



Health and Wellness Classroom

Activities and Handouts

The PCSD Student Wellness Policy #5405 recognizes the connection between proper nutrition, adequate physical activity and educational success. The Board of Education policy sets goals and authorizes district actions to provide district students with a school environment that promotes student health and wellness and reduces childhood obesity.

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Low
Cost

Elementary
School-Oriented

Student champions of the month wear costumes and lead fun activities to educate their peers about nutrition and physical activity.



Objective

Peer motivation encourages students to try new healthy food options, make healthy food choices from each food group, and participate in physical activities and nutrition education programs.

The Event

Small groups of students serve as food champions, motivating their peers to make healthy food choices from the five food groups: Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Dairy, and Protein Foods. For more information about healthy food options from each food group, visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>. Each month, rotating groups of food champions promote the nutritional benefits of a featured food throughout the month, encouraging other students to try it when it is served in the cafeteria. Food champions can create costumes and colorful posters, host trivia games, and create songs about their featured food. Have food champions help students get excited about tasting featured foods when they are served in the cafeteria.

After a series of months, schools can assign each student to a food group team and hold races between the teams as part of physical education classes. The food champions can participate in the competition while wearing the costumes they created. The school nutrition staff can feature winning groups' foods on school lunch or breakfast menus.

Planning

Gather a food champion team. As a group, decide how you will recruit student volunteers to serve as food champions. Involve students and school nutrition services staff in deciding which foods will be featured each month. Create a timeline for the monthly activities, coordinating them early with the school nutrition director (especially if the food champions will be promoting foods on the school lunch or breakfast menu). Teachers, librarians, and wellness committee members can create a list of resources to help students research the nutritional benefits of their food. Art teachers can provide students with ideas for simple, easily accessible materials that can be used to make costumes or decorated T-shirts promoting the featured food.

Design a food group race day. Physical education teachers can determine how to incorporate a food group race into physical education classes or an all-school field day, including what elements will comprise the race. It can be a running event, an obstacle course, or another competitive physical activity that all students enjoy. The food champions can participate by wearing the costumes or T-shirts they created.



Team Up ^{FOR} Success

School



- The food champions can make an announcement over the school's public address system, sharing a healthy fact about their food.
- Enlist the school mascot to help food champions promote the event.
- As an alternative to having students design costumes or shirts, ask parent organizations (e.g., PTA, PTO) to purchase specially designed T-shirts for food champions to wear throughout the year.

Classroom



- Students can use class time to learn about healthy food choices from the five food groups. Consult *Serving Up MyPlate* for elementary school students and *Nutrition Voyage* for middle school students.
- Language arts teachers can assign a writing project, such as writing a fictional story about how a food champion helps kids power up with foods from the five food groups.

Cafeteria



- Each month, school nutrition directors can highlight featured foods on the school lunch or breakfast menu.

Community



- Local chefs or registered dietitians can provide cooking demonstrations using the featured food. Food champions can assist and help distribute samples to students.
- If the featured food is produced locally, area producers can use visuals to show the food's origins. For example, a local miller can show how wheat is made into flour, a dairy farmer can discuss how milk from a cow ends up in cartons, and farmers can discuss how vegetables go from seed to plant to a student's plate.
- Local grocery stores can put the champions' foods on display in sections of the market.

Media



- Post blogs featuring pictures, students' stories about their roles as food champions, and presentation materials about various healthy food choices on the school's Web site.

Home



- School nutrition directors and wellness committee members can provide recipes using the featured foods for students to bring home to their families. For ideas, consult the *Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Homes*

Schools **IN** Action

Slater Middle School in **Pawtucket, RI**, ran a summer food program called *Fruit and Vegetable Ambassadors*, where students came up with fun ways to encourage their fellow students to make healthier decisions during lunch. The ambassadors learned about uncommon healthy food options, such as malangas and chocolate peppers, so they could talk about them with their peers. They also learned from a local farmer who came to speak about the fruits and vegetables grown on her farm. The ambassadors participated in a food trivia game, taste-tested foods, and brainstormed ideas to help promote healthy food consumption among their fellow classmates. One group's idea was to create rap songs about healthy eating that could be aired on the school's public address system.



[Photo] Fruit and Vegetable Ambassadors sample fresh produce at their Summer Food Service Program.





Healthy competition is just the ticket to get students excited about eating more fruits and vegetables.

Objective

Students become more aware of their current eating habits through self-monitoring and are encouraged to set goals for sustained healthy eating.

The Event

Students team up by class and record the fruits and vegetables they eat over the course of 2 weeks. Classrooms challenge one another to see which class eats the most or the widest variety of fruits and vegetables. Students in each class brainstorm ways to achieve the class goal. For example, how can they eat more fruit at breakfast? Also, the activity can be adapted to have children track what they consume from the dairy or grain groups (with an emphasis on whole grains).

Students can reflect upon their experience in the competition through a journaling activity. At the end of the first week, students can examine how their eating habits changed and share tips with one another about how to make even more healthy food choices during the second week of the competition. At the end of the competition, all classes can attend a celebration. The top teams can receive nonfood prizes and all students can share their experiences with unfamiliar fruits and vegetables during the event.

Planning

Plan your calendar. Decide when and how long students will track what they eat. A 2-week period is suggested to keep students' attention and help them learn new habits. If possible, tie the competition to existing calendar events (for example, by linking the event to New Year's resolutions in January).

Get teachers on board. This event can be linked to core course content in a variety of subjects. For instance, tabulating, comparing, and analyzing the class data can be linked to math; discussing the benefits of the healthy food choices students are making can be tied to health or science; and summarizing and reporting findings can be connected to English and language arts. Refer to the following section for several Team Nutrition classroom lessons involving similar self-monitoring activities linked to educational standards.

Choose your recording tracker and pass it out. Consider using an existing tracker (i.e., a simplified method of recording what you eat) or develop your own. Students can track their choices at lunch or breakfast, since school meal programs help make healthy choices accessible for students at these times. Some existing trackers include:

- *Fruit and Veggie Detective Challenge Tracker* (Student Handout 6.2) for third and fourth grades in *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* (see appendix, page 97).
- *Fuel Up With Veggies...and Zoom to the Finish!* (Lesson 4 Handout) for fifth and sixth grades in *Dig In!* (see appendix, page 95).
- *Reaching Produce Peak* tracker for seventh grade in *Nutrition Voyage: The Quest To Be Our Best* (see appendix, page 95).
- Older students may be interested in using the online *MyPlate Super Tracker* (see appendix, page 97) to record their food intake.

Planning (cont'd)

Reflect on the experience. At the end of the first week, students can examine their trackers to see where they made healthy food choices and where there are opportunities to add more fruits and vegetables in their diet during the second week. As part of English and language arts, ask students to write a journal entry about their experience at the end of week 1. Students can review whether they met their goals or tried new foods as a part of the activity, and talk about any challenges they faced. Ask students to identify strategies to overcome these challenges in week 2. At the end of week 2, students can again reflect on their progress and set new goals for the future or establish ways to maintain their improved eating habits.

Select the winners and celebrate. During each week of the competition, compile the team members' trackers and determine each student's and team's fruit and vegetable total. At the end of the competition, determine the winning class and hold a celebration. At the celebration, give nonfood prizes to the top teams and ask participants to talk about one unfamiliar fruit or vegetable they tried.

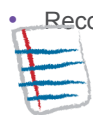
Team Up ^{FOR} Success

School



- Announce participating classrooms to the school via the public address system. During the challenge, provide tips on how to eat more fruits and vegetables (or dairy foods or whole grains) each day.
- Ask teachers, school nutrition staff, and principals to participate in the challenge along with the students. Middle schools can provide staff with *Healthier Middle Schools: Everyone Can Help* materials (see appendix, page 98), which encourage healthy role-modeling behaviors.

Classroom



- Record students' progress as a class and strategize ways to reach their goals.
- Teach lessons associated with the trackers listed under the Planning section (see appendix for more information about *Dig In!*, *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* and *Nutrition Voyage* curricula, page 95).

Cafeteria



- Coordinate with the school nutrition director to include encouraging messages about the challenge on the school lunch menu.
- Highlight fruits and vegetables on the menu.
- Display the *It's Launch Time* fruit and vegetable poster and *Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables* poster, if hosting the event at an elementary school (see appendix, page 96).
- Display the *Power Up!* fruit and vegetable game poster, if hosting the event at a middle school (see appendix, page 96).



Community

- Request donations, such as nonfood prizes, from community retailers for your celebrations.
- Ask local public figures, such as the mayor, to participate with students in the challenge.

Team Up for Success (cont'd)



Media

- Include a “Can’t Beat How I Eat” recurring feature in the school newspaper or blog that spotlights students participating in the competition. The feature can highlight the students’ success in the competition and share tips for readers looking to improve their own eating habits.



Home

- Send a letter to students’ families (see appendix, page 90) explaining the competition, and provide families with a copy of the tracker used by students to encourage family members to participate in the challenge.
- Middle schools can also provide families with the *Healthier Middle Schools: Everyone Can Help* parent materials (see appendix, page 98).

Schools **IN** Action

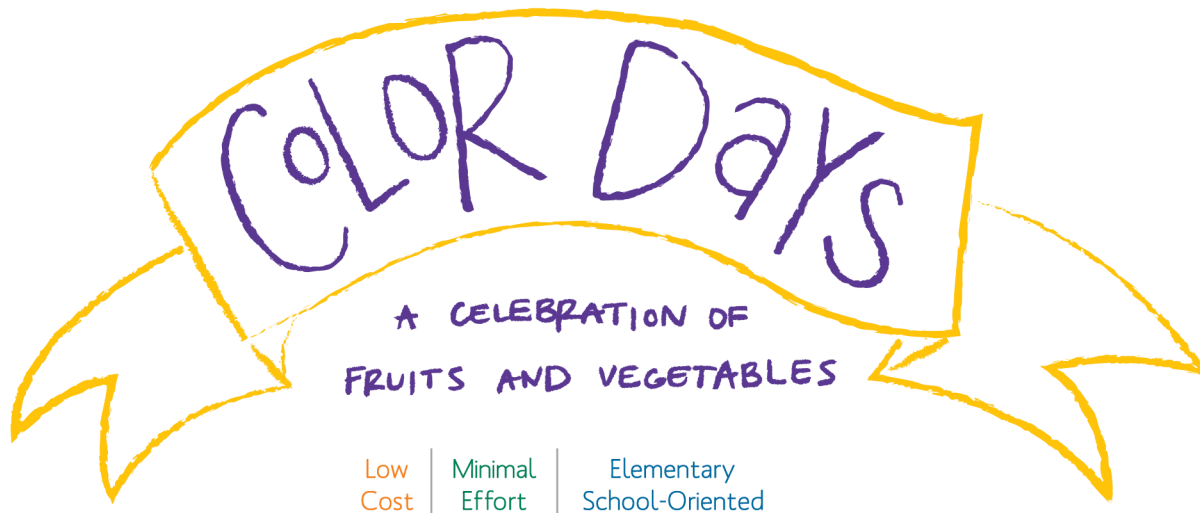
Students at **Wakarusa Elementary School** in **Wakarusa, IN**, completed weekly trackers for a month, noting their healthy food choices and physical activity. They completed trackers at home and turned them in to their teachers each Monday. To accompany the activity, the school made morning announcements featuring health tips, physical activity ideas, and suggestions for healthy food choices. The school also hosted food demonstrations featuring two recipes that involved apples (apple cinnamon breakfast quesadillas and apple-cranberry smoothies), and students were given apples to take home for a snack. At the end of each week, students reviewed their trackers to identify where they made healthy food choices and where they had room for improvement.

In **Dodge City, KS**, schools competed to see which teams could eat the most fruits and vegetables, as well as be more physically active. Each school had a team captain who tracked the school’s progress and reported back to the district. During the competition, teams ate more than 3 tons of fruits and vegetables and walked more than 25,000 miles. In addition to receiving prizes of fresh fruit and vegetable trays, participants reported feeling more energetic and positive. Students weren’t the only ones to take the challenge – 425 staff members participated in the competition and lost a collective 842 pounds!

Eighth-grade students at **Sequoyah Middle School** in **Doraville, GA**, participated in a “Can You Eat Better Than a Grade Schooler?” challenge. During the 2-week competition, students in health education class learned about MyPlate and the variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain-rich foods offered in school meals. Students kept journals to record the vegetables and grains they ate and how long they spent staying active each day. Challenge participants were recognized at a ceremony during annual Field Day activities.



[Photo] A **Wakarusa Elementary School** student enjoys an apple-cranberry smoothie.



Students explore fruits and vegetables of a variety of colors through art, classroom lessons, and tasting opportunities.

Objective

Emphasize the importance of a varied diet and motivate students to increase their consumption of colorful fruits and vegetables.

The Event

As part of coursework or after school, students create a colorful mural using photos or drawings of fruits and vegetables. Students can incorporate these images into a rainbow, painter's palette, prism, or other creative design that highlights the many colors of fruits and vegetables. The mural can then be displayed in the school cafeteria to remind everyone to "eat their colors."

To create an interactive event, hold "Color Days" schoolwide throughout the year, where activities revolve around the colors of certain fruits and vegetables. These events can be integrated into the calendar, tying colors and fruits and vegetables to certain observances (for instance, green for St. Patrick's Day). Events can feature a tasting of the fruits and vegetables that match the designated color and theme of the day. Consider inviting students to wear clothes in the "color of the day," or challenge them to see how many fruits and vegetables of the designated color they can name or identify in a display.

Planning

Gather a group to help plan the activities. Consider involving the art teacher, school nutrition services staff, and the parent organization (e.g., PTA or PTO) for coordinating the Color Day tastings and mural display. Teachers can integrate lessons about fruit and vegetable variety into their existing coursework.

Determine who should participate. These activities are especially well-suited for kindergarten and lower elementary school students. Consider whether or not to invite older elementary school students to participate in the tastings.





Team Up ^{For} Success

School



- Encourage the school principal and other staff to contribute artwork to the mural and participate in Color Day activities with the students.
- Consider planting a school garden that will yield fruits and vegetables of a variety of colors (see page 56 for a school gardening event).
- Enter the names of staff who participate in the Color Day tasting events into a drawing for a “rainbow fruit and vegetable basket” filled with produce of every color.

Classroom



- Kindergarten teachers can use Team Nutrition’s *Discover MyPlate: Lesson 3: Eat Your Colors* (see appendix, page 94) to tie the event into educational content on the five senses, color sorting, math, reading, and more.
- First and second grade teachers can use Team Nutrition’s *Serving Up MyPlate: Level 1* curriculum (see appendix, page 94), which invites students to write a short story about a day in the life of their favorite fruit or vegetable.
- Third and fourth grade teachers can use the Detective Veggie Dice in Team Nutrition’s *The Great Garden Detective Adventure: Lesson 4* (see appendix, page 95) to teach children about eating a variety of vegetables.
- Fifth and sixth grade teachers can use Team Nutrition’s *Dig In!: Lesson 3: Healthy From the Ground Up* materials (see appendix, page 95). These materials invite classes to prepare a rainbow bean salsa and create a comic strip about how eating a colorful variety of vegetables helps you play hard.

Cafeteria



- Collaborate with your school nutrition director on how to implement the Color Day tasting activities. Ask the director to highlight colorful fruits and vegetables on the school menu.
- Display the colorful mural in the school cafeteria to remind everyone to “eat their colors.”
- School nutrition directors can offer training for school nutrition services staff on ways to offer, prepare, and present fruits and vegetables. Team Nutrition’s *Fact Sheets for Healthier School Meals* (see appendix, page 100) include handouts titled “Jazz Up Your Menu with Fruits,” “Vary Your Vegetables,” and “Serve More Dry Beans and Peas.” The *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (see appendix, page 100) can help in planning how much food to buy for the correct number of servings you will need.

Team Up for Success (cont'd)

Community



- Ask local grocery stores to donate circulars for students to use in their mural of colorful fruits and vegetables. Inquire about donations of fresh fruits and vegetables to use in tasting activities or to create rainbow fruit and vegetable baskets to use as prizes.
- Invite a local chef to demonstrate for students the preparation of colorful, healthy foods, such as the Purple Power Bean Wrap from the *Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbooks* (see appendix, page 99).



Media

- Take photos of the cafeteria mural and post them on the school's Web site or in the newsletter.

Home

- Send a letter to students' families (see appendix, page 90) explaining the activity and encouraging them to help the students bring in pictures of fruits and vegetables from fliers, magazines, or coloring books to use in their artwork.



- Send 8- to 10-year-old students home with the *Fuel up with Fruits and Veggies* activity sheet (see appendix, page 104) to further encourage them to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Create a parent handout by consulting *Tips, Advice, and Guidance for Moms of Elementary School Children* (see appendix, page 100).
- Send home colorful fruit and vegetable recipes from the *Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbooks* (see appendix, page 99), such as the Crunchy Hawaiian Chicken Wrap, Confetti Soup, and Rainbow Rice.

Schools **IN** Action

Country View Elementary School in **Winfield, KS**, hosted an *Eat the Rainbow* event. More than 400 students and parents sampled a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables and voted on their favorite from each color group. The winning foods included cantaloupe (orange), pineapple (yellow), blackberries (blue/purple), dried cranberries (red), and kiwi (green).

Students at **Beech Bluff Elementary School** in **Jackson, TN**, drew fruits and vegetables and identified the items they drew using fun adjectives like “brain-boosting bananas” and “A+ apples.” The school held a contest to select the winning pictures, which were displayed along the cafeteria lunch line. Winning students also received goody bags that included pedometers, jump ropes, and activity books related to health and fitness.

At **Carson Elementary School** in **Cincinnati, OH**, students, staff, parents, and volunteers came together to paint a mural featuring physical activity and good nutrition. The Nutrition Council and teachers facilitated classroom nutrition activities, along with taste tests of vegetables and flavored waters (fresh lemon, orange, cucumber, and mint). During recess, Action for Healthy Kids members and volunteers led students in organized playground games.



A friendly competition encourages students to create videos about their favorite fruits and vegetables.

Objective

Increase students' knowledge about fruits and vegetables, as well as drive their preference for these food groups, by watching peers' videos and creating their own.

