

Graduation Day

Graduation Day is a time for reflection, celebration, and goal setting with your class. The final lesson covers fruits, vegetables and other non-food components of a healthy lifestyle like honoring one's fitness, spirituality, family, creativity, and relationships.

This final lesson is a wonderful time to strengthen those bonds for continual support and to reflect upon all that's been learned about eating more like the old ways, celebrating the healthy traditions of ancestors and the power they have to change the health of future generations. It is also a great time to set intentions to continue these traditions for the long run. Talk with your class about carrying the torch and sharing what they have learned with others. Review the "Staying Connected" handout and ask students how they would like to stay connected to motivate and support one another as they go forward.

Here are some nice ways that past classes have ended their ATOAH series:

Potluck Celebration. In addition to the in-class recipes, consider having a potluck on graduation day. Invite each student to prepare a dish from the handbook, or a recipe of his or her own using ingredients covered in class. Create a small banquet of traditionally inspired whole-food, plant-based dishes for everyone to enjoy.

Student Takeaways. Have students share the most useful and/or meaningful thing that they will take away from this series. Did they discover a new food, like beans or avocado, in this program? Are they inspired to cook more often? If so, what barriers to cooking were broken down for them?

Goal Setting. An ATOAH teacher in Cleveland Heights, OH asked each of her students to bring one intention, one goal, to the last class to share with the group. Sharing a goal out loud to others empowers individuals with greater responsibility and resolve than just thinking it to oneself.

Carrying the Torch. Use the last page in the student handbook to lead a brainstorming session. Ask your students how they would like to carry on this program to achieve their goals for healthy eating and living. Would they enjoy getting together for monthly potlucks after graduation? Do you they want to start an email list together or a meet up group? Do they want to become ATOAH teachers themselves? Or would they like to host a social event, like an African Heritage & Health Fair or block party based on heritage foods in their communities?

Once you know what your group would like to do going forward, you will be able to organize future gatherings or appoint a volunteer group leader to keep gatherings going. More on staying connected and carrying the torch on the "**Staying Connected**" sheet.