

A TASTE FOR *Wellness*

HER DAUGHTER'S MEDICAL CONDITION INSPIRES
CHEF DORA PAULAR TO PACK
FLAVOR AND NUTRIENTS INTO EVERY BITE.

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As a professionally trained chef who knew how to please palates, Dora Paular faced a new challenge when her eldest daughter, Kennedy, was born with a severe digestive malformation. Now 14 years old, Kennedy underwent numerous surgeries to reconstruct her abdomen and had extreme difficulty eating by mouth during the early years of her life.

Even though her daughter received

nutrition via a feeding tube, Dora was determined to instill a love of food into her child. "Although eating was painful and traumatic for Kennedy, we sat down together for every meal," Dora says. "She learned to love the smell, look and texture of food. Even if it was merely a single bite she put into her mouth, we considered it an achievement."

Because Kennedy could only eat tiny morsels of food at a time, Dora resolved to make every bite count. "Each meal needed

DORA'S YEAR IN HEALTH

DAILY NUTRITION:

"I practice what I preach. My diet is high-protein, low-carb and mostly vegetables. My favorite meal would be a gorgeous piece of salmon with some zucchini noodles, some kale and some farro with grilled tomatoes and ají sauce. It's simple and clean."

GUILTY PLEASURE:

"Bone-in, double-cut rib eye, barely cooked with pretty much all the fat marbled around it."

FITNESS ROUTINE:

"I work out daily. Chris DiVecchio is my personal trainer. We do a lot of weight training and cardio. I focus on core strength since I'm on my feet all day. I love training for races and competitions like the Spartan."

HEALTH INSPIRATION:

"My personal trainer is like my preacher. He keeps me on the straight and narrow."



to create pleasure, interest and comfort, as well as the utmost in nutrition," she says.

Over time, Kennedy's capacity to eat by mouth increased. She would have bites of food throughout the day and use a feeding machine nightly to supplement calories. For the past two years, Kennedy has no longer needed to use the feeding machine. In fact, Dora reports that her elder daughter has become a foodie with a penchant for white truffles, wild mushrooms, sashimi and

Wagyu beef.

Today Dora—known as Chef Dora—uses the same approach in her professional kitchen as she does in her home kitchen. The single mother of two focuses on fresh produce and high-protein/low-carb foods cooked with Asian, American and French influences.

Chef Dora's enterprise consists of multiple endeavors. Her nutrition management program, FUEL by Chef Dora, provides prepared, preportioned meals customized to

clients' nutritional and culinary preferences. The meals include fresh, organic fruits and vegetables, many from Catalina View Gardens in Rancho Palos Verdes. ("This is as local as it gets," she says.)

Selections—such as peppered filet steak with chimichurri, sautéed green beans and brown rice with diced rosemary sweet yams—contain no flour, preservatives or added sugar and are delivered ready to eat or heat in microwave-safe containers.





“We try to use marinades, herbs and spices for flavors instead of the added fats and dairy that chefs typically rely on for their flavors,” she says.

Chef Dora also handles special events, including catering, décor and production. A birthday extravaganza for one client involved transforming an empty warehouse into themed rooms including a re-creation of the Star Wars Cantina and a riff on Tim Burton’s *Alice in Wonderland*. It featured a life-sized maze, sword swallows and chainsaw jugglers.

Chef Dora started out as a full-time private chef to a celebrity client (whom she declined to name) and continues managing his culinary and nutritional needs, as well as those of other private clients. She also has hospitality accounts including Ten Thousand, a new luxury residential high-rise on the Westside.

Dora always knew she wanted to be a

chef. Her Filipino culture, she says, emphasized sharing food as a way to nurture family and friends. Her grandfather, a chef in Sacramento, embodied that approach and passed along his love of food and cooking to his granddaughter.

“In school, other kids would ditch to go to the beach,” she says. “I’d ditch to go to the farm on Crenshaw to buy fresh ears of corn.”

Young Dora, a Torrance native, also saved her lunch money to patronize new restaurants. Afterwards, she’d replicate dishes at home for her friends. She received training in culinary institutions in California and Paris and worked as an executive chef and food and beverage director before striking out on her own in 2010.

Chef Dora’s philosophy of food, she says, “is to make dining delicious without deprivation. Cooking should be from the heart. People should feel the warmth when they walk in, even before they sit down to eat.” ■