The Event

Each group of students creates a campaign video to promote their favorite fruit or vegetable, aiming to convince other students that it is a food worth eating. The videos should convey the nutritional benefits in a fun and competitive way, as well as communicate the visual aspects, taste, texture, and other relevant details of the food.

On event day, students can view all video entries and vote for their favorite. For the grand prize, the winning team's fruit or vegetable can be featured on the school menu.

Planning

Identify a team to lead the effort. Convene the school's media lead, head of the drama department, school wellness committee, a health teacher, the school nurse, the principal, student government representatives, and other school staff. Decide which students will participate and create a list of rules for entries, including the videos' desired length and content. Identify deadlines for completing the project and plans for sharing the final videos with the student body, including how to promote the event in advance. For more ideas, consult the list of promotion tips (see page 3).

Decide how and when students will produce their videos. Videos can be recorded at home or at school (for example, during health class). Ensure that students know how to use the video equipment provided. If providing smartphones for video recording, disable Internet functionality first, if required. Also, be sure to take into account the school's compliance practices when using video, as there may be a release form or approval process involved.

Choose skits if videos aren't convenient for your school. Students can still participate in the event by creating skits when videos aren't a possibility. Instead of airing each group's video, students can present a fun and informative skit about their favorite fruits and vegetables.

Decide how and when students will view and vote on project entries. Determine if videos can be aired in all classrooms, such as during morning announcements. (If using skits, consider holding an all-school assembly where the students can perform in front of the entire student body.) Collect the students' votes after the videos are showcased and then announce the winner to the school and the community.

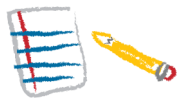
Team Up ^{For} Success



School

- Consider showing videos created by middle school students to your district's elementary schools, asking younger students to vote on the video they like the best. Ask them to hold a contest to come up with a silly, creative new name for the winning team's fruit or vegetable.
- The winning team's video can be played during a school pep rally, during lunch, or on the school's TV network. Announce winners over the public address system.

Classroom



- Before students develop their videos, middle school health and science teachers can use Team Nutrition's *Nutrition Voyage: Lesson 1: The Path to Fruits and Veggies* materials (see appendix, page 95). English and language arts teachers can assign students to write portions of the scripts and compile food facts to feature in the videos.
- Incorporate voting results into the math curriculum by asking students to create different charts and analyze them.
- Band instructors or music teachers can help students select and play background music to include in their videos.



Cafeteria

- The winning team's fruit or vegetable can be featured as an ingredient or a standalone item on the school menu.

Community



- Community organizations can sponsor the students' videos and be recognized at the end of each entry.
- Ask local grocery store managers to offer special discounts or promote the winning fruit or vegetable.
- The winning videos can be shared with other schools to air at assemblies, in health class, or as part of morning announcements.
- Encourage students to choose a fruit or vegetable that grows in their local area and use their video to show where the food comes from. Ask local growers to be part of the videos.



Media

- The winning team's entry can be posted on local TV and radio Web sites, as well as the school's Web site, newsletter, and social media channels.



Home

- Families can assist students in filming and editing their videos. The videos can be shown at any schoolwide event that families attend.

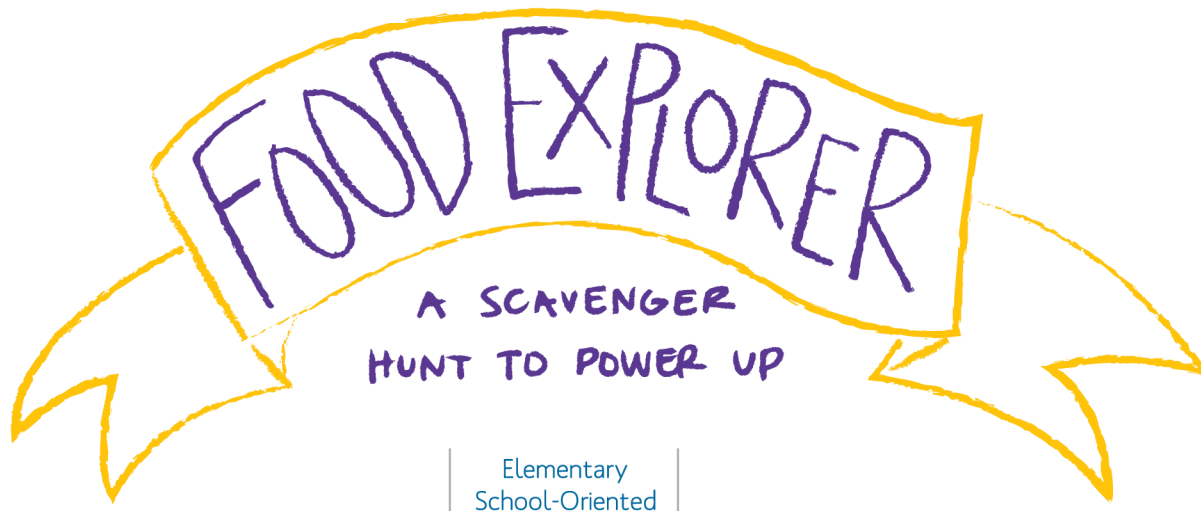
Schools Action

The **Montana Team Nutrition Program's Focus on Health Youth Video Competition** asked young people (grades K-12) to demonstrate positive examples of healthy practices in their schools. Students from across the State submitted 15 videos for the competition. The four winning teams were awarded cash prizes and had part or all of their videos featured at statewide conferences and on the Montana Team Nutrition Web site. The **Jefferson High School** team was awarded the grand prize for the video "You Are What You Eat." In their winning video, students showed how diet can affect behavior. **Kalispell Middle School's** video won second place and the Popular Choice award for a video focusing on positive choices in the school cafeteria, including a new salad bar.

At **Norton Junior High School in Norton, KS**, students were asked to participate in the *Eat. Move. Score.* video contest, sponsored by the Midwest Dairy Council and the Kansas City Chiefs, to help them recognize the importance of eating healthy and staying active. A group of eighth grade students wrote the school's entry, which was a rap emphasizing the need to eat healthy and exercise. They performed the rap in their video and managed the technology for recording and editing the piece. The students' video was shown to all students at the elementary and junior high schools, and it was then followed by discussions on healthy eating and the importance of exercise. The school also held fruit and vegetable tastings shortly after the video screening and found that many students were more willing to try unfamiliar foods after being shown the video. As a result of the contest, water became a more popular choice for students using vending machines after school.

To see other examples of student videos, visit the USDA's *MyPlate Fruits and Veggies Video Challenge* (<http://fruitsandveggies.challenge.gov>), where students created presentations about how to add fruits and vegetables to their diets without spending a lot of money.

[Photo] Upload students' videos to your school's Web site or social media channels so students can share their work with friends and family.



Students have the opportunity to embark on a scavenger hunt where everyone wins the ultimate prize – a healthy snack!

Objective

Raise students' awareness of the components of a nutritious snack and encourage them to build their own healthy snacks in a fun, memorable way.

The Event

Students are divided into teams and led by teachers and parent volunteers through a premapped scavenger hunt. Their task is to “find” various healthy ingredients that will ultimately be combined into a healthy snack. Multiple stations are set up along the route, and at each stop, students receive a series of clues that guide them to guessing the station's food. When a team identifies the correct food, each student on that team receives a ticket with the name of the food on it. Teams move through the remainder of the scavenger hunt until all food tickets are collected and all ingredients for the healthy snack are found.

Once students have completed their entire clue worksheet, they can redeem their tickets for the healthy snack they “created” during the scavenger hunt – for example, a fruit salad featuring all of the ingredients they “found,” a vegetable salsa and whole-grain chips, a whole-grain and dried fruit snack mix, yogurt parfaits, or smoothies.

Planning

Collaborate with a broad team. Gather wellness committee members, school nutrition staff, parent organization (e.g., PTA or PTO) members, students, and teachers to plan your event. Talk with your school nutrition director about food preparation and using the cafeteria. Investigate options for how to fund the food, such as through your school's parent organization or through local grocers, restaurants, and community groups.

Choose your recipe. Pick a healthy snack that is both easy to serve and also has ingredients that allow for fun stations and interesting clues. Recipes that work well contain fewer than 10 ingredients and involve more than one MyPlate food group. For example, the Farmers Market Salsa (see appendix, page 82) has corn, black beans, and lime juice among its ingredients. For more ideas, consult the *Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbooks* (see appendix, page 99).

Set the date, time, and process. Decide when you will hold your scavenger hunt and reserve classrooms or other indoor areas for each station. Determine the number of student teams needed, as well as how many teacher and parent volunteers will be needed to escort student teams through the scavenger hunt. Develop a schedule to inform volunteers of when teams should reach each station and how much time they should spend there.

Design the course to be memorable and fun. Map out the route, making sure to lead students around the entire area reserved for the hunt. Try to decorate stations to match their foods, but be careful not to give away a station's answer. For example, a tomato-themed station might use vines in its decorations or a banana-themed station might use monkeys.

Planning (cont'd)

Develop a clue worksheet for students. Create clues that are challenging but solvable. If older students are participating, consider creating more difficult clues for them. For a clue sheet of the ingredients for the Farmers Market Salsa (see appendix, page 83), refer to the *Food Explorer* Clue Sheet (see appendix, page 83). Additionally, Team Nutrition's *The Great Garden Detective Adventure*'s Fruit and Vegetable Flash Cards (see appendix, page 95) include interesting facts that can be used to create clues.

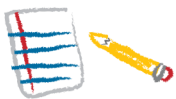
Take your volunteers on an event run-through. This event has a lot of moving pieces – food supplies, rotating teams, stations – so give your volunteers a chance to practice before the event begins. Ask volunteers to come early in order to walk through the schedule of events, including how quickly teams move from station to station and who's in charge of distributing and collecting paper slips.

Team Up ~~FOR~~ Success



School

- Divide students into teams by classroom or grade. Classes in the same grade can compete against each other to see which one can complete the scavenger hunt first.



Classroom

- Use Team Nutrition's *Serving Up MyPlate* (see appendix, page 94) to help students learn about the five food groups and MyPlate before you begin. If conducting a fruit- or vegetable-themed scavenger hunt, refer to Team Nutrition's *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* (see appendix, page 95) and *Dig In!* (see appendix, page 94) to help students learn about fruits and vegetables.



Cafeteria

- Coordinate with school nutrition services staff to have students eat their snack in the school cafeteria at the end of the hunt. Investigate options for ordering, storing, and preparing food supplies.



Community

- Reach out to local grocery stores about providing donations for the ingredients used in your snack.
- Ask a local chef or registered dietitian to present a demonstration on how to prepare the snack.
- Invite local farmers to discuss how the foods in the scavenger hunt are grown.



Media

- Feature the event and ingredients on the school's Web site.
- Provide a local radio station with the scavenger hunt clue sheet and suggest they challenge listeners to guess the correct answers on the air.

Team Up for Success (cont'd)



Home

- Provide families with the *MyPlate Grocery Store Treasure Hunt* activity sheet (see appendix, page 86) and encourage them to take their kids on a scavenger hunt at the grocery store.
- Provide students with a copy of their snack's recipe so they can make it at home.

Schools **IN** Action

Students at **Kansas' Greeley County** schools participated in a scavenger hunt to build their own salads. Each clue led them to an ingredient they would need to make their salad. The first clue led them to bowls of lettuce while another clue led students to select a dressing. At the end of the activity, students ate their healthy salads in their classrooms. Many students tried unfamiliar vegetables, with one student proclaiming, "That was the best salad I ever tasted!"

At **Orchard Park Elementary School** in **Indianapolis, IN**, students went on a scavenger hunt to find rooms featuring healthy food choices from different food groups. Food items such as garbanzo beans, pomegranates, and sugar snap peas were featured in clues, and students had the opportunity to taste them all when they discovered which rooms had samples of the foods. The school offered both clues that were appropriate for students in kindergarten through first grade and clues appropriate for students in second through fifth grade. After the scavenger hunt, students gathered in the gym to do yoga exercises.



[Photo] An **Orchard Park Elementary School** student shows off his scavenger hunt find:

a sugar snap pea.

Farmers Market Salsa Recipe

Eat smart to play hard. Power up with fruit and vegetable snacks! The ingredients you discovered during your *Food Explorer* scavenger hunt mix together to make this delicious, healthy salsa.

INGREDIENTS

½ cup corn

1 can black beans (15-ounce, drained and rinsed)

1 cup tomatoes (diced)

½ cup onion (diced)

½ cup green bell pepper (diced)

2 tablespoons lime juice

2 garlic cloves (finely chopped)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Chill until serving time.
2. Drain before serving.

½ cup picante sauce

3. Serve with whole-grain pita chips, baked tortilla chips, or fresh vegetables.



Salsa recipe adapted from Kansas Family Nutrition Program, by way of the SNAP-ED Recipe Finder Database, National Agricultural Library, United States Department of Agriculture.



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Explorer Clue Sheet

Clues based on the recipe for USDA's Farmers Market Salsa

Station 1

I'm a vegetable and a protein food. My dark color is part of my name.
People enjoy me with rice, in soups, or in burritos.



Station 2

I'm a-MAIZE-ing. My golden kernels are eaten on a cob or off.

Station 3

You can find me on a salad bar, in pizza and pasta sauce, or growing on a vine.
Sometimes I squirt juice and seeds when you take a bite!

Station 4

The first half of my name sounds like something that rings between classes or in a church. The second half of my name can be confusing, since I'm not hot or spicy.



Station 5

I make some cooks cry when they peel and slice me. I am a vegetable that adds flavor to many foods.

Station 6

You can separate me into cloves. In stories, I'm used to ward off vampires.

Station 7

I'm a type of bread with a pocket. My whole grains make me look tan or brown.



ANSWERS BY STATION NUMBER: 1. Black beans, 2. Corn, 3. Tomatoes, 4. Bell pepper, 5. Onion, 6. Garlic, 7. Whole-wheat pita



Food Explorer Ingredient Coupons

Write the name of each ingredient from your *Food Explorer* hunt on the coupons below. Copy and cut out the coupons, making sure there are enough for all students to have one of each ingredient. You may wish to copy coupons for different ingredients on different colors of paper. Hand out coupons at each ingredient station.



Food Explorer Ingredient Coupon

tomato

Food Explorer Ingredient Coupon

Food Explorer Ingredient Coupon

Food Explorer Ingredient Coupon

Food Explorer Ingredient Coupon

Food Explorer Ingredient Coupon

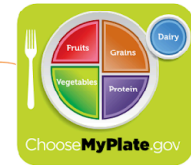
Food Explorer Ingredient Coupon

Food Explorer Ingredient Coupon

MyPlate Grocery Store Treasure Hunt

Families and Friends:

Take this sheet along with you the next time you go to the supermarket, and have your child look for foods in each food group. Make this a fun treasure hunt and a memorable activity for your child.



Make at least half of your grains whole grains.

GRAINS

Start every day the whole-grain way. Find a breakfast cereal that has one of these listed as the first ingredient: brown rice, oatmeal, rolled oats, whole oats, whole-grain corn, or whole wheat.

☐

Check the box and name the cereal

The color of the bread does not mean it is whole-grain. Read bread labels and find one with whole wheat as the first ingredient.

☐

Check the box and name the bread



VEGETABLES

Look for a dark green and a red or orange vegetable.

☐

Check the box and name the red or orange vegetable

☐

Check the box and name the dark green vegetable

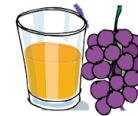
Color your plate with great tasting veggies.

FRUITS

Find a fruit. If you choose a fruit juice, make sure it is 100% juice.

☐

Check the box and name the fruit



Fuel up with fruit.

DAIRY

Dairy foods contain calcium for strong bones and teeth. Find a dairy food that is low-fat or fat-free.

☐

Check the box and name the dairy food



Get your calcium-rich foods.

MEAT AND BEANS

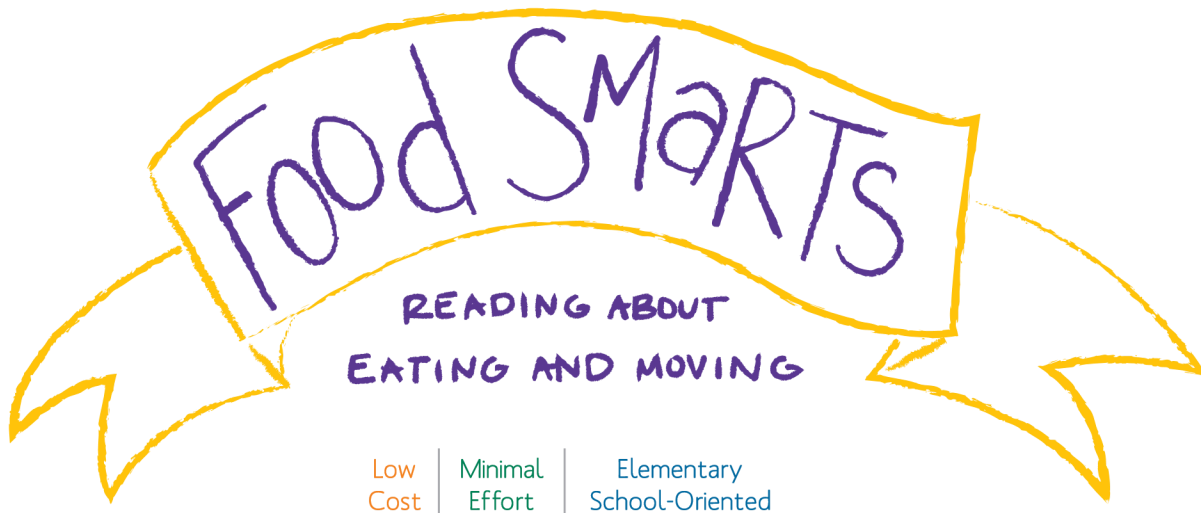
Try fish, shellfish, beans, and peas more often. Find a bag of dry beans.

☐

Check the box and name the beans



Vary your proteins.



This event promotes awareness of new foods and healthy eating among K-2 students through fun food stories and tasting activities.

Objective

Build literacy skills, encourage reading, and generate discussions about nutritious choices, trying new foods, and being physically active.

