into the foreseeable future.

Case Results

In order to pay for our client's past medical expenses, their future medical care, physical disfigurement, physical pain, and mental anguish, we sought a claim of over \$1 million. After a couple years, we won our case. This will certainly put our client's heart and mind at ease as they face a future coping with expensive medical bills and protecting their family's financial health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that in 2018 (the same year our client was injured), over 2,800 Americans were killed and an estimated 400,000 were injured in crashes involving a distracted driver. Please keep your eyes on the road to make sure you, your family, and many others a little bit safer this summer!

drivers from 2012–2018. In an effort to reduce these numbers, many companies have founded campaigns, tips, and events to increase awareness of this danger and prevent it. One such event is Distracted Driving Awareness Month that takes place in April every year.

To participate in Distracted Driving Awareness Month, our team at Garcia & Ochoa wants to provide our readers with a few reminders on how to keep their eyes on the road.

Maintain Your Focus

While driving, it can be tempting to glance down, whether that's to adjust your radio, check your phone, or pick up a drink. No matter what reason you might have for looking down, you should not take your eyes off the road in front of you. The seconds that you aren't focused on the drivers around you could lead to devastating and irreversible damage. Before you back out of your driveway, make sure that you are comfortable and that there will be minimal-to-no distractions while you're driving.

Turn Off Your Phone

The leading cause of distracted driving is phone use. Our phones have become an integral part of our lives, but in the car, they should remain silenced or turned off and out of reach. However, if you need to use your phone while on the road, such as to use the GPS, be sure to set it up **before** you start driving. By doing so, you won't be tempted to make adjustments. In the event that you do need to set a different destination or answer an important call, pull over to a safe spot on the side of the road and park before picking up your phone.

By following these tips or sharing them with family and friends, you are not only participating in Distracted Driving Awareness Month but also saving lives. By following the rules of the road and keeping our distractions to a minimum, we are keeping ourselves, our passengers, and other drivers safe.



Inspired by TheSpruceEats.com

INGREDIENTS

- 2 boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 2 tbsp canola oil
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 large head of broccoli, cut into florets

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425 F.
2. On a large baking sheet, combine chicken, sweet potatoes, salt, and pepper. Drizzle with oil and toss to coat.
3. Bake for 15 minutes. In the meantime, make the sauce by combining the soy sauce, lemon juice, honey, and cayenne pepper.
4. Remove pan from oven and use a spatula to flip the chicken and potatoes, then add broccoli florets.
5. Drizzle sauce evenly over top and return to the oven to bake for an additional 15 minutes or until chicken has an internal temperature of 165 F and vegetables are fork-tender.

BE INSPIRED

i know you're tired.
do not be deterred.
do not shut down.
do not give up,
but know that
it's ok to rest.
it's ok to take moments
to gather your strength
back. reset, reenergize
and begin again.

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Sprout Your Kids' Imagination With 3 Fun Earth Day Projects

With spring officially underway, April showers starting to bring May flowers, and Earth Day on April 22, now is a great time for outdoor family activities.

One for the Birds

Making a pine cone bird feeder is a fun and inexpensive project. In addition to creating and hanging your bird feeder, you'll get hours of extra entertainment from watching the birds it will attract to your yard. If your kids are older, take photos of the birds or note their colors and features and look them up in a field guide or online.

This craft just requires a pine cone (the bigger the better), peanut butter, and some twine or string. Top the peanut butter with "sprinkles" of mixed birdseed or small pieces of nuts and fruit to appeal to even more birds. For full instructions, visit **TheSpruce.com** and search "pine cone bird feeder."

An Egg-cellent Planter

Save those eggshells from breakfast (and the paper carton, too!) and use them to start a garden! Your little ones will enjoy planting some seeds, watering them, and watching them sprout and grow into something new. When the sprouts are big enough

and it's warm enough outside, you can plant the shell and carton directly into the ground!

This easy project just requires rinsed eggshell halves, some lightly moistened potting soil, and seeds of your choosing. Note that smaller seeds, like those for herbs, lettuces, peppers, or tomatoes, work best for this project. For full instructions, visit **GardenBetty.com** and search "starting seeds in eggshells."

Stick With Magic

Nature is a magical place. Many kids know this instinctively and often point out things adults take for granted or overlook, like bright-colored leaves, fun-shaped rocks, and acorn "hats." Making a nature wand is a great way to let your kids explore their environment, whether that's in your backyard, on a neighborhood walk, or in your favorite park. Let their imaginations run wild with what their magic wand can do!

This simple project starts with a stick and masking tape. Your kids add all the extra flair by hunting for natural treasures and sticking them onto their wand. Complete instructions can be found at **LaughingKidsLearn.com/nature-wands-outdoor-play**.