

# Guy-a-titian, Dave Grotto

We can't say enough about Elmhurst resident, Dave Grotto, RD, LDN, president and founder of Nutrition Housecall, LLC, a nutrition consulting firm that services the healthcare industry and offers personalized at-home dietary services. Grotto is currently on the Scientific Advisory Board for Men's Health, the Advisory Board Chair for PBS Kids' "Produce for Kids" and also served as the National Media Spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association for six years. He has written for numerous major publications, hosted "Let's Talk Health, CHICAGO!" a live radio program for over 10 years co-hosted a television show called, "Health & Lifestyles Weekly" and is a returning guest on I Village Live in the Loop.

At the beginning of this year, Dave added two more credits to his name. He was a guest on The Montel Williams Show as a result of his participation in Montel's new book, "Living Well: 21 Days to Transforming Your Life, Supercharge Your Health and Feel Spectacular" and his first book was published, **101 Foods That Could Save Your Life**. Add to his many accomplishments the fact that Grotto never waivers from his common sense approach to better eating, conversational style and humorous candor, and it's easy to understand why we really can't say enough about him.

## Background

Originally a south-sider who moved to Chicago Heights at the age of 9, Dave graduated from Homewood-Flossmoor High School, first attended Prairie State College and subsequently went to Columbia College for communications. While at Columbia, he switched gears and decided to become a dietician, a decision which isn't as odd as it seems when you get to know Dave.

Grotto says his interest in health foods was first sparked in childhood. "My grandfather operated a natural food store in La Mesa, California and my mother would often go out to visit him. She would bring back black licorice ropes, rock candy, Tiger's Milk bars and I thought, 'Hey...I LOVE health foods!!'"

Dave's family also owned a health food store in Midlothian which they ran for 18 years. "The reason I became a dietician," he says, "is that many of the customers were asking me for advice for which foods and dietary supplements would be best for their health challenges. I saw this as an awesome responsibility and felt obligated to know what I was talking about so I pursued becoming a RD. I had diabetics, people who suffered from cancer, heart disease, gout, you name it, all looking for a natural solution for their health concerns. I had people who lived in the surrounding community who used my health food store as a point of entrance to health care. Many could not afford insurance and relied heavily on traditional home remedies to help heal themselves and their family."

Just one semester short of his communications degree from Columbia, Grotto took on nutrition. This was a task easier said than done because he first had to meet a slew of pre-requisites as a direct result of "having avoided math and science classes like the plague" before he could get into the dietetic program at UIC in Chicago. He persevered and graduated with honors with a Bachelor of Science degree in Medical Dietetics and Nutrition, and became a Registered Dietitian.

Ultimately, it is Grotto's love and knowledge of food combined with his natural ability to speak before and to people that makes him stand out above the rest. We caught up with Dave during his recent book signing tour at Meijer...

**CWM** What is your general philosophy about nutrition?

**DG** I have come to find that people really don't like the word nutrition but they love food. To me it makes so much more sense to talk about how great the foods are and then espouse their nutritional value later. Tasting is believing!

**CWM** How did the idea for 101 Foods That Could Save Your Life come to your mind?

**DG** Many of my patients were looking beyond a handful of super foods to add to their diet. In my research I found that there were lots of foods that were worthy of adding to one's diet. This became my mantra – it's a lot easier to add in than take away which led to another philosophy – taste + doability = sustainability.



Getting ready for the book signing at the Meijer store in Algonquin.

Story photos by Lee Balgemann



"The one thing I realized from my experience is that health management boils down to three essential things: possessing knowledge of nutrition, being aware of what you are eating, and sticking to a game plan."



In my practice, I don't even talk about weight loss any more. Instead, I focus on health achievement where weight loss and management is a natural side effect of health achievement.