The Event

Students in kindergarten through second grade read books about healthy food choices and physical activity, and books that involve characters who model healthy behaviors or overcome barriers to lead a healthy lifestyle. Schools can involve multiple grades by matching older students and younger students to read together as “book buddies.” You may also consider inviting notable members of the community to read with the students. A reading challenge, where students read as many books as they can in a month from a list, can be another way to get students involved.

Once the reading is finished, classes can discuss the story and the importance of making healthy food and physical activity choices. Classes can then taste foods related to the book or enjoy storybook-themed meals in the school cafeteria.

Planning

Gather a broad team. Teachers, librarians, school nutrition directors, and wellness committee members can work to identify books that feature healthy food and physical activity choices, making sure to take into consideration the reading curriculum criteria, book availability, and overall themes. Many schools already plan activities for National Reading Month in March, so this activity may be easy to integrate into the school schedule at that time.

Choose a theme. You may wish to focus the reading selections around a specific theme in order to make discussions and tasting activities easier to implement, as well as make the overall message more memorable. Some themes and the books that relate to them are listed below.*

Breakfast

Good Morning, Little Fox

By Marilyn Janovitz (North-South, 2001)**

The Hatseller and the Monkeys: A West African Folktale

By Baba Wagué Diakité (Scholastic Press, 2000)**

Dairy

A Big Cheese for the White House: The True Tale of a Tremendous Cheddar

By Candace Fleming (DK Publishing, 1999)

Make Me a Peanut Butter Sandwich and a Glass of Milk

By Ken Robbins (Scholastic, 1992)

Raising Cows on the Koebels' Farm By Alice K. Flanagan and Romie Flanagan (Children's Press, 1999)

Planning (cont'd)

Food Groups and Meals

The Beastly Feast

By Bruce Goldstone (Henry Holt and Company, 1998)**

Discover MyPlate Emergent Readers

By the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, 2014

Zachary's Dinnertime

By Lara Levinson (Star Bright Books, 2012)**

Fruits and Vegetables

Count on Pablo

By Barbara deRubertis (Kane Press, 1999)

Growing Vegetable Soup

By Lois Ehlert (Sandpiper, 1990)

Pumpkin Soup

By Helen Cooper (Doubleday, 1998)

The Trouble with Cauliflower

By Jane Sutton (Dial Books for Young Readers, 2006)

The Ugly Vegetables

By Grace Lin (Charlesbridge Publishing, 2009)**

Yum! ¡Mmmm! ¡Qué Rico! America's Sproutings

By Pat Mora (Lee & Low Books, 2007)**

Gardening/Farm-to-School

Apple Countdown

By Joan Holub (Albert Whitman & Company, 2009)**

In the Garden with Dr. Carver

By Susan Grigsby (Albert Whitman & Company, 2010)**

Little Critter: A Green, Green Garden By Mercer

Mayer (Harper Collins Publishers, 2011)

Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!

By Candace Flemming and G. Brian Karas (Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2002)

Plant a Little Seed

By Bonnie Christensen (Roaring Book Press, 2012)

The Surprise Garden

By Zoe Hal (Scholastic, 1998)

Tops & Bottoms

By Janet Stevens (Harcourt Children's Books, 1995)**

Water, Weed, and Wait

By Edith Hope Fine and Angela Demos Halpin (Tricycle Press, 2010)**

Grains

The Little Red Hen and the Ear of Wheat

By Mary Finch (Barefoot Books, 2001) **

The Tortilla Factory

By Gary Paulsen (Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1995)

Physical Activity

The Busy Body Book: A Kid's Guide to Fitness

By Lizzy Rockwell (Crown Books for Young Readers, 2004)**

Froggy Plays Soccer

By Jonathan London (Viking, 1999)

Giraffes Can't Dance

By Giles Andreae and Guy Parker-Rees (Orchard Books, 2001)**

Planning (cont'd)

Junie B Jones is Captain Field Day

By Barbara Park (Scholastic, Inc., 2001)

The Listening Walk

By Paul Showers (Harper Collins Publishers, 1991)

Pete the Cat, Play Ball! (My First I Can Read)

By James Dean (Harper Collins, 2013)

Rainbow Magic: Sports Fairies (series)

By Daisy Meadows (Scholastic Press, 2003)

Scholastic Reader Level 1: Bob Books #4: Outdoor Adventures! By

Lynn Maslen Kertell (Scholastic Inc., 2012)

Watch Me Throw the Ball!

By Mo Willems (Hyperion Books for Children, 2009)

Trying New Foods

Bread and Jam for Frances

By Russell Hoban (HarperCollins, 1964)**

Delicious! A Pumpkin Soup Story

By Helen Cooper (Doubleday, 2006)**

Green Eggs and Ham

By Dr. Seuss (Random House, 1960)

I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato

By Lauren Child (Candlewick Press, 2000)**

Two Bite Club

By the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, 2013

Yoko

By Rosemary Wells (Hyperion Books, 1998)

*Mention of these materials is not an endorsement by the United States Department of Agriculture over other materials that may be available on this subject. **Discussion questions for this book are provided in Team Nutrition's *Discover MyPlate* curriculum (see appendix, page 94).

For children reading chapter books, some popular selections can still provide opportunities to discuss nutrition and physical activity. For instance, *The Chocolate Touch* by Patrick Skene Catling (HarperCollins, 2006) can start conversations about moderation. Even *Bunnicula* by Deborah and James Howe (Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006) can be the source of creative conversations about vegetables.

Plan how to present and sample the foods during meal times. School nutrition staff can incorporate the reading theme into cafeteria displays, such as labeling special menu items as a book character's "favorite" or creating storybook-themed menus or food tastings.

Make it fun and memorable. Promote your event with posters and announcements, or in the school newsletter or emails (see page 3 for promotion tips).

Team Up ^{For} Success

School



- Ask older students to volunteer to read books to younger students.
- Hold a book parade, where children dress as a character from a book they've read and carry foods or sporting equipment featured in the book.
- Create a special display in the library of the books on your students' list. Create a chart for children to track how many books they read. Give children a small nonfood prize or coupon when they have read a certain number.

Classroom

- Tie books to lesson themes using *Discover MyPlate* (see appendix, page 94), which includes a Book Club section that connects activities with educational standards for kindergarten.



- If your school offers the Breakfast in the Classroom program, read stories about nutrition and physical activity to children as they eat breakfast.
- Consider a book bag program, in which families check out a bag containing a book, some discussion questions, a simple recipe or physical activity related to the book, and a journal. As students check out their book bags, they can use the journal to describe their experiences with the book and the recipe/physical activity. At the end of a designated period, share some of these experiences with the class.

Cafeteria



- Incorporate story themes into the cafeteria décor and menu. Invite children to decorate placemats with a food-related image from their stories.



Community

- Invite a local children's book author, chef, or registered dietitian to read a book to the students and lead a discussion on what they like about trying new healthy foods and being physically active.

Media



- Ask students to write about their experiences with a food featured in one of their books. Post those writing assignments on the school's Web site, along with recipes that feature the book's food and lists of other books that discuss healthy foods.

Home

- Send students home with recipes that include foods featured in their books, as well as additional books about food recommended by librarians, to encourage their families to read with them and try the foods at home.



- If your school offers a family literacy night for parents and children, create a display or handout of books with positive nutrition and physical activity messages. Provide parents with a copy of Team Nutrition's *MyPlate for Kindergarten Emergent Readers* (see appendix, page 97) to take home and read with their child.

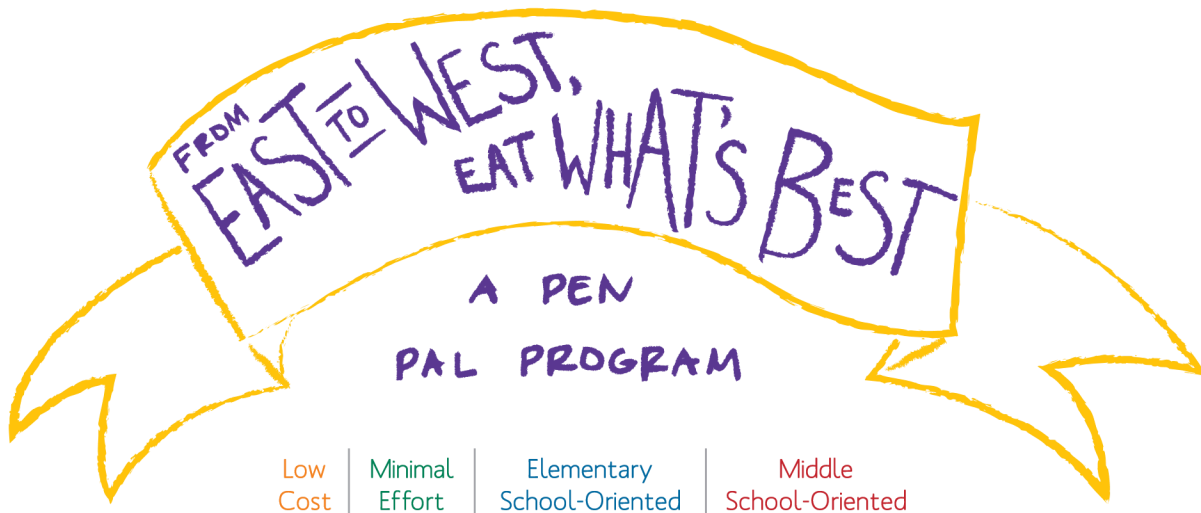
Schools **IN** Action

Rural Vista School District in Hope, KS, coordinated a *Healthy Lifestyles with Dr. Seuss* event. The event, held during Dr. Seuss Week, involved junior high and upper elementary students reading a Dr. Seuss book to younger students. Tasting stations were set up based on healthy foods featured in the book, such as a snack of green eggs and ham made with Canadian bacon. Local media highlighted the event, and both students and their families had a fun and educational experience.

In **North Marion School District in Aurora, OR**, third through fifth graders qualified for a *Kids Iron Chef* competition by writing nutritional essays based on literary challenges. One of the challenges posed was, "The story of Jack and the Beanstalk does not tell about the crop of beans that must have come from such a big plant. Write about what Jack and his mom did with all those beans. Were they dried beans or green beans? Did they eat them or sell them? How did they cook them?" Students with winning essays were placed on Iron Chef teams coached by a high school student. Teams then participated in a competition during an all-school assembly, preparing two recipes each for a panel of local "celebrity" judges.



[Photo] Books about nutritious foods and physical activity help students strengthen their reading skills while learning more about healthy habits.



Students from different schools share stories about nutrient-rich foods grown and eaten in their area.

Objective

Students gain favorable attitudes toward novel fruits, vegetables, or whole grains.



The Event

Teachers or administrators connect their school with another school in a different part of the United States, pairing individual students as pen pals. Through letters, students introduce themselves and share information about their favorite fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, as well as foods that are native to their region. Students can be given a list of questions to ask their pen pals, using materials such as *Dig In!: Lesson 6, Handout 2: Garden Pen Pals* (see appendix, page 95). If the school maintains a garden, students can also share updates about the garden with their pen pals. As letters are received back, students can read them aloud to the class and discuss how their pen pals' eating habits differ from their own.

Planning

Identify your pen pal project leaders. With help from the school wellness committee and language arts teachers, identify a staff member or teacher who can lead the effort. Check to see if administrative approval is needed. If your program starts at the beginning of the school year, pen pals will be able to correspond throughout the year.

Find a classroom or school partner. Use the U.S. Department of Agriculture's *Team Nutrition: Schools Database* Web site to find other Team Nutrition schools in different regions of the country (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/database>).

Connect leadership at both schools to determine how your pen pal program will work. Decide together how the program will function. Will students correspond through email or hand-written letters? How often will pen pals write to one another? Is online video chat software appropriate to use?

Integrate classroom activities into the project. Before the pen pal program begins, ask teachers or guest speakers to talk about different types of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains produced locally and around the United States. That way, students will be prepared with knowledge about their own local food history – and they'll be ready with questions for their new pen pals.



Team Up ^{FOR} Success



School

- Students can share letters from their pen pals in the school paper.
- A student reporter from the school paper or cable news show can interview students about the pen pal experience.
- Students can send a cardboard cutout or other replica of the school mascot to their pen pals. The pen pals can then send back photographs of the mascot with the pen pals' school lunch, in the school garden surrounded by local foods, or at a nutrition education class.

Classroom



- Elementary school teachers can help students learn about the many choices from different food groups using several standards-based curricula from Team Nutrition, including *Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum*, *Dig In!*, and *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* (see appendix, pages 94-95). These resources include a cross-walk that shows how activities meet Common Core and other educational standards for core subjects.
- Seventh grade science classes can use the *Nutrition Voyage: The Path to Fruits and Veggies* lesson to track and analyze their fruit and vegetable consumption. Eighth grade English and language arts classes can use the *Nutrition Voyage: From Farm to You* lesson to further explore where food comes from (see appendix, page 95).
- Use class time to talk about healthy breakfasts and lunches in different parts of the country.
For example, a class in Virginia might talk about what students in Alaska eat for breakfast.
- Math classes can determine the distance between each student and their pen pal, or discover what percentage of their State's economy relies on agriculture.

Cafeteria



- Classrooms can decorate a cafeteria bulletin board with letters from their pen pals and, if resources allow, prepare (with school nutrition staff supervision) a healthy dish local to the pen pals' area.

Community



- Students can write to the mayor or school superintendent at the end of the project, encouraging other schools in the area to participate in a pen pal program.
- Schools can invite a local chef, registered dietitian, or farmer to be the school's pen pal, writing about the locally grown fruits, vegetables, or whole grains they serve or grow.

Team Up for Success (cont'd)



Media

- Invite a local blogger to write about the pen pal program and post students' letters to the school blog.



Home

- Compile the students' letters to their pen pals into a booklet to share with students' families. Encourage families and students to write pen pal letters together over school breaks.

Schools Action



As part of *International School Meals Day* (ISMD), **Cartoogechaye Elementary School** in **Macon County, NC**, partnered with **Bridgend Primary** in **Scotland** to share challenges and successes with healthy eating in different parts of the world. Before connecting with its partner school, the elementary school invited three guest speakers to visit the classroom: a community member of Scottish heritage, who discussed the local history of Scottish culture in Macon County; the school's child nutrition director, who talked about nutrition and brought a healthy breakfast for students to sample; and a representative from the Macon County Health Department, who discussed MyPlate, portion control, and building a balanced diet. Following the guest speakers, the students researched Scotland and brainstormed in groups to compile questions for the students at **Bridgend Primary**. Students also compared the menus of both schools, worked together to locate Bridgend on a map, wrote letters to Bridgend students, and prepared foods from Scotland. During the video conferencing session with Scotland, Cartoogechaye showed Scottish students typical school breakfast foods consumed in the United States.

Fourth-grade students at **M.B. Henderson Elementary School** in **Dallas, TX**, also celebrated ISMD by holding a breakfast video conference with students in Scotland. Students learned about what foods they ate during the week, shared different recipes from other countries, and created a poster.



*[Photo] American students share breakfast with new Scottish friends
as part of International School Meals Day.*



A family evening featuring games, exercises, dancing, and nutritious foods promotes the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Objective

Encourage students and their families to explore healthy eating and physical activity in fun ways that reinforce healthy choices in school and at home.

The Event

Students, families, and teachers gather in the evening to dance, play games that involve physical activity, and sample healthy snacks at a festive food table that also features student displays. The evening can build upon an existing schoolwide family event, with modifications made to incorporate healthy choices.

The activities can be set up as stations around the gym or the whole school. School faculty members or parent volunteers can supervise each station by introducing the activity, leading an interactive session, providing additional information about the activity's health benefits, and suggesting ways students and families can incorporate the activity into their routines. Attendees can be given a guide that encourages them to explore and try several stations. Using games or a passport-type card will encourage greater participation, especially if completed cards are eligible for nonfood prizes. For example, **Dighton School District in Kansas** handed out playing cards at each station of its *Family and Fitness Event* and awarded prizes for the best and worst hands at the end of the evening.

Planning

Gather a broad team. School faculty, teachers, wellness committee members, parents, and student volunteers can all contribute ideas for the event's logistics, preparation, promotion, set-up, clean-up, and takeaway materials. Consider the activities that would work best in your available space, and determine how the stations should be set up so several activities can run simultaneously. Collaborate with parents, the school nutrition director, or a local registered dietitian to offer nutritious snacks such as low-fat popcorn, yogurt parfaits, and fresh fruit, or main dishes such as sandwiches made with lean meats, low-fat cheese, vegetables, and whole-grain bread.

Determine a date and a theme. The event can be tied in with another annual family event held at the school, such as a holiday fair, craft show, or fundraiser. For example, try a "Harvest Hoedown" theme with fall seasonal produce and country line dancing, or a "Jingle Jam" where participants can move to music from Team Nutrition's *Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum* (see appendix, page 94), with music-themed nutrition posters from Team Nutrition's *Dig In!* curriculum (see appendix, page 95) on display. During winter, remind students that staying active can help them stay warm.

Promote your event in a fun way. Spread the word throughout the school with posters and announcements, as well as via the school's Web site and newsletter. For more ideas, consult the list of promotion tips (see page 3).

Arrange the activity stations and healthy snack table for the day of the event. Volunteers can begin setting up the event early in the day. Once the event begins, each volunteer can assume roles leading the activity stations and running the festive food table. Both volunteers and attendees can help clean up the event after it ends.

Team Up ^{For} Success



School

- Conduct a schoolwide vote to determine your event's theme. Invite different classes/grades to propose the physical activities and decorate posters for the event.



Classroom

- Ask students to create decorations for the event that relate to a subject they are studying. Art classes can create collages of healthy food options and physical activities.
- Elementary school students can learn songs about healthy food options during class using the tunes in Team Nutrition's *Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum, Level 3* (see appendix, page 94).
- Middle school students can write about the connection between making healthy food choices and physical activity using Team Nutrition's *Nutrition Voyage* materials (see appendix, page 95).



Cafeteria

- Ask the school nutrition director to help select items for the festive food table that are in line with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (<http://www.health.gov/DietaryGuidelines/>). Collaborate on the use of cafeteria and kitchen space, if needed. School nutrition services may be available to cater food for the event.



Community

- Ask local businesses to provide donations or sponsor sections of the event. For example, a local restaurant could donate healthy sandwiches and a local grocer or farmer might donate fresh fruit.
- Invite a local chef to provide an interactive activity where families learn to prepare a healthy snack.



