

## Plant-Based Cooking Class Connects Nutrition and Wellness

Written by Mallory Gleich

Monday, 16 February 2026 13:58 -

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Plant-based cooking is stepping out of the restaurant kitchen and into the heart of the community this month. On February 21, [Loving Hut](#) Vegan Cuisine will partner with [Thrive and Rooted](#) to host Powered by Plants, a free community nutrition class and live cooking demonstration at Desert West Community Center. The event invites Phoenix-area residents to explore how plant-based meals can support health, boost energy and fit real-life budgets without feeling intimidating or out of reach.

Running from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., the program blends practical nutrition education with a live cooking demonstration led by Love Hut Owner Linh La. The class is part of Thrive and Rooted's 2026 educational series focused on expanding access to plant-based wellness and sustainable living resources throughout the community, with sponsorship from Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation.

"For us, this is about showing up for the community in a real way," Linh said. "We cook these foods every day for our guests and we see how plant-based meals can support health without being expensive or complicated. This class is about sharing that knowledge in a way that feels practical, supportive, and empowering."

Founded by Jayme and John Williams, Thrive and Rooted is a community-driven nonprofit dedicated to making plant-based wellness and sustainable living accessible to all.

Inspired by the founders' transition to a plant-based lifestyle in 2019, the organization has grown from a backyard garden into a broader mission centered on nutrition education, sustainable food practices and compassionate living. Through workshops, community gardens and cooking classes, the nonprofit helps individuals build practical skills and healthier routines.

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“When we started Thrive and Rooted, we wanted to make wellness feel attainable and community-driven,” Jayme said. “Hosting this event during Black History Month is a reflection of that journey and our commitment to expanding conversations around plant-based nutrition, food access, and community health.”

The session will also include nutrition education from Rhyan Geiger, an award-winning registered dietitian and author specializing in plant-based nutrition. Together, the presenters will focus on how everyday food choices can support disease risk reduction, immune health and overall well-being while still working within busy schedules and realistic grocery budgets.

During the cooking demonstration, attendees will see recipes come together in real time, including Southwestern tofu scramble, Blissful Fried Rice and hearty vegetable pasta soup. Several dishes are gluten-free, and free samples will be available while supplies last. Blissful Fried Rice, one of Loving Hut’s top five best-sellers, also reflects the restaurant’s broader mission of compassion, as it is regularly prepared as complimentary meals for unhoused guests visiting Loving Hut locations.

Beyond food and education, the event will feature raffle prizes supporting local vegan businesses and nonprofit partners. Giveaways include artisan soaps from Strawberry Hedgehog, e-gift cards to select Loving Hut locations and a merchandise bag from Better Piggies Rescue.

The Powered by Plants class is free to attend, but registration is required and space is limited. Those interested can register by visiting [thriveandrooted.org](https://thriveandrooted.org).