

Brenda Borjas—Elementary & Middle Schools - Eastside

This month, I taught several topics. In elementary schools, students studied dairy, fats and protein, whole grains, *MyPlate*, and the *Fizzics of Soda*. In middle schools, students learned about fast food and fat content.



“Where’s the Fat?”—Elementary students (and teachers) had the opportunity to see the variety of fats and amounts found in some of their favorite foods (French Fries, chicken nuggets, cheese burgers, and pizza) and were amazed at what they learned. Some thought that because the foods are sold at their local supermarkets and readily available at home, it was all good to eat. They asked “So why do they sell these kind of foods when it is bad for us?” I explain that there are no “bad” foods, just “sometimes” and “anytime” foods. Manufacturers are more concerned about profits than they are about helping us stay healthy. They spend lots of money on advertising trying to get us to buy their products. That is why we need to read labels and be educated consumers. Students also learned about the fats found in dairy products and the importance of choosing low-fat or fat-free milk. I explained that the change can be done gradually but, by doing so, they will protect their heart and help maintain their weight.

“The Yuck Factor”—Middle school students were really surprised and at the same time, grossed-out to see the amount of fat found in the food they eat when eating out. They learned how easy it was to cut fat and reduce calorie intake by just reducing the number of times they ate out in a week, avoiding super-sizing, and making healthy choices. I reminded them that they needed to think about *MyPlate* and to fill half of their plate with fruits and vegetables. All the students pledged by a show of hands to now be aware of fat content in foods and choose healthier options.

Linda Tesar—Elementary Schools - Westside

“Got Milk?”—May topics were dairy foods, proteins and fats. I visited 65 classrooms and taught 1,313 students. Students were offered a sample of low-fat cheese sticks, calcium fortified orange juice, or calcium fortified cereal. They learned about the importance of getting enough calcium in their diet by eating low-fat or non-fat dairy products.

We discussed the importance of exercise along with adequate amounts of calcium to maintain bone strength and to help prevent osteoporosis later in life. I explained that their bones are like a bank and need to have calcium deposited on a daily basis in order to keep up with the way our body spends the calcium daily.



A second grader shared that he knows a lady who is in a wheel chair because “her back bones break easy,” and he asked if that was because she didn’t get enough calcium.

Students were impressed with the model of an artery that had fat floating in it and also a model of arteries that showed different levels of fat built up in them. Some students seemed concerned and asked, “What happens if you stop eating junk food and start eating healthy? Would that change the amount of fat that is already there?” The visuals really helped to get the message across about the importance of making the low-fat or fat-free choices.

Karen Faverty—Middle/High Schools - Westside

With the month of May came the end of classes with the culinary students at Marchman Technical Education Center, as we took to the grass outside the classroom.

“Heart-Healthy Cook-out” - The lesson for the day, *Healthy Cookouts*, gave the students one more example of how small changes in our food choices, along with increased physical activity, can promote a healthy calorie balance.



The students sampled “Mock Potato Salad”, a low-fat, low-carbohydrate substitute for a cookout staple made with cauliflower. After many comments like, “Love the potato salad,” they were *shocked* to find out there wasn’t a potato in sight!

The fat-free beef frank samples, sprinkled with low-fat cheese were a hit. And, of course, no cookout would be complete without watermelon.

The class not only spent time sampling the healthy alternatives for cookout fare but enjoyed some games, too. A bean-team relay challenged students to remember how to make a plant-based protein a “complete” protein. Everyone had the opportunity to showcase their Frisbee skills and then, to their surprise, they got to keep the “Fruits and Veggies—More Matters” message Frisbees as an end-of-year incentive.

They were reminded to stay hydrated after activity with samples of 100% fruit juice.

There was time to relax and recap with the students one-on-one about what they had learned or appreciated about the topics shared throughout the school year.

One student’s enthusiasm topped them all. “I talk about all the things you’ve taught us with my family and everyone I work with all the time! Thank you so much for giving us all this good information!”

To have had the privilege to influence these students toward healthier food choices has not only benefited them, but, I believe, since they will be going out into the food-service industry, the knowledge they take with them has the potential to spread exponentially and touch the lives of many.

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