Media

- Post student journal entries on the school's Web site about how to spend a healthy evening. Use these ideas to also post a list of healthy activities that families can enjoy together.
- Post pictures from the event on the school's Web site.



Home

- Provide families with take-home materials that promote healthy routines outside of school, such as Team Nutrition's *Eat Smart to Play Hard MyPlate Mini Poster* (see appendix, page 107).

Schools **IN** Action

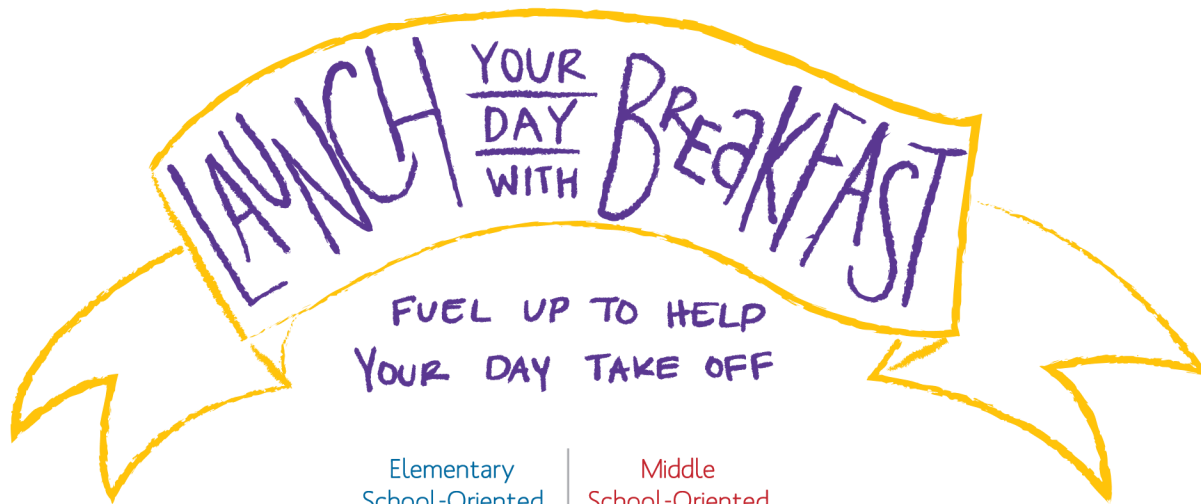
Southeast High School in **Cherokee, KS**, hosted a *Wealth of Health Activity Evening*. The night began with a brown bag supper of healthy food options for the 465 students of all ages and their guests, including family and members of the community. After the meal, participants visited activity booths where they could partake in various physical activities, including double-dutch, kick boxing, and hip hop dancing. Booths also provided information on healthy behaviors. The Kansas State University Research and Extension booth held an exercise requiring participants to pick out foods that contained whole grains. The kids were all given a jump rope, kick sack, or hula hoop to take home with them.

Richmond Elementary School in **Richmond, VT**, held a *Family Wellness Night*. Students and their guests received a map of the school indicating nine stations they could visit. The stations invited attendees to participate in activities geared around food, fitness, and well-being. A professional chef hosted a cooking class, showing families how to make a healthy, kid-friendly stir fry. Dance lessons, taste-tests, and a salad bar gave families the opportunity to enjoy healthy food options and new activities.

Hesston Middle School in **Hesston, KS**, hosted a *Steppin' into Wellness* event for students and their families. Eighth grade students led all physical activities, including horseshoes, croquet, golf, balloon volleyball, badminton, dance, wiffleball, basketball, and an obstacle course. Harvey County Research and Extension set up a snack creation station where families could create their own snacks, including fruit cups, vegetable trays, and make-your-own snack mix from a grain buffet. The school nurse also conducted blood pressure checks and vision screenings.



[Photo] **Richmond Elementary School** students play games as part of their Family Wellness Night.



At the Launch Your Day event, students and their families enjoy a space-themed school breakfast together.

Objective

Increase awareness of the importance of a healthy breakfast for learning and well-being.

The Event

On a school day, invite families to join students for a fun space-themed breakfast in the school's cafeteria. The school can set up MyPlate-themed "space stations," where families can select foods from each food group to "help their day take off" – for example, low-fat milk at the dairy station, whole-wheat pancakes at the grains station, or blueberries at the fruit station. School nutrition staff and student volunteers can explain the stations' connection to MyPlate.

To emphasize the theme, students can dress in astronaut costumes or prepare a brief skit or presentation about how a healthy breakfast helps them "fuel up" like a rocket ship. Students and their families can decorate stars with drawings of their favorite breakfast fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, lean protein foods, and whole grains, creating a starry sky of healthy food choices. Launch Your Day star stickers can be given to students who attend the event. Visit the Team Nutrition Graphics Library for free artwork to include on your stickers (see appendix, page 99).

Planning

Gather a Launch Your Day team. The school nutrition staff will be critical to the success of this event, and can help plan the menu. Teachers and administrators will also need to work together to determine the logistics of the event, such as when to hold the event (for example, during National School Breakfast Week in March) and how to fit students and guests in the cafeteria.

Get students involved. They can:

- Invent names for menu items that tie into the space theme;
- Plan and prepare for the skit;
- Help create costumes; and
- Create invitations and custom-decorated breakfast menus to send home as reminders to families.

Set up the cafeteria in advance and determine staffing. Teachers, school nutrition staff, and parent volunteers will be needed to serve breakfast to a large group of people. If having enough space for guests and children to eat breakfast together poses a problem, sell Launch Your Day "grab and go" breakfast bags that contain nutritional information and are decorated with the theme.

Get the word out. Consider having a breakfast poster competition among students, hanging the posters around the school to build excitement about the event. Send emails and invitations home to families and place alerts in the school newsletter (see page 3 for promotion tips). Parent organizations (e.g., PTA or PTO) can promote the event to families. On the day of the event, make sure the cafeteria is decorated.

Team Up Success



School

- All students should be encouraged to participate, even if they do not have guests. Students can take different roles in planning and presenting the skit. To get more students involved, the school may want to host different grades on different days.

Classroom

- Teachers can work with students to plan the nutrition skit, drawing on knowledge the kids have learned through Team Nutrition's *Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum* lessons (see appendix, page 94). Fifth and sixth graders can play the *MyPlate Blast Off* game (see appendix, page 98).



- Explore options for enjoying fruit at breakfast through *The Great Garden Detective's* Lesson 10 for third and fourth grade students and *Dig In!'s* Lesson 10 for fifth and sixth grade students. These materials include activities linked to English and language arts, math, science, and health classes.
- For kindergarten teachers, Lesson 5 of *Discover MyPlate* provides numerous activities related to breakfast. The parent information at the end of *MyPlate for Kindergarten Emergent Readers* discusses the importance of breakfast.

Cafeteria



- School nutrition staff will have an active role in planning and serving the meal. You may also want to have a member of the school nutrition staff introduce the skit, explaining how the school nutrition team plans and serves healthy meals to the students every day (with a particular emphasis on the School Breakfast Program. See <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-program-sbp> for more details).
- Display the *Launch Your Day With Breakfast* poster and the *It's Launch Time* fruit and vegetable poster (see appendix, page 96) in the cafeteria.
- Promote the event on the school breakfast menu.

Community



- Ask local grocery stores if they can offer coupons or discounts on the foods featured at the breakfast.
- Invite a chef to assist classes with the food preparation activities in the lessons from *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* (Strawberry Smoothie), *Dig In!* (Breakfast Sundae), and *Discover MyPlate* (Fruit-a-licious Breakfast Cup) (see appendix, pages 94-95).
- Invite local officials to have breakfast with the students.

Team Up for Success (cont'd)



Media

- Submit favorite recipes and pictures of the event to the food reporters for the local paper, and encourage them to write a story about the importance of school breakfast.



Home

- Provide families with information about the School Breakfast Program (see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-program-sbp>).

Schools **IN** Action

Each year, all of the schools in the **El Monte City School**

District in **El Monte, CA**, host a *Bring Your Parents to Breakfast* event called “Superheroes Eat Breakfast Too!” During the event, students and families dress as their favorite superheroes, and nutrition educators promote the importance of eating a healthy, well-balanced breakfast. Families and children enjoy breakfast together in the school cafeteria, play nutritional games, participate in fun physical activities, earn prizes, and receive recipe books featuring healthy food choices.

The nutrition education team, also dressed as superheroes, talks to students about the importance of eating a “super” breakfast daily. The cafeteria team members talk about student breakfasts that are served throughout the course of a month. Menu items are also renamed for the promotion – for example, super-galactic cereal, interstellar juice, and Iron Man milk.



[Photo] Nutrition superheroes at

El Monte City School District take on breakfast.



A schoolwide food drive encourages students to collect healthy food items for a community organization.

Objective

Increase awareness among students about the importance of eating foods from the five food groups, while showing them how to identify healthy, affordable foods in these groups. The event also showcases the vital role food drives and food banks play in providing nutritional assistance to needy families.

The Event

Students and community members collect and donate nonperishable foods from each MyPlate food group to a local food bank. If your school has a thriving school garden/greenhouse, you may also want to include the donation of fresh produce from those sources (depending on the rules and guidelines of your food bank partner). To illustrate progress and areas of need, schools can create a large MyPlate Food Donation poster, to which students can add small squares of colored construction paper corresponding with their donations' food groups.

Collected food items should be organized and separated into MyPlate food groups, with each item placed into the colored box that correlates with its food group. If a donation falls into more than one food group (e.g., beef stew with vegetables), students can use their best judgment to determine where the food should be placed. Students can decorate the outside of the boxes with examples of foods from that group to assist with sorting. Once all of the food has been collected, the school can donate it to a community organization, such as a local area food bank. If you include perishable items in your food drive, plan for a series of drop-off times to ensure that the food stays fresh. To celebrate the students' efforts, hold a student gathering. At the event, a spokesperson from the community organization or the school's wellness committee can thank the students, using the colored-in MyPlate Food Donation poster to show how the students are helping their community stay properly nourished with well-balanced meals.

Planning

Gather a broad team. School administrators, teachers, wellness committee members, parents, and student volunteers can all contribute ideas on which local organization should receive the food donations and on the logistics surrounding the event, including where the food will be securely stored and how it will be transported to the community organization.

Determine a date. You may wish to hold this event in November or December to tie in with the season of giving. Alternately, if you are donating food from your garden, plan your event close to the harvest.

Prepare materials in advance. Decorate giant boxes in the colors that correlate with the five food groups of MyPlate – Fruits (red), Vegetables (green), Grains (orange), Protein Foods (purple), and Dairy (blue). Cut out small squares of construction paper in each color and create a MyPlate Food Donation poster, to be hung in a prominent place in the school. Also, hand out the list of healthy food choices acceptable for donation (see appendix, page 87). Work with students to organize the items into MyPlate food groups. Certain food items on the list can be highlighted, depending on the particular needs or requests of the community organization receiving the donation.

Planning (cont'd)

Promote the event and make it fun. Spread the word about the food drive in the newsletter of your school parent organization (e.g., PTA, PTO) or during meeting announcements. Also use posters, school announcements, and the school newsletter or emails (see page 3 for promotion tips) to raise awareness. To get the community on board, distribute flyers inviting people to support the food drive by bringing donations to the school or giving them to students in their neighborhood to bring to school. To get kids actively engaged, consider making the drive a competition among classrooms or grades, to see who can collect the greatest number of food items.

Hold a finale gathering. Decide how best to recognize the students for their efforts. A gathering can be held to collectively thank the students or, as is common among schools that conduct food drives, a summary can be posted to the school's blog, including the final tally of donated food with pictures of the students in action. If incorporating a competition, the winning class or grade can be announced at this gathering, giving the team an award.

Team Up ^{For} Success

School



- All classes or grades can participate in the food drive and track daily progress with the MyPlate Food Donation poster.
- If holding a competition, all classes can collect food donations. Celebrate the winner at a schoolwide assembly.

Classroom



- Teachers can introduce the food drive to students using the list of recommended food items (see appendix, page 87), discussing the nutritional benefits of each MyPlate food group. Refer to Team Nutrition's *Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum* (see appendix, page 94) and <http://www.choosemyplate.gov> for lessons and background materials, respectively.
 - Students can decorate the donation boxes in art class.
- Students can write about why it is important to ensure that everyone in the community is able to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, using the materials in *Nutrition Voyage* (see appendix, page 95).
- If your school offers a family and consumer sciences or home economics class, teachers can incorporate a lesson on budgeting. In the lesson, students can use a list of MyPlate grocery items with prices to create a grocery shopping list for a week's worth of food for a family of four on a fixed budget. Tailor the degree of difficulty according to grade level.



Cafeteria

- The MyPlate Food Donation poster that tracks the students' progress can hang prominently in the cafeteria and dually serve as a reminder about the MyPlate food groups during mealtimes.



Community

- Local businesses, organizations, and neighbors can be invited to contribute items and promote the food drive.

Team Up for Success (cont'd)

Media



- Post students' journal entries about the food drive and pictures of the MyPlate poster to the school's blog on an ongoing basis to show the progress of the food drive in real time.
- Alert the media about the food drive and explain how the community can contribute food items. Include the date and time when the food donations will be officially transported to the community organization, to encourage potential coverage on that date.

Home



- Students can bring home their MyPlate food drive list of healthy food choices to encourage families to stock the pantry with these foods and donate them to the drive.
- A local chef or dietitian can take part in a school parent organization (e.g., PTA, PTO) meeting to discuss making healthy food choices on a budget. At this meeting, invite local organizations to come and take part in a mini resource fair, where representatives from local food banks or nutrition assistance programs (for example, the National School Lunch Program, Summer Food Service Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs [SNAP], etc.) can pass out relevant information. Give families *The Ten Tips Nutrition*

Education Series: Smart Shopping for Veggies and Fruits handout (see appendix, page 97).

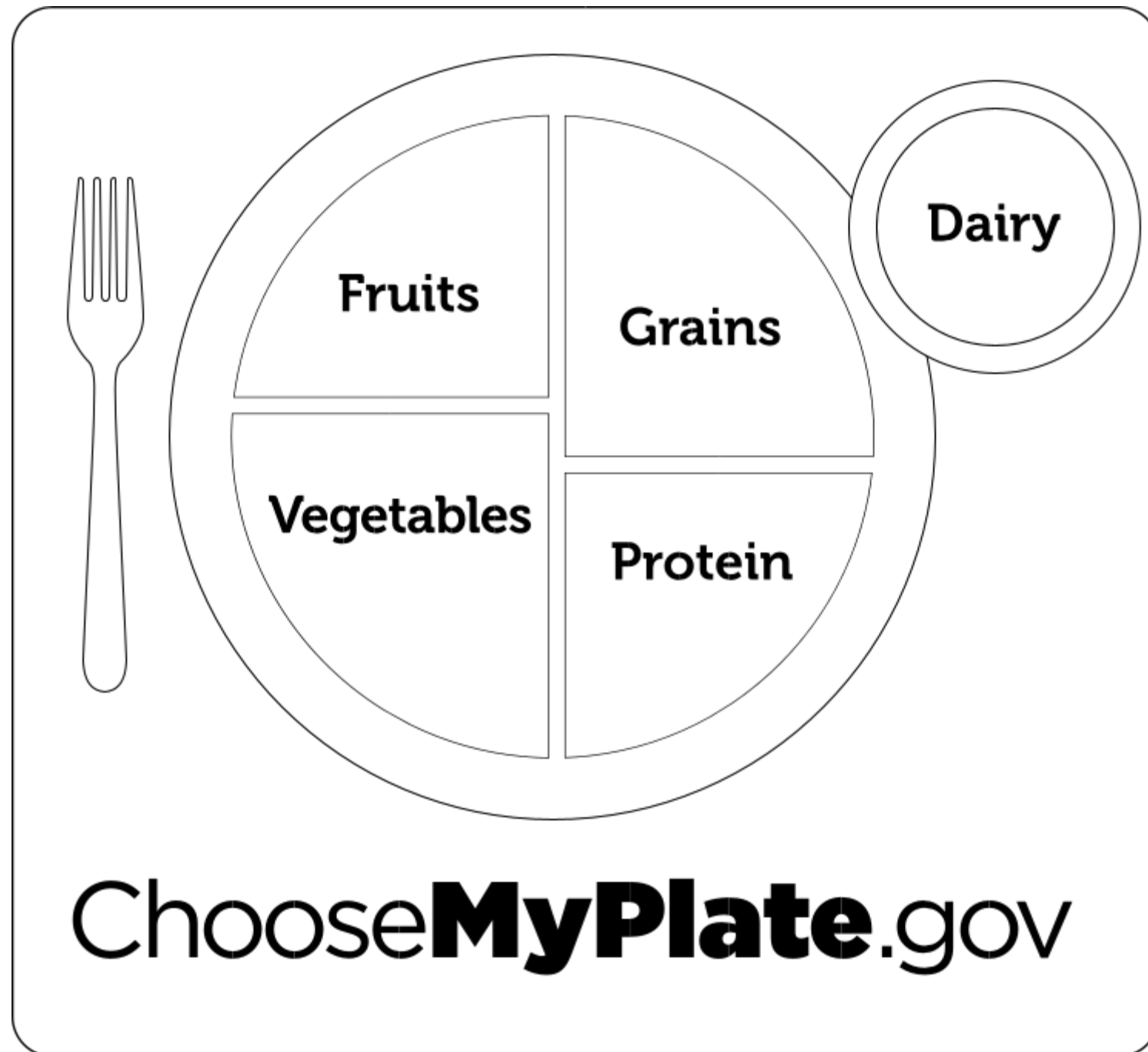
Schools **IN** Action

Shippensburg Area Middle School in **Shippensburg, PA**, held a food drive for a local food pantry in December and collected 1,500 nonperishable items for the area's families in need. The event was organized by the student council and run as a friendly competition between students. The food items included canned goods, as well as some fresh food grown by the school's photography and gardening club, including red, white, and sweet potatoes.

Greenville Middle School in **Hortonville, WI**, has held a schoolwide food drive in conjunction with Greenville Elementary School every December for the past 20 years. One recent year's collection brought in 8,255 items and helped feed more than 200 families. A follow-up drive later that school year raised the total number of items collected to 10,000. The schools posted a blog on the school system's Web site after the event to share the success of the students' efforts, and included a picture of the students holding their donations.



[Photo] Greenville Middle School staff
celebrate their school's annual food drive.





MyPlate Day is a full day of interactive, MyPlate-themed activities that emphasize healthy eating and physical activity.

Objective

Increase awareness and skills needed to build a healthy plate using foods from the five food groups.

The Event

MyPlate Day is made up of a variety of fun activities that reinforce classroom nutrition education and physical education while building school spirit. Students form teams according to the MyPlate food groups and participate in MyPlate-themed activities throughout the school day. These activities build on the lessons for grades 1–6 in Team Nutrition's *Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum* materials (see appendix, page 94). To ensure students get the most out of MyPlate Day, work with the faculty to make sure learning modules are completed prior to the event.

Nutrition education activities could include:

- **MyPlate Design Challenge** – Students create posters showing a “MyPlate meal” with foods from each of the five food groups. Have the MyPlate planning team select the posters that best portray the MyPlate message (for example, posters where all five food groups are depicted, where half the plate is fruits and vegetables, or where foods lower in solid fats, added sugars, and sodium are shown). Once these posters are selected, students can be invited to vote for their favorite. Turn the winning posters into tray liners or a calendar to remind students, families, and school staff to eat foods from all five food groups.
- **MyPlate Living Photo** – Assign students to wear specific food group colors (green, red, orange, purple, blue) on MyPlate Day. At a designated time, have students gather on the field or in the gym to create a massive MyPlate photo. The school dance team or cheerleading squad can lead students in a dance to “Alive with 5” from the *Serving Up MyPlate* curriculum (see appendix, page 94).
- **Feed Your Brain Bowl** – At the end of the day, test fifth and sixth graders’ nutrition knowledge with a game. Split students up into small teams and explain that they will compete against one another to answer questions based on what they’ve learned during the rest of MyPlate Day. The MyPlate Quiz Show in *Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum, Level 3, Lesson 1* (see appendix, page 94), can serve as a template for questions. For younger students, consider hosting MyPlate Bingo (there are many commercial options available or create your own). Ensure that all classrooms and grades are represented in the activity. To help students prepare for the game, incorporate lessons from *Serving Up My Plate, Levels 1 and 2*. (See appendix, page 94).

Physical activity opportunities could include:

- **MyPlate Relay** – Players team up into groups of five and line up together. Thirty feet from the starting line, place five open shopping bags, each labeled with a different food group name. Prepare a separate bag filled with images of various foods from each of the five food groups. (Do not include pictures of foods such as pizza that include more than one food group). When the relay starts, the first player in each line reaches into the picture bag and grabs one picture, running to place the picture in the correct food group bag. After successfully placing his or her picture in the right bag, each player runs back to the start and tags the hand of the next player in line. Play continues until all players have completed the relay. The team that finishes first and places its pictures in the correct food group bags wins.
- **Healthy Hopscotch** – Write the name of a food group in each hopscotch square. One at a time, each player throws a hopscotch marker onto a square. Before hopping, the player must name a food from that food group.

The Event (cont'd)

- **MyPlate Obstacle Course** – Create stations named after healthy food choices from each food group. For example, try:
 - **Popcorn Pop and Hop** (players hop one leg at a time through tires or hula hoops in a zigzag pattern, jumping up and down like kernels popping)
 - **Apples on Top** (players balance red bean bag “apples” on their heads as they travel a course)
 - **Lettuce Leap** (players hop across green spot markers decorated like lettuce leaves)
 - **Carton Crasher** (players knock over empty milk cartons by rolling a soccer ball or kickball)
 - **Egg Relay** (players carry an egg on a spoon between two points)
 - **“Alive with 5” Jump Rope** – Have students use various jump-roping techniques to the beat of *Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum*’s “Alive with 5” lesson (see appendix, page 94)

Planning

Plan with your MyPlate Day team. Wellness committee members, teachers (particularly physical education teachers), the school nurse, your school’s parent organization (e.g., PTA or PTO), students, the principal, and community volunteers can all contribute to planning the day. Pick a day to hold your MyPlate Day activities. Consider March, which is National Nutrition Month, or June 2 in honor of MyPlate’s birthday. If your school is year-round or if you operate a summer food program, consider holding this event in July. Look at the school schedule and consult with the administration, school staff, and teachers to determine how many activities the school can accommodate and what times of day work well. Once you have determined which activities you want to do, assign team members to lead each one.

Gather materials and information for each event. The events you choose for MyPlate Day will inform the supplies you need to gather. Make a list of everything you’ll need to host a successful event, such as arts and crafts supplies, cameras, tables and chairs, and obstacle course materials (e.g., bean bags, soccer balls, kickballs, jump ropes, spoons, milk cartons, and eggs).

Generate anticipation and excitement. Notify students of their food group teams the week before the event, and send out reminders for students to “wear” their food group color on MyPlate Day. (You may even want to have extra T-shirts on hand for students who forget.) On the day of the event, decorate with balloons and streamers in MyPlate colors and decorate the cafeteria with students’ MyPlate Design Challenge art.



- Display the MyPlate poster finalists around the school.
- Use your MyPlate Day as a launch event for your school’s work on meeting *HealthierUS School Challenge* criteria (see appendix, page 101).
- Schools can add a fundraising component to MyPlate Day by having students turn their MyPlate designs into real plates, using a service where designs can be mailed in to be manufactured into plates. Plates could then be auctioned off at a school fundraising event.



Classroom

- Use the *Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum* (see appendix, page 94) and *Discover MyPlate* lessons (see appendix, page 94) to teach elementary students about healthy food choices while meeting core standards.

Team Up for Success (cont'd)



Cafeteria

- Display colorful signs on the lunch line counter that highlight the food groups represented in each menu item. The Team Nutrition Graphics Library is a source of free food group images (see appendix, page 99).



Community

- Ask community businesses for donations of nonfood prizes for the Design Challenge and Brain Bowl winners, such as Frisbees, jump ropes, puzzles, or art supplies.



Media

- Invite the media to watch the students pose for the school's human MyPlate.



Home

- If students are participating in the *Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum* lessons (see appendix, page 94) in class, distribute the parent handout *MyPlate at Home* (see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resource-library>).

Schools **IN** Action

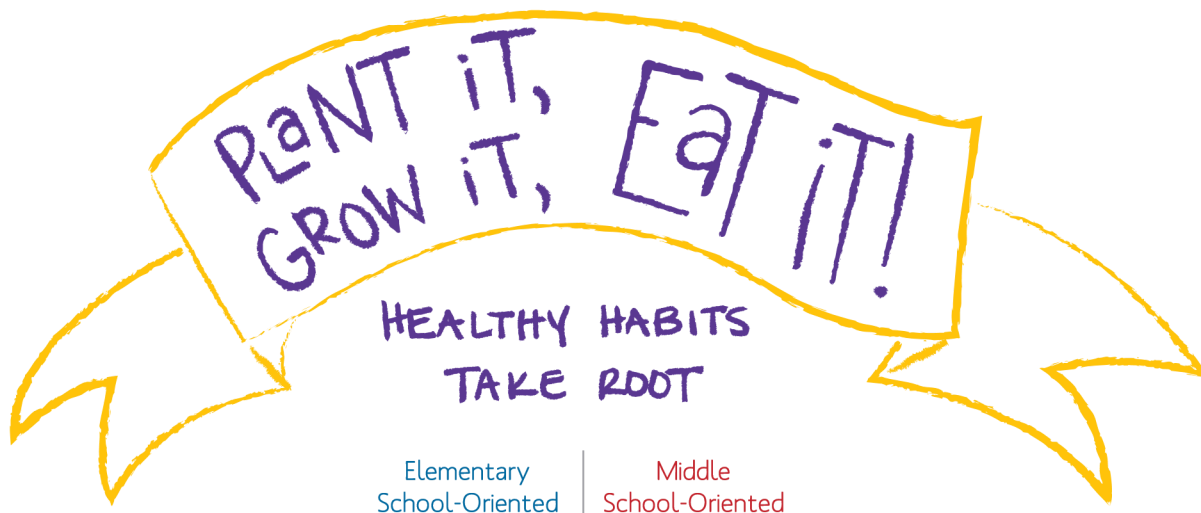
In **Fairfax County, VA**, middle school students participated in a *Colors That Jive! Derby* to learn about MyPlate and the importance of team skills such as communication, cooperation, self-control, encouragement, respect, friendship, and listening. Following a discussion about MyPlate and the importance of fruits and vegetables, students formed teams to construct cars made from produce. Each team received a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, plus bamboo skewers, rubber bands, toothpicks, and instructions for designing their car. A student on each team was selected as a “chief engineer,” and guided teammates in selecting fruits and vegetables for the cars. Using a derby ramp as a racetrack, each team’s car was judged on both distance traveled and creativity.

At **St. Joseph Catholic School in Wichita, KS**, the physical education teacher turned a traditional game of volleyball into a fun way for middle school students to learn about nutrition. First, students drew a paper food model out of a brown grocery sack for each point they scored during the game. Then, students placed those foods in the appropriate food group on a printout of MyPlate. The first team to fill up their plate correctly won!



[Photo] A Fairfax County student prepares to race his team's car.

At **Triplains USD 275 in Winona, KS**, high school students gave a presentation about nutrition to the third and fourth grade students as part of a Family and Consumer Science and Speech project. The presentation included a skit about a family eating dinner together, a quiz to test the students’ nutrition knowledge, and an activity to teach correct portion sizes. One of the students even created and wore a giant MyPlate costume. In turn, the fourth graders shared what they had learned from the presentation with the entire elementary school during lunch.



Students plant and tend their own fruit and vegetable garden.

Objective

Raise students' awareness of where foods come from, and increase preferences for fruits and vegetables.

The Event

The project starts in the classroom, where students discuss the basics of gardening and the nutritional benefits of fruits and vegetables. A teacher or a volunteer with a green thumb can talk with students about the different ways students can tend to a garden. Team Nutrition offers two garden-related nutrition education curricula for elementary schools (see appendix, pages 94-95), which can be used to connect garden, classroom, and cafeteria experiences together with nutrition.

Student volunteers break into groups and tend to the garden during specified times. Ask student volunteers to monitor the garden's development and report back on its progress. As the food grows, talk about the produce and how it can be prepared.

Planning

Identify a facilitator for the project. The school will need someone to manage the garden. A parent or staff member who enjoys gardening, a Master Gardener with the county Cooperative Extension Office, an area farmer, or a community gardening organization can provide expertise and guidance during the entire growing process. Youth groups, volunteer organizations, and parent volunteers may be able to help establish the garden and maintain it during school breaks and on weekends. Many organizations offer grants for school gardens, which may help offset the costs of your garden activities.

Work with school officials to determine where and when to start your garden. The garden can be outside the school, ideally within a walking distance, or you can use pots in the classroom. Choose which fruits, vegetables, and herbs are the most suitable for growing based on where and when you will plant your garden. For more information on school gardens, see the *Dig In! Gardening Guide* at http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/diginTG_gguide.pdf.

Gather your tools and start scheduling. Assemble seeds, pots, and other supplies as needed. Consider asking community gardening groups for donations. While preparing supplies, identify which classes/grades will participate, and develop a schedule for students to plant and maintain the garden during recess or lunch periods.

Celebrate your harvest. Once the garden's produce is fully grown, students can celebrate tasting what they have grown in the classroom or cafeteria (if district policies permit). If enough food is produced, schools can donate it to a local food pantry.



Team Up ^{For} Success



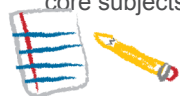
School

- Representatives from each class/grade can take turns tending the garden and reporting on its progress through regular updates on the public address system, in the school newspaper, and on the school's Web site.



Classroom

- Kindergarten teachers can help students learn how seeds grow into plants using *Discover MyPlate's Lesson 4: Planting the Seeds for Healthier Eating*. This lesson (see appendix, page 94) is matched to educational standards for core subjects.



- Other elementary school teachers can connect gardening and nutrition education activities to Common Core and other educational standards using Team Nutrition's *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* (grades 3 and 4) and *Dig In!* (grades 5 and 6) curricula (see appendix, page 95). Both resources provide a crosswalk between activities and standards.
- Middle school teachers can use the *Nutrition Voyage: Trek 3, Grade 8: From Farm to You* materials (see appendix, page 95).

Cafeteria

- School nutrition staff can display the food grown from the garden during mealtimes, and can highlight school menu items that incorporate locally grown foods.



- They can also provide the students with instructions on how to prepare and eat the fruits, vegetables, and herbs in the garden, as well as offer recipe cards to take home that involve the garden's foods. For recipe ideas, consult the *Recipes for Healthy Kids Home Cookbook* (see appendix, page 99), *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* (see appendix, page 95), and *Dig In!* curricula (see appendix, page 95).
- In locations where students wait in line, display the *Dig In!* posters promoting fruits and vegetables.

Community



- Area farmers and Master Gardeners with the county Cooperative Extension Office can speak about locally grown foods and teach students how to tend to their plants.
- A local chef or registered dietitian can demonstrate how to prepare some of the fruits and vegetables grown in the garden.
- The harvest can be donated to an area food bank or homeless shelter, if possible.

Team Up for Success (cont'd)



Media

- Direct local news organizations to the school's Web site, where the students' updates about their growing garden can be posted.



Home

- Students can share garden updates and recipes with their families and encourage their families to start a garden at home.
- If your school is using *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* or *Dig In!* curricula (see appendix, page 95), send home the *Garden Detective News* and *Dig In! at Home* parent materials, respectively.

Schools **IN** Action

Approximately 140 students at **North Attleboro Middle School** in **North Attleboro, MA**, started an outdoor garden and managed its fundraising, planting, and harvesting. A small group of students even worked over the summer to maintain the garden while school was out of session. They grew vegetables such as green beans, peppers, and tomatoes, all of which were donated to a local food pantry. **North Attleboro's** garden is now serving as a model for schools across the Nation. The students who have participated in the program mentor other schools that are trying to start their own gardens. For example, students at a middle school in **Philadelphia** held weekly virtual meetings.

Longfellow Elementary School in **Iowa City, IA**, hosted a *Farmer Fair* led by five local farmers and four food/nature instructors. All 320 students in grades K-6 rotated through four lessons throughout the course of an afternoon. Students learned about many aspects of growing their own produce, including how popcorn grows, how to build a composting system, and how different foods grow during different seasons of the year. A local chef prepared samples of butternut squash, carrots, turnips, and sweet potatoes for the students to enjoy.

In **Eastern Idaho**, the **Lillian Valley School**, which serves local Native American children, used a grant to convert a 3,400-squarefoot plot of bare soil near the school into a traditional Native American garden. The school also added raised garden beds to grow other vegetables, such as tomatoes and radishes, that most students had never tasted before. The students worked in the garden in the spring and fall, and during summer camps. At school, they were taught nutrition lessons in the classroom, and the school sent packets of nutrition and gardening information home to families. According to one school staff member, "The hands-on experience that our students have had in planting and caring for our garden has given them a desire to at least try new vegetables and not be afraid of new things."



[Photo] **Lillian Valley** students tend crops in their school garden.



You Control the School Menu: Vote for Your Favorite

Fill in a box in each row below to tell us how you feel about the food you tasted today. Then tell us whether or not you would like to see this food on the school menu and why.

Food name: _____

Bad	Fair	Good	Great

How did the food look?

How did the food taste?

How was the food's texture?

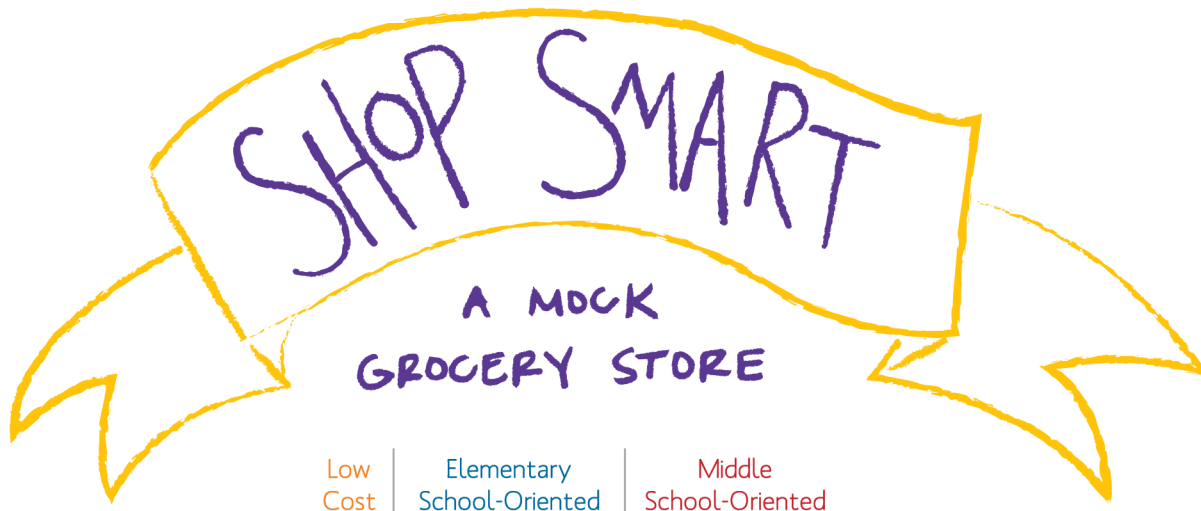
How did it feel in your mouth?

How did the food smell?

How did you like the food overall?

Was the food served at the right temperature? YES NO

Would you like to see this food on the school menu ? Why? Why not?



A mock grocery store shopping experience in school empowers students through real-life lessons.

Objective

Reinforce students' understanding of the food groups and food labels and inform students' future decisions about the foods they consume in and outside of school.

The Event

Simulate a grocery store tour using empty food packages, pretend food, and mock displays of at least three grocery store stations. Your imaginary store can be created in a classroom or another indoor area of the school, and you can customize your store tours for students of varying age groups. A tour leader can provide students with a brief overview of the benefits of each food group, where to find healthy food choices at the grocery store, and (for older children) how to read food labels.

Students can practice what they learn by forming groups and pretending to shop for groceries at the mock store. Volunteers can act as store clerks, guiding students and answering questions. In **Stewart County, TN**, schools set up donated cash registers and provided students with child-sized shopping carts.

Planning

Collaborate with others to form a planning team. Identify a grocery store tour leader, such as a registered dietitian, Cooperative Extension Family and Consumer Science professional, or health teacher. Recruit parents, student organizations, and teachers to help prepare the displays for the grocery store sections.

Pick a date for your event. Decide what, including food groups and food labels, will be covered during the tour. You can also designate certain areas for specific food groups, such as a produce department, cereal aisle, fish counter, meat counter, and dairy section.

Stock and set up the store. Collect and clean empty food containers or obtain pretend foods, food models, or pictures of foods from magazines to use in your imaginary store. Team Nutrition's *Discover MyPlate: Nutrition Education for Kindergarten* curriculum includes food cards that can be adapted for this purpose (see appendix, page 94), and *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* includes fruit and vegetable flash cards (see appendix, page 95). Ask students to create posters that illustrate the different store areas. They can create signage that marks different aisles and the front entrance.

Enhance the shopping experience. Consider offering a nonfood prize for every station the students visit. You may also want to offer food samples to students, as well as distribute a list of healthy items from each store section on the tour.

Team Up ^{For} Success

School



- Conduct a mock grocery store tour for each grade at different times throughout the day, and ask a selection of students from each grade to share a healthy eating tip they learned from the tour via the school intercom system.
 - Train older students to become grocery store tour leaders or to serve as clerks for younger children, giving them a chance to teach what they learned to others.
- Create a market where students, families, and staff can purchase fruits and vegetables grown in the school garden, if possible. (See page 56 for a school garden event.)

Classroom



- Explore the concept of the marketing and advertising of foods, providing examples from magazine and newspaper ads. Assign groups of students to develop their own print ads that promote a healthy food option or a MyPlate food group, and then combine the ads to make a catalog of healthy food choices.
 - To prepare students for learning to read food labels, middle school teachers can present the *Nutrition Voyage: Backpack Full of Snacks!* lesson plan (see appendix, page 95) that discusses how to compare nutrition information based on serving sizes. For students in grades 5-6, consider incorporating the materials from *Serving Up MyPlate's Level 3, Lesson 3: Decisions, Decisions!* (see appendix, page 94) and *Dig In!'s Lesson 9: Power of Choice* (see appendix, page 95).
- Integrate the grocery store into classroom activities, such as having students add up the cost of grocery items in math class or working healthy food choices into word problem exercises.
- Invite a registered dietitian or Family and Consumer Science professional to lead a class discussion about how the grocery store design influences food purchases, including display height and where different foods are located in the store.



Cafeteria

- Ask the school nutrition director to briefly discuss with students different meal planning ideas that include a variety of grocery store items.

Community



- A staff member from a local grocery store, a registered dietitian in your community, or a county Cooperative Extension Family and Consumer Science professional agent can lead students on the mock tour. A local grocery store can donate food to be sampled or provide coupons to encourage families to buy healthy food items that are in line with MyPlate.
- Encourage afterschool programs to host a field trip to a local supermarket or farmers market for a real grocery shopping experience.

Team Up for Success (cont'd)



habits.

Media

- Create a master school list of students' grocery shopping tips to include on the school's Web site and in its newsletter.
- Develop a healthy shopping quiz based on the students' grocery store tips and pitch it to local radio stations, asking them to challenge listeners' knowledge of healthy grocery shopping



Home

- Families can donate empty containers from home to add to the mock grocery store.
 - As a supplement to this event, students can do an at-home kitchen check, where they take home a list of healthy food choices and check off the healthy items they find in their pantry and refrigerator.
- Provide families with the *MyPlate Grocery Store Treasure Hunt* worksheet (see appendix, page 86) so students can have fun learning during real-life trips to the grocery store.

Schools **IN** Action

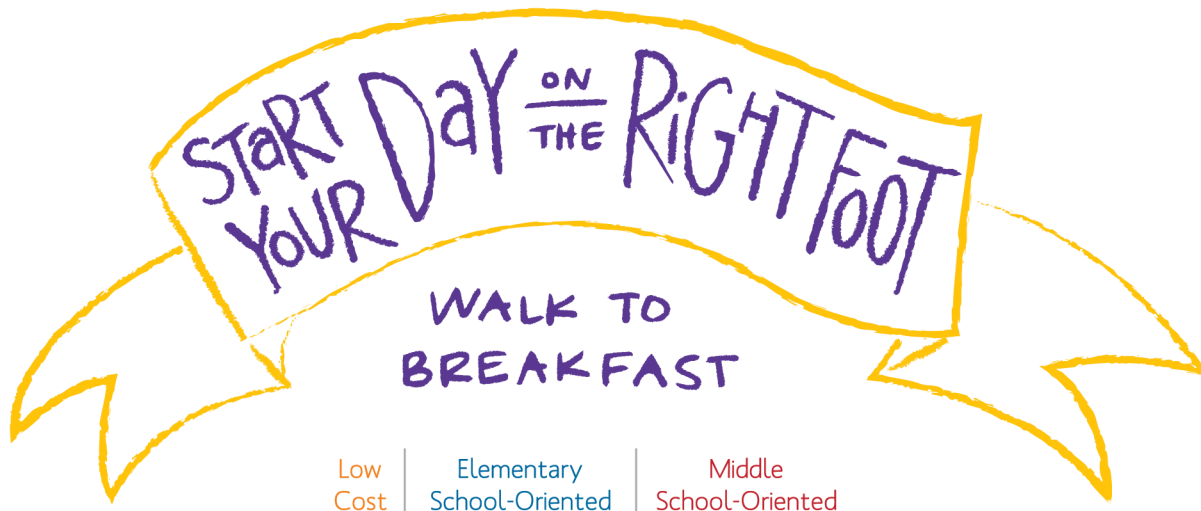
North Stewart Elementary in **Big Rock, TN**, created a mock grocery store, inspired by a school counselor's experience visiting one at a museum. The school wellness council created a team of volunteers to implement it, including staff from local grocery stores, and the school counselor identified a classroom to house the store. The group collected donations of empty containers for the store and enlisted parent and teen volunteers to clean and arrange the empty containers on their store's low shelves. The school worked to develop a curriculum that uses the mock grocery store to teach students about nutrition, as well as geography, math, foreign languages, and social studies.*



[Photo] The mock grocery store at **North Stewart Elementary** is open for business.

*Source: Alliance for a Healthier Generation, <http://www.HealthierGeneration.org>.





A walking club invites students to start their day with physical activity and a healthy breakfast.

Objective

Raise students' awareness of the importance of eating a healthy breakfast and staying active all year round, and motivate them to incorporate physical activity into their lives through fun group activities.

The Event

Students, school staff, families, and community members can form a walking club that meets regularly before school. To kick off the program, schools can hold an event that includes a guided walk and a school breakfast. The program leader begins by saying a few words about the benefits of physical activity and a healthy breakfast, and leads the walkers on a designated and well-marked route. Participants can gather in the cafeteria after the walk to enjoy a healthy school breakfast.

Planning

Decide how the club will work. Teachers, the school nurse, members of the wellness committee, and parents can serve as the walk coordinators. Involving students in the planning process can also strengthen the program. Make decisions about how often your club will walk, how far each walk should be, what routes to take, and how to keep your club safe when walking outdoors. Meet with local law enforcement and perhaps a local traffic engineer to identify safe routes for walking. Consider launching your walking club in conjunction with Walk to School Day in October, then hosting walks at regular times throughout the school year, both indoors and outside.

Plan club events. Select a regular date and time to meet. You may also consider walking at school, such as around a school track, field, or gym. Map safe walking routes, gaining approval from your school administration. Coordinate with the school nutrition director, particularly in terms of the kick-off event, as it may bring additional participants in for breakfast.

Get the word out. Promote the event through the school's public address system, newsletter, and Web site, as well as in gym classes, where students can also learn about walking safety. Use outdoor signs to promote your activity and alert drivers. For more ideas, consult the list of promotion tips (see page 3).

Team Up ^{FOR} Success



School



- Prior to the walking club's launch, encourage all members of the school community to participate in walking events. You can distribute the *Healthier Middle Schools* materials (see appendix, page 98).
- Invite the principal, classroom teachers, and other school staff to lead or join a walk.
- Pair older and younger students together so that everyone has a "walking buddy."

Classroom



- Kindergarten teachers can use *Discover MyPlate's Lesson 6: Let's Play, Let's Party* to promote physical activity through song and dance, story, and role-play (see appendix, page 94).
- Elementary school teachers can introduce the *Serving Up MyPlate* curriculum (see appendix, page 94) to raise awareness about the connection between healthy food choices and physical activity. Middle school classes can explore Team Nutrition's *Nutrition Voyage: Grade 8, Trek 1: Finding Fitness* (see appendix, page 95).
- In art classes, students can create footprint cut-outs or color copies of the school mascot to post as signs along the walking route.
- In math class, students can measure the distance they will walk individually or as a group.
If the school has access to pedometers, students can track the number of steps they take.
- Teach children about pedestrian safety using free resources from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at <http://www.nhtsa.gov/nhtsa/everyoneisapedestrian/index.html>.
- If your school is an elementary school, display the *Launch Your Day With Breakfast* poster (see appendix, page 96).
- If your school is a middle school, display the *You Control You* breakfast poster (see appendix, page 96).



Cafeteria



- Invite school nutrition staff to participate in the walk and speak briefly at the breakfast about the types of healthy breakfast foods served every day at school. Provide handouts about the School Breakfast Program (see appendix, page 101).

Community

- Ask local figures, such as team mascots or the mayor, to join the walking club on specific days.
- Ask businesses to provide donations, such as water bottles and shoelaces.
- Consider asking retired members of the community to volunteer and join the walking events.

Team Up for Success (cont'd)

Media



- Invite a local TV anchor to walk with the students and film the event for a feature segment.

Home



- Encourage families to join students on the morning walks, as well as incorporate walking into their home routines. Post resources for family breakfast planning on the school's Web site, such as FNS' videos and widgets on milk and whole grains (see appendix, pages 98-99) and *Core Nutrition Messages: Especially for Mom* materials (see appendix, page 101).

Schools **IN** Action

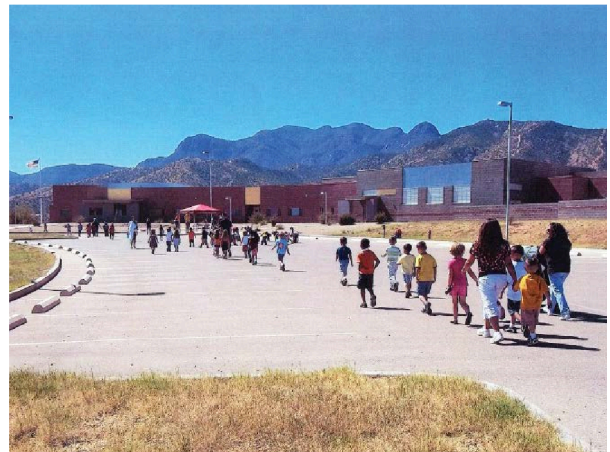
At **Stafford Elementary School** in **Stafford, KS**, students learned about walking safety and the importance of physical activity and a balanced breakfast. Then, on National Walk to School Day, the students walked to school together and were led by the middle school drum line. Everyone received a free nutritious breakfast upon arrival at school, and families were encouraged to walk together.

Southeast Polk Junior High in **Pleasant Hill, IA**, encouraged students to join a walking club and walk on the track surrounding the football field after they were finished with lunch. During the winter months, the indoor gym was also open for walking. One fall day, the students were surprised to find that the mascot of the Kansas City Chiefs, the Kansas City Wolf, wanted to lead the club around the track for several laps.

Fort Huachuca School District in **Arizona** has taken advantage of its community resources by partnering with soldiers at Fort Huachuca to hold a walking club every other Friday during lunch

recess. Troops typically conduct 5 minutes of stretching with the students, and then they all walk for 20 minutes before going to lunch. One year, pedometers were used with the second grade students as they "walked to San Diego." The students and the community have enjoyed their walking club so much that the school plans to make it a weekly event in the future.

In **Fort Scott, KS**, a "walk and talk" program for middle school students invited different grades to walk each day before school for 18 minutes. During the walks, music played over the public address system. Students tracked the number of laps they walked and converted the distance into miles, and awards were presented at mile markers and marathon goals. Close to 450 students participated, and many of them found they could walk farther than they originally anticipated.



[Photo] **Fort Huachuca** students and their families enjoy walking together each week.



Eat smart to play hard.

Eat fruits and veggies at meals and snacks.

Fruits and veggies give you energy to help you be a champion when you run and play. Eat them every day at meals, snacks, or for dessert. Ask mom or dad to help you make this recipe and share it with your family and friends. Don't have or like pineapple? Be creative! Use whatever fruits you have at home.

"The Trying Game"

Have you ever tried Amazing asparagus, Exciting eggplant, Peppy peppers, Spunky sweet potatoes, or Tangy mango? There are so many tasty fruits and vegetables, it's fun to see, touch, taste, and smell new ones you've never had before.

Use this chart to write about and draw the new fruits and vegetables you try. Can't think of any? Ask your family and friends to tell you their favorites and try some of those. You can even have a contest with your friends to see who is the Champion at trying new fruits and veggies.

My new fruit or vegetable

mango

How does it taste, smell, feel?

sweet

Draw a picture of it



Champion's POWER Packed Snack (makes 4 servings)

2 cups canned crushed pineapple, packed in juice

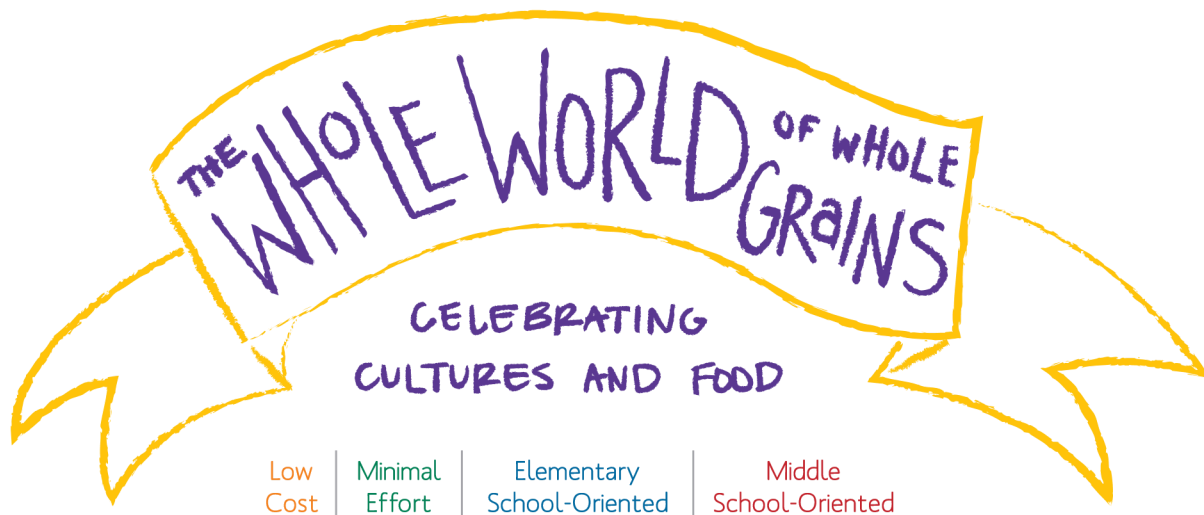
1 cup fresh or frozen berries, thawed

1 firm medium banana, peeled and sliced

1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt

1/3 cup raisins

Have fun putting a layer of pineapple, berries, yogurt, banana slices, and raisins into each of four glasses.



By trying whole grains from different countries and cultures, students can take part in a world tour of good-for-you grains.

Objective

Raise students' awareness of and preference for a variety of whole grains through multicultural educational displays and tasting experiences.

The Event

Each classroom adopts a different whole grain to present about to other classes, such as whole-wheat flour, brown rice, barley, oatmeal, bulgur wheat, whole cornmeal, or quinoa. The class researches the whole grain, including where and how it is grown, how it fits into the traditions of different regions, and nutritious ways it can be eaten. Students may also find cultural examples in places such as in artwork or historical literature that demonstrate the food's importance.

Each class then prepares an educational display and decorates the classroom to promote its whole grain to other classes and share its new knowledge. For example, a class can present on quinoa and cover its uniquely high protein content, the South American countries where it is primarily grown, its role as a sacred grain in the Incan civilization, and various side dishes and salads in which it is commonly found as an ingredient.

If possible, students can also bring in samples of the whole grain and healthy dishes featuring it, such as tabouleh with bulgur, whole-wheat pasta with durum wheat, or whole-grain tortillas with cornmeal. Alternatively, parent volunteers can prepare samples in the classroom.

Planning

Coordinate with school staff. Wellness committee members, teachers, and school nutrition staff members can help plan the event and encourage students to research their grain, the various cultures where it is popular, and the geographical regions where it is grown, as well as decorations students can make related to their grain. A list of whole grains for classes to select from should be determined, as well as what resources are available for researching and decorating. The school nutrition staff can also plan how to incorporate selected whole grains into upcoming menu items, if possible.

Pick a date for your event. To maximize the impact of your event, avoid dates when other food-related activities or events are planned, especially if classroom decorations are involved.

Select a different whole grain for each class. Encourage students to identify interesting facts about their class's whole grain to incorporate into their event day presentations. Research can be conducted during class, at the library, or as part of a homework assignment.

Planning (cont'd)

Arrange for the event day's success. Teachers can plan time for students to set up their displays and prepare tastings, if possible, before a schoolwide tour begins. Each classroom can be supervised by a faculty member while the students tour classrooms in groups. Timed announcements on the public address system can alert students when they should move on to the next tour stop.

Arrange displays accordingly. Students can decorate the classroom, the door, or nearby hallways to feature their whole grain and the global regions where it is grown and consumed. For example, a class can spotlight corn by drawing cornfields on the chalkboards in the classroom. A class presenting on oats can make a collage of pictures from different recipes in which oats are used as an ingredient.



Team Up ^{FOR} Success



School

- Each class will have an opportunity to present its whole grain during the tour on the event day.

Classroom



- Fifth and sixth grade teachers can help students explore culinary traditions and learn about the different types of whole grains grown throughout the world using Team Nutrition's *Dig In!: Lesson 6: The Global Garden* materials (see appendix, page 95).
- Art teachers can help students make creative displays that demonstrate the visual attributes of the whole grain.



Cafeteria

- School nutrition staff can display samples of the whole grains in the cafeteria.
- If possible, the different whole grains can be featured on the school menu during the weeks following the event day.



Community

- If including a tasting, invite local grocery store staff, restaurants, or community organizations to contribute whole-grain foods.
- Invite a local chef or registered dietitian to talk with students about how to cook whole grains.
- Culturally based community organizations may also want to share some of their whole-grain traditions with the students.



Media

- Take photos of the classroom displays, and post them to the school's Web site or in the school's newsletter.

Home

- Collect recipes to send home with the students. For ideas, consult Team Nutrition's *Recipes for Healthy Kids Home Cookbook* (see appendix, page 99).
- Send students home with the Team Nutrition's *Ten Tips Nutrition Education Series: Make Half Your Grains Whole* activity sheet (see appendix, page 96).
- Post Team Nutrition's *Whole Grain Rollover* widget (see appendix, page 99) on the school's Web site to show ways kids and the whole family can enjoy whole grains.
- Play FNS' video on whole grains (see appendix, page 98) at a parent meeting, or share the link in the school or parent organization's newsletter.



Schools **IN** Action

In **Las Cruces, NM**, students at **Conlee Elementary School** celebrated International Food Day by hosting an event called *Foods and Farms Around the World Food Tasting Day*. During this event, students, parents, and staff explored the connections between culture and food. Participants learned about how specific ingredients are grown, the types of foods that are grown in other countries, and how those foods are incorporated into meals and traditions. They also talked about the roles that both food and farmers around the world play in helping local communities thrive.

The Luther School in **Luther, MT** hosted a monthly cultural meal focusing on healthy food options and traditions that incorporate them. One Native American-themed meal featured wild rice as a healthy whole grain, roasted root vegetables, and beef and bison jerky. It was served outdoors, where students sat on blankets to add cultural authenticity.



[Photo] A **Conlee Elementary School** student celebrates Italy as part of her school's *Foods and Farms Around the World* event.



Students interview friends, family, or community members to discover healthy eating traditions from diverse cultures, culminating in classroom displays about nutrition heritages.

Objective

Teach students how foods are prepared by different cultures and how these traditional foods fit into the five food groups; increase students' willingness to try new cultural or regional foods.

The Event

As part of a class assignment, students interview a member of their family, the community, or the school faculty or staff to learn about food traditions of a culture different from their own. Students can refer to a list of sample interview questions (see appendix, page 84) to help focus the discussion on ways different cultures prepare and eat fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean protein foods.

Guest speakers, such as a registered dietitian in the community, local Cooperative Extension staff, or the school nutrition director, can lead the class in a discussion about MyPlate and how foods eaten in various cultures fit into the five food groups. A local journalist or reporter can also visit the class to give the students interviewing tips.

After students conduct their interviews, they can work in small groups to create multicultural MyPlates that include traditional foods from the cultures they've explored. The class can then create a bulletin board display featuring their diverse MyPlates. Students can also research any fruits and vegetables mentioned during their interview with which they are unfamiliar, and then reflect in a writing assignment on how different cultures include fruits and vegetables at meals.

MyPlate is an important tool that helps individuals, families, and communities make healthy eating a part of everyday life. It is an icon that is supported by simple nutrition messages, and it can remind us of how to build a healthy plate no matter what our traditional foods are. Learn more about MyPlate at <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>.



[Photo] At Florida's Orange County Public Schools, tilapia tacos are on the menu for students to sample.

Planning

Determine event logistics. Work with teachers to determine a timeframe when students will conduct their interviews. Consider allowing students 2 weeks to complete their interviews. Before students conduct their interviews, invite guest speakers who can discuss nutritious food choices among various cultures, as well as review interviewing techniques. If individual interviews are not possible, consider inviting guests of various cultural and ethnic backgrounds to visit the class and have students take turns asking questions.

Share nutrition expertise with students. A week before the students conduct their interviews, have guest speakers visit the class. They can explain how foods eaten at meals are not always separate as shown in the MyPlate icon – they may be combined, such as in a beans and rice entrée. Some traditional meals may not even be eaten off of a round plate, but rather eaten from a bowl or some other vessel. The guest speaker can reinforce that MyPlate serves as a reminder to eat from the five food groups, but that this can be accomplished in a variety of ways.

Prepare for the interviews. Suggest topics and questions that students can discuss in the interview and writing assignments, such as culinary heritages, family meals, and other traditions. See page 84 in the appendix for a list of sample questions. Remind students that during their interview, they should inquire further about any foods that are mentioned with which they are unfamiliar, including any fruits or vegetables.

Share insights and reflect on findings. After the interviews, teachers can provide students with opportunities in class to review what they learned in their interviews and share their findings with fellow students. Invite your guest speakers to be part of this discussion.



Team Up ^{FOR} Success



School

- Have students interview teachers, fellow students, principals, and other school staff.
- Feature students' multicultural MyPlates on a bulletin board for the whole school to see.



Classroom

- Connect students' interviews, writing assignments, and nutrition education to their English language arts, humanities/social studies, and health classes.
- Invite the physical education teacher to lead students in physical activities and games that are popular in other countries.



Cafeteria

- Highlight international dishes on the school menu and show how they reflect the MyPlate food groups by using free food group graphics from Team Nutrition's Graphics Library (see appendix, page 99).

Team Up for Success (cont'd)



Community

- Encourage students to interview community members, including supermarket managers or restaurant owners. Ensure that students are accompanied by a parent or guardian during their interview.
- Invite local chefs or registered dietitians to provide a food demonstration, showing how fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean proteins are prepared in specific cultures (emphasizing healthful cooking techniques).



Media

- Invite a local news reporter to talk about his or her job, help students learn to effectively interview others for the project, or agree to be interviewed by a student.
- Post pictures of the students' multicultural MyPlates on the school Web site.



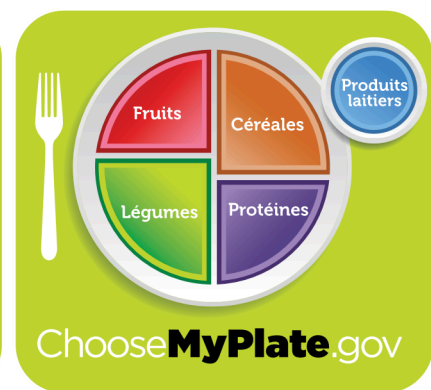
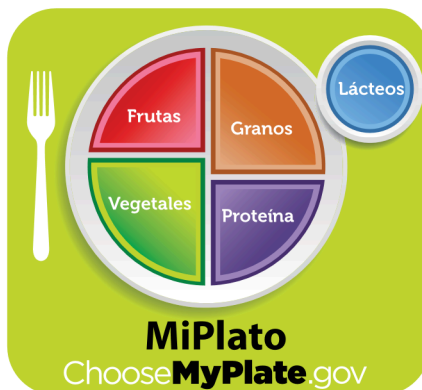
Home

- Send a letter home explaining the project, asking parents or guardians to talk to students about their family's own healthy food traditions.

Schools **IN** Action

Eastern Middle School in Silver Spring, MD, celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 until October 15.

During the month, morning announcements include interesting facts about the importance of the Hispanic culture. These special announcements recognize Hispanic heroes and celebrities, and acknowledge authors, singers, teachers, scientists, lawyers, doctors, and more. The celebration closes with a huge event that features Hispanic cuisine, music, and art.



[Photo] Students can bring MyPlates in Spanish, Chinese, and French to interviewees who speak these languages.

Healthy Food Heritages Interview Questions

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm a student at _____. I am learning about healthy food choices from other cultures and regions. I would like to ask you a few questions about food traditions that are special to you and your family.

1. What is a traditional cultural or regional meal that you enjoy?

2. Does your favorite traditional meal include vegetables? Fruits? Whole grains? Low-fat dairy? Protein foods?

3. How is your favorite meal prepared?

4. What is a popular vegetable dish in your culture or region? What are the ingredients?

5. What are popular protein dishes in your culture or region? Do they include nuts, seeds, beans, seafood, eggs, chicken, turkey, or lean cuts of beef, pork, or lamb?

6. Does your family use whole grains such as whole cornmeal, whole-wheat flour, or barley to prepare any traditional dishes?

7. Are there any fruits or vegetables that are eaten widely in your culture or region?

8. Is breakfast customary in your culture or region? What do you most often eat for breakfast?

9. Are there foods available in your culture or region that aren't available or common here?
What do they taste like?



Local sports celebrities and coaches get students excited about physical activity and healthy food choices that can help them “power up.”

Objective

Motivate students to try different ways to be physically active, and increase awareness of how healthy food choices are important for active bodies.

The Event

During this event, students visit 6 to 8 stations, learning about a different sport at each. Station visits last about 10 to 15 minutes and include an activity such as kicking a soccer ball or learning how to serve a tennis ball or ride a bike. Stations can be staffed by community athletic leaders, such as physical education instructors, coaches, and representatives from the local department of parks and recreation. High school or college athletes can serve as helpers.

In addition, include a “Power Up” station, where a registered dietitian or the school nutrition director can lead interactive nutrition education activities and offer a healthy snack like fruit, whole-grain crackers, or low-fat yogurt.

For added fun, schools can give students the chance to enter a free raffle for sports lessons such as swimming or karate. This is a great event to hold in the spring, especially during National Physical Education and Sports Week in May. If weather permits, hold the event outside on the school’s playing field or coordinate with the school’s field day.

Planning

Form a planning team. Physical education instructors, aided by wellness committee members, other teachers, the school nutrition director, and your school’s parent organization (e.g., PTA or PTO), may be interested in taking the lead on this project. Determine which sports you want to feature, as well as the sports equipment and other resources that are available. Collaborate with the school nutrition director and registered dietitians in your community, in addition to your school’s parent organization, to identify healthy snacks to offer at the “Power Up” station and ways to obtain the foods you’ll serve (e.g., donations, funding). Consider offering orange wedges, pineapple spears, low-fat milk, water, low-fat yogurt, reduced-fat cheese sticks, or snack mixes made with whole-grain cereal and dried fruit.

Decide who will host each station. Invite local sports enthusiasts from your area. Consider asking coaches and athletes from local high schools, colleges, and even professional teams to participate. Once the volunteers are secured, contact them about possibly providing sporting event tickets to one of their upcoming games, which you can award as door prizes.

Determine what resources you will need. If the athletes hosting your stations are not able to provide their own materials or sporting equipment, the school can reach out to community organizations for the remaining items or find adequate substitutions, such as using a large bucket in place of a hoop during a basketball shooting drill.

Promote the idea in a fun way. Make students aware of your upcoming event through posters, announcements during after-school activities and gym class, notes in the school newsletter and calendar, or emails (see page 3 for promotion tips).

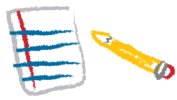
Team Up Success

School



- Display Team Nutrition posters that emphasize being active and making healthy food choices (see appendix, page 96).
- Band students and the chorus can perform a song at the event, such as the Olympics theme song, “Take Me Out to the Ball Game,” or “The Star-Spangled Banner.”
- Have art students create decorations to display at each sports station.
- Have the school mascot join in the stations.
- Display the *Power Up!* snack poster (see appendix, page 96).

Classroom



- Incorporate 5-minute sports-themed physical activity breaks into the classroom or as part of morning announcements to help promote the event; consider activities such as basketball jump shots, racing in place, baseball throws, or pretend jump rope.
- Third and fourth grade teachers can invite students to come up with “Snacks of Champions” using Student Reproducible 1 in *Serving Up MyPlate’s Level 2: Lesson 2* (see appendix, page 94). This lesson is connected to Common Core and other educational standards in core subject areas.
- Fifth and sixth graders can test their nutrition knowledge with Team Nutrition’s *Track and Field Fuel-Up Challenge* (see appendix, page 98).
- Feature students’ favorite sports in physical education classes, or ask event volunteers to come to physical education classes to offer additional lessons.

Cafeteria



- Feature sports-themed menu items or physical activity tips on posters throughout the cafeteria.
- Ask school nutrition services staff to help provide or prepare healthy snacks for the event, or provide or store ice for coolers to keep perishable snacks cold during the event.

Community



- Invite representatives from the local YMCA or other sporting organizations to provide donated materials or information about the sports programming available to youth in the area.
- Ask your local sporting goods store if it can offer a student discount or donations of equipment, either for use at the event or for door prizes.
- Invite youth safety organizations to provide information on helmet use and other ways to stay safe while playing sports.
- Invite local high school, college, and professional athletes to be part of the event.

Team Up for Success (cont'd)



Media

- Invite your local sports reporter to be a guest of honor at the event. Ask him or her to staff a station and demonstrate how to play his or her favorite sport.
- Ask local photographers and bloggers to cover the event. Make sure to secure photo releases for any students who are featured in photos.



Home

- Send a letter to families informing them of the event (see appendix, page 90). Include materials about local sports programming available to youth.
 - Ask members of the school's parent organization (e.g., PTA or PTO) to assist by providing volunteers and supplies.
- Provide families with a list of healthy snack options that help kids eat smart and play hard.

Schools **IN** Action

Covington Elementary School in **Covington, IN**, held a decathlon for fourth and fifth graders. During the 2 ½-hour activity, students in all classes, along with their teachers, participated in different physical activity events led by the physical education teacher, music teacher, and elementary school administrators. The teachers placed students in at least two events each, and students competed against each other. The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) provided six members to help run the events, which included a 100-meter dash, 200-meter dash, 1,600-meter run, 4 x 100-meter relay, softball throw, and frisbee toss.

Shoals Elementary School in **Shoals, IN**, offered a nutrition and physical activity event as part of a field day. The physical activity stations included a scooter board relay, basketball shot contest, and obstacle course. The event also featured a "Health Haven" station, which offered students samples of fresh orange slices,



[Photo] In **Sacramento, CA**, an **Elk Grove Unified School District** student powers a blender using a stationary bicycle. match each food with its respective food group and then discuss the importance of making healthy food choices every day.



Middle school students sample and vote on a variety of school menu options, giving them the chance to select new healthy food choices.

Objective

Give students a voice in selecting healthy school menu meals, empowering them to make nutritious choices while increasing their awareness of MyPlate and the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

The Event

If possible, the first part of this event should be held at the beginning of the school year, prior to the date when ingredients for the next school year must be ordered. School nutrition staff can present two to four dishes that could be incorporated into the school menu. To give students the chance to try healthy ingredients in a variety of ways, consider theming your dishes around a common fruit, vegetable, low-fat dairy, or whole-grain ingredient. For example, students could taste both a sweet potato and black bean stew and a sweet potato, squash, and carrot side dish.

A different table for each dish can be set up, with the ingredients prominently displayed. A teacher or school nutrition professional can briefly introduce the dish, making it clear how each food fits into MyPlate. Students then visit the tables to receive sample cups of each item. When all dishes have been tasted, students can vote for the dish they would most like to see on the school menu using a ballot (see appendix, page 81).



The second part of the event occurs once the votes have been tallied and the winning food is announced. Give students the opportunity to suggest a creative name for the dish. Each classroom can then vote so that one title per classroom can be submitted to a schoolwide title selection. The winning title can be announced over the school's public address system.

When the winning dish debuts on the school menu, promote it as the students' choice and offer additional samples.

Planning

Form a team. To determine what kinds of healthy food choices would work best as additions to the school menu, gather the wellness committee, school nutrition staff, volunteers, student advisory board, and teachers for a wide range of input and ideas. Consider availability of ingredients, cost, taste, and ease of preparation.

Decide which dishes to present to students for sampling and voting. The selection can range from two to four dishes determined well in advance by the school nutrition staff. **Denver Public Schools in Denver, CO**, decided to add healthy items, such as a homestyle meatloaf and a cucumber and tomato salad, to its menu. To decide on these foods, they consulted the USDA Foods program, which sources approximately 15 to 20 percent of the food served in each school lunch. USDA Foods provides more than 180 nutritious choices of fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, and grains. For a full list, read the *USDA Foods Available List* (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods-expected-be-available>).



Planning (cont'd)

Set a date and decide what resources you will need. The tasting and voting can be held in conjunction with lunch, and school nutrition staff can plan to incorporate the dish samples into the day's menu items, if possible. Once the dish ideas have been selected, develop a list of the ingredients needed. Invite the principal and other faculty members to attend and serve as role models in trying the various dishes. Ideally, three to four volunteers will help staff the event and hand out samples, as well as tally the students' votes (see appendix, page 85).

Promote the idea in a fun way. Display materials in the hallways and cafeteria that drum up enthusiasm for the event and reinforce the power students have to make healthy choices. Middle schools can use Team Nutrition's *You Control You* poster (see appendix, page 96) to reinforce the message of empowerment. For more ideas, consult the list of promotion tips (see page 3).

Team Up ^{For} Success



School

- Form an advisory panel of students from each grade to consult with school nutrition staff. They can be invited to the planning meetings or hold their own meeting and present a list of suggestions to the school nutrition staff.

- The entire student body can be involved in voting, both for the meal they want to see added to the menu and for the meal's title.



Classroom

- Teachers can incorporate the voting process into the math curriculum, asking students to create different pie or bar charts that display the results.

- If it is an election year, social studies teachers may want to incorporate the voting element of this event into a lesson on the national election process.



Cafeteria

- School nutrition services will provide two to four new foods for tasting. For ideas, consult the planning team, the *USDA Foods Available List* (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foodsexpected-be-available>), and Team Nutrition's *Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbooks* (see appendix, page 99).



Community

- Invite a local community figure such as a registered dietitian to join the planning team and provide nutritious meal ideas that kids will enjoy.

- After the voting reveals the winning dish, ask local health-related organizations to include the students' favorite recipe in their newsletter or on their Web site.





Media

- Take photos of each dish selection, along with the number of votes they received and students' comments about the foods, and post them to the school's Web site.
- Students can write posts for the school's blog and newsletter about the new food items they tried and what they liked and didn't like about each new dish. They can also share what they learned about the nutritional benefits of the various ingredients.



Home

- Provide students with the recipe for the winning dish to take home and try making with their families.

Schools **IN** Action

Orange County Public Schools in Florida hosted an annual food festival, the largest student food sampling event in the State. In 2012, more than 300 students attended the event, where they tasted and voted on food items. A total of 140 menu items were available to try, including turkey pot roast, rainbow trout, Mexican brown rice with vegetables, and mini whole-grain sweet potato pancakes. A total of 85% of the district's new menu items for the subsequent school year came from the food festival.



[Photo] Orange County students smile at the fifth annual Food Festival.



Try-Days offer both children and school staff the chance to try new foods in a fun and supportive environment.

Objective

Encourage favorable attitudes among students about unfamiliar fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy items.

The Event

Try-Day is a recurring event during which students sample new healthy food options such as kale, butternut squash, or quinoa. On each Try-Day, students and staff sample a food and indicate how much they like or dislike it, using the *Try-Day Ballot* (see appendix, page 81) or other scoring method. Hand out “I tried it” stickers to encourage students to taste-test new items. Classrooms that collect the most stickers for the month can be recognized by the principal and receive a nonfood reward. Foods that are a hit can then be incorporated into the school menu.

To distribute food samples, some schools offer students small cups of new foods on the serving line as students get their lunch. **Rockville Elementary School** in **Rockville, IN**, set up tasting tables in the cafeteria as an alternative. Consider inviting students to visit a tasting table one group at a time, to allow for greater participation and crowd control. If you do not have room for a table, consider having student, parent, or teacher volunteers bring samples to the students on a tray or cart. Another option is to hold a taste-testing in the classroom as part of a lesson. Food samples may be prepared by the cafeteria and brought to the classroom by parent volunteers for sampling.

Planning

Gather a Try-Day team. Wellness committee members, teachers, parent organization members (e.g., PTO or PTA), the school nutrition director, students, and garden coordinators may have ideas about foods to highlight during Try-Days that link to the school curricula or other activities. For instance, consider produce grown in a particular State, a past president’s favorite vegetables, or produce that may be easy for students to grow.

Create your Try-Day calendar. Monthly Try-Days are suggested. Your Try-Days do not have to be held on Fridays or even on the same day of the week every month. Coordinate dates and times with the principal and school staff; it’s critical for them to serve as role models by taste-testing the Try-Day foods along with students.

Choose your Try-Day foods. Your school nutrition director may have ideas for new ways to prepare selected items for future school meals and how to incorporate USDA Foods into the tasting event. For a full list of USDA Foods, visit the *USDA Foods Toolkit* (see appendix, page 101). Dark green, red, and orange vegetables; beans and peas; and whole grains are great options. Consider highlighting fruits and vegetables that are in season. Schools can also solicit donations from local grocery stores, farms, or restaurants. Pick methods that best support your school’s space, food policies, and resources.

Plan how to present the food items and conduct voting. Consider how and where the food will be served, and prepare volunteers to help. Decide how you’ll make the ingredients look appetizing and attractive; options include pairing a new vegetable with a familiar favorite or low-fat dip. Talk with your school district and principal about food policies (e.g., food in the classroom, allergies). Create a ballot (see appendix, page 81) for students to offer feedback on the foods.

Planning (cont'd)

Get kids excited. Promote your event with posters, announcements, emails, and in the school newsletter (see “How Do I Promote Our Event?” on page 3). Elementary schools can display the *Make Today a Try-Day* poster (see appendix, page 96) and *Be Brave and Try New Foods* poster (see appendix, page 96) at events nearby the tasting area. Make the event memorable with balloons, table tents, songs, food preparation demonstrations, or the school mascot or food ambassadors dressed in costume. See page 94 for other Team Nutrition resources that can help.

Promote favorites. Once students have selected their favorite foods, spotlight them on the menu, perhaps with a “kidapproved” symbol. Have kids create posters and signs about these foods to decorate the cafeteria. Let families know what their kids tried – and liked – so they can serve those foods at home too.

Team Up Success



School

- Create a bulletin board with photographs of school staff, the school mascot, and students enjoying new foods on Try-Days. Post findings from the school ballots.
- Promote Try-Day events during morning announcements, and have a student organization create posters featuring the Try-Day food.
- Follow the example of **Slater Junior High School in Pawtucket, RI**, which recruited students to serve as “food ambassadors” to inform other students about new foods and offer samples.



Classroom

- Incorporate relevant Team Nutrition materials, such as tasting activities outlined in *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* for third and fourth grade, and in the *Dig In!* curriculum for fifth and sixth grade, into classroom discussions. See page 94 for a full list of Team Nutrition resources.
- Language arts teachers can develop writing assignments about students’ experiences trying new food items; in math class, students can tally the results of the voting.



Cafeteria

- Ask school nutrition staff to encourage students to choose the new food during school meals. If it has been a while since the original Try-Day event, offer additional samples of the new food on the first day it is featured on the menu.
- Team Nutrition’s *Healthier Middle Schools* materials for school nutrition staff (see appendix, page 98) provide additional suggestions for implementing tasting events in the cafeteria.

Team Up for Success (cont'd)

Community



- Ask a local chef or registered dietitian to demonstrate healthful ways the featured food can be incorporated into a recipe. Ask a local farmer or cooperative extension professional to talk about how and where the food is produced.
- Give the chef the National Food Service Management Institute's *Chefs' Recipe for Success* guide to demonstrate using USDA Foods (see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/RecipeForSuccess.pdf>).
- Ask local grocery stores to post a sign near a Try-Day winning food. For example, "Kiwi: Elementary School Favorite of the Month."



Media

- Post student-written blog posts and photos about Try-Days.
- After a couple of successful Try-Days, invite a local political figure and local reporters to attend an event.
- Use the talking points in the *USDA Foods Toolkit* (see appendix, page 101) to showcase USDA Foods that are used in the Try-Day events.



Home

- Ask your school's parent organization (e.g., PTA or PTO) to assist as volunteers for your Try-Day team and during the day of the event, or provide funding for purchasing food and supplies.
- Host a Try-Day event at a parent meeting or family night.
- Send a letter or email to families describing the taste-tests and the foods their child tried (see appendix, page 90). Include recipes families can try at home.

Schools **IN** Action

California schools have incorporated a *Harvest of the Month* program into their curricula for several years. *Harvest of the Month* helps students establish a preference for selected produce items through classroom activities such as taste-testing, cooking in class, and school garden activities, as well as through menu offerings in the school meals program. The program typically features 36 produce items, with at least 4-5 available across each season. For ideas, see the California Department of Health *Harvest of the Month* program's *How to Grow Healthy Students* guide at <http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/download/How-ToGuide.pdf> and extensive toolkit at <http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/program-overview.asp>.

At **Tuba City Primary School** and **Eagles Nest Intermediate School** in **Tuba City, AZ**, students taste-tested two items, turtle beans and kiwi. Foodservice staff set up a table with large signs describing both foods. Each student received cards to place in bags with smiling or frowning faces to indicate whether they liked the food they tried. Most students loved both foods – and most had never tasted kiwi before.

Try-Day Taste-Testing Ballot

Copy, cut out, and distribute the ballots to elementary school students so they can share their thoughts on new foods they have tried.



Make Today a Try-Day!



It's fun to find new favorite foods!

Write the name of the food you tried and then circle the faces below to tell us how you feel about it.

The food I tried: _____

The food looked:

The food tasted:

The food smelled:

The food made me feel:

Make Today a Try-Day!



It's fun to find new favorite foods!

Write the name of the food you tried and then circle the faces below to tell us how you feel about it.

The food I tried: _____

The food looked:

The food tasted:

The food smelled:

The food made me feel:



Students create their own recipes in a fun cooking competition involving local chefs.

Objective

Build food preparation skills and motivate students to try fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and other healthy food options prepared in new ways.

The Event

Student teams work with local chefs to create their own recipes. Later, during a schoolwide event, students prepare the dishes they envisioned, and judges (a panel of local chefs or the student body) evaluate each dish. The team with the highest-scoring dish is named the winner. The competition can involve multiple award levels or even different categories of awards (e.g., best vegetable dish, best whole-grain dish).

Planning

Form a “Chef in You” planning team. Involve wellness committee members, school nutrition directors, teachers, afterschool program directors, students, local chefs, and registered dietitians from your community. Hold an initial planning meeting 2 months prior to the event to determine event details. What will constitute a student team? Who is eligible to enter (for example, what grades)? How will students register for the competition? Where will the competition be held?

During the initial meeting, committee members should determine when and where to hold the competition. (For instance, consider using the school auditorium in order to accommodate friends, families, and other guests.) Who will secure the availability of this space? How will ingredients be stored?

Determine the date of the “cookoff” event. Consider holding the event after school hours in March, during National Nutrition Month, and invite the whole school, as well as families and friends, to attend and cheer on student teams. Determine how long each student team will have to prepare their recipe (try 45 minutes) and how each will present its dishes. Try holding the competition in conjunction with a nutrition and wellness fair, with displays about healthy food choices and physical activity.

Plan for how chefs (and others) will work with student teams. Local chefs can meet with students prior to the event to help develop recipes and conduct taste-tests of healthy food choices the students can integrate into their dishes. The day of the event, local chefs can assist students on stage while they prepare their chosen dishes in front of the audience.

Identify the type of dishes students will create. The competition doesn’t have to involve cooking over a stove or using an oven – students can create a yogurt-based vegetable dip with a variety of spices and prechopped vegetables, or a salad made from locally sourced produce. Think about the equipment and resources you have available for storing and preparing food. Alternatively, consider filming student food demonstrations from a test kitchen and then showing the videos of the finalists during the event (making sure to obtain release forms for all participants). If your school has a culinary program, this may provide both a location and a chance for students to work under the guidance of a culinary professional.

Select healthy ingredients. Featuring beans, peas, whole grains, and multicolored vegetables (especially dark green, red, and orange) is a great way to generate interest in and excitement about these typically underconsumed foods. Determine how to solicit ingredient donations from local grocery stores, farms, or restaurants. Decide how and where to announce the key

Planning (cont'd)

ingredients. Consider adding in a “mystery ingredient” unveiled the day of the event or as a part of the recipe criteria shared ahead of time. Also consider generating awareness about farm-to-school by asking students to create recipes with regionally produced foods.

If you plan to establish nutrition requirements for eligible recipes, consider who will assist students with the nutrient analysis, such as community dietitians or older students. For example, the *Recipes for Healthy Kids Competition* set the following nutrient requirements per serving: < 35 percent of total calories from fat; < 10 percent of total calories from saturated fat; < 35 percent of calories from sugar; < 480 mg sodium for side items; and ≤ 600 mg sodium for entrées (main dishes). For more information on the *Recipes for Healthy Kids Competition*, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resource-library>.

Establish safety rules. Talk with your school district, principal, and local health department about food allergy and food safety policies. Give contestants and volunteers safety and hand-washing training. Also, provide information about rules of conduct in the food demonstration area, checking with the school administration regarding the need for permission slips, liability waivers, proper clothing, etc.

Define judging procedures and criteria. Decide what factors judges (or students) will use to evaluate the dishes and how your school will reveal the winning recipe. Consider judging against criteria such as ease of preparation and nutrition. Determine how many rounds of judging will be involved. Will you first select a group of semi-finalists based on recipe submissions and then hold a cookoff competition to determine the winner(s)? Will there be public voting? Is the student body allowed to vote on their favorite recipe?

Promote the competition. Posters, announcements over the loudspeaker, school newsletter placements, and emails are a great way to get the word out. (See page 3 for more promotion tips.) You can also promote the event through your school parent organization (e.g., PTA, PTO). If possible, consider providing student participants with paper chef hats (your parent organization or a local community organization may be willing to donate these).



Team Up Success

School

- Involve the entire school in the cookoff event through a “Popular Choice” award, where students vote for their favorite recipe.



- If the school has a garden, have teams incorporate the garden's food into their recipes.

Classroom

- Use Team Nutrition curricula and lessons (see appendix, page 94) to teach students about your competition's featured ingredients in a way that also meets educational standards for math, science, or English and language arts.
- Specifically, refer to Team Nutrition's two garden-related curricula, *Dig In!* and *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* (see appendix, page 95), for ways to give a broader range of students an opportunity to create a fruit or vegetable dish. The *Discover MyPlate* curriculum (see appendix, page 94) also includes simple “Look & Cook” cards for use with kindergarteners.
- If your school offers family and consumer sciences (or home economics) classes, consider having students plan out a day's worth of meals for a family of four. The teacher should give students a budget and a set of nutrition criteria. Tailor the degree of difficulty according to grade level.



Team Up for Success (cont'd)

Cafeteria



- School nutrition services staff can be part of teams or the judging panel and can adapt the winning recipe for inclusion on the school lunch or breakfast menu.
- The school nutrition director can recommend available ingredients and equipment to prepare the recipes and also provide suggestions on how the dish can be easily integrated into a meal that meets meal pattern requirements.

Community



- Contact local culinary programs (possibly at universities or area food banks), restaurant associations, and large hotels to solicit chef and judge volunteers.
 - Ask local kitchen supply stores for prize donations to give to the winning students (such as chef's coats or gift cards).
- Consider forming a chef-school partnership through the *Chefs Move to Schools* program (<http://www.letsmove.gov/chefs-move-schools>).

Media



- Invite media to attend the competition; ask if the local newspaper will include the recipes developed in the kids' or food section of the paper.
- Invite school broadcast students to film the cooking competition and share the videos on the school's cable network or online. (Make sure to secure video release forms for students featured in videos.)
- Post blogs about the different recipes and students' experiences creating and tasting them, with students contributing to the writing.
- Share photos of the submitted dishes on the school's social media channels or Web site.

Home



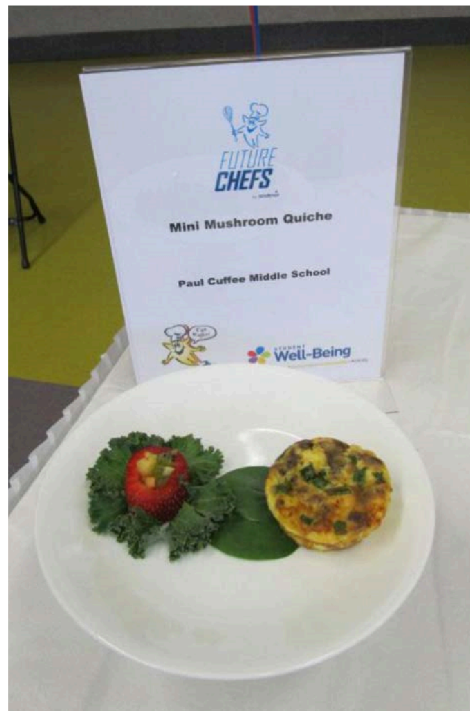
- Your school's parent organization (e.g., PTA, PTO) may be able to assist you by providing volunteers for the event or funding for purchasing food and supplies.
- Invite families and friends to the cookoff event, and consider holding a meet-and-greet in the school lobby with guests and staff to taste-test creations.
- Following the event, compile all of the recipes (as well as some additional healthy school favorites) into a cookbook. Students can hold a fundraiser (for example, during Global Child Nutrition Month in April) and offer these cookbooks to families and friends for a small donation. Students can also demonstrate how to cook these recipes at home.

Schools **IN** Action

Providence Career Technical Academy in **Providence, RI**, hosts an annual *Future Chef Cook-Off*. Each year, the school selects a different group of students to participate and identifies a different recipe category for the challenge. The first year, middle school students were tasked with developing and cooking a healthy breakfast recipe; another year, students in elementary school came up with healthy salad options. Local chefs mentored the students as they developed their recipes, and guests were able to taste competition entries.

Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) in **Florida** took this one step further, partnering with *Chefs Move to Schools*. The schools participated in an event at **Edgewater High School** in **Orlando**, where chefs, school food nutrition managers, and students from 10 schools cooked healthy “chef inspired, kid approved” recipes in front of hundreds of students wearing chef’s hats in the auditorium. The students later had a chance to sample the food items, which debuted on the school menu that year. They created nutritious items such as fish tacos with tilapia, shredded carrots, red and green cabbage, bok choy, and avocado in a whole-grain tortilla; and a fruit roll with cantaloupe, melon, strawberries, and pineapple rolled in rice paper.

Six of the new recipes from the event were also submitted to the *Recipes for Healthy Kids Competition*, which provides another opportunity for chefs to work with students to enhance the school food environment. OCPS’s accomplishments through the *Chefs Move to Schools* program have earned the district national recognition, and the program serves as a model for other schools around the country.



[Photo] (L) A student chops vegetables as part of the 2012 Future Chef Cook-Off.

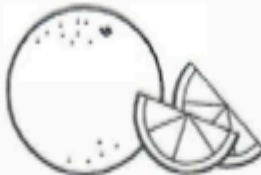
[Photo] (R) One of the Future Chef healthy breakfast entries: a mini mushroom quiche.

Nutrition Sudoku - Easy

You may have seen Sudoku with numbers, but here's one with food items. Each horizontal row, vertical column and 3x3 box must contain all nine food words. The words begin with letters K - T to make it easier for you to check that all nine have been placed in each row, column and 3x3 box.

Lemon		Plum	Tuna		Rice	Milk	Kiwi	Spinach
	Kiwi		Lemon	Plum	Milk	Nuts		Tuna
Tuna		Orange		Kiwi	Nuts		Rice	Plum
Spinach	Tuna		Nuts			Kiwi	Plum	
		Nuts	Milk	Tuna	Kiwi	Rice	Spinach	Orange
Orange	Rice	Kiwi		Spinach			Nuts	Milk
Kiwi		Lemon	Rice	Milk	Spinach	Plum	Tuna	
	Spinach	Tuna	Kiwi		Plum	Orange		Rice
Nuts	Plum	Rice	Orange	Lemon	Tuna	Spinach	Milk	Kiwi

K- Kiwi
L- Lemon
M- Milk
N- Nuts
O- Orange
P- Plum
R- Rice
S- Spinach
T- Tuna



M	W	S	/	1	0	d	N
H	1	0	4	H	1	S	W
N	/	d	S	N	H	1	0
N	N	1	S	d	H	0	
0	S	1	1	W	N	7	d
1	d	0	H	N	W	1	S
d	H	1	N	S	0	1	1
1	0	N	W	d	1	S	M
S	1	W	1	0	1	d	N

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