Success Stories

Oregon Family Nutrition Program in Central Oregon

Students encourage their families to prepare nutritious recipes

When a Central Oregon “Nutrition Lady” planned her 4th grade “Enjoying Our Healthy Harvest” lesson plans in September, she thought that the carrot lesson would be a good lesson to start with to win the trust of her students. She had never met a child who did not like carrots. A couple of weeks after the Nutrition Lady delivered the carrot lesson to the 4th graders, a parent approached her to share her child’s breakthrough. The mother explained, “My son has never liked carrots. He will never ever eat anything with carrots in it. But he was brave enough to try the carrot salad sample you brought to his classroom!” Since then, they had made the recipe at home together and they think they discovered that he likes the texture of grated carrots.

A local Head Start teacher enthusiastically approached the Nutrition Lady visiting her classroom to share that her daughter, a 4th grader in Central Oregon, had tasted pumpkin in a nutrition lesson at school. When her daughter described the pumpkin smoothie she made with such excitement, she agreed to purchase the ingredients on her next trip to the store. Her daughter did not hesitate to remind her of this promise. ~ Ashley Joyce

Students Add Vegetables to Meals at Home, too.

4th graders have been focusing on learning about different fruits and vegetables with “Enjoying Our Healthy Harvest” curriculum, how to shop for produce with parents, how to clean and store, beneficial nutrients and fiber for that particular food and recipe demonstrations in class so they can take the recipe home to make with their family.

The students are very excited to get the Fruit and Vegetable Recipe Cards (FVRC) and were delighted that they could take them home the same day after learning how to make the “Corn Critter Salad”. They have received various other recipes including a “Fruity Carrot Craving Salad” and a free cookbook from the USA Pear Board. Students are involved in our lessons with either assisting with assembling the recipe or reading the recipe and directions out loud.
One girl “Amy” said that she and her dad are going through each recipe of the FVRC to cook together and have as part of their family meal. “Amy” was so excited that she and her dad were doing this together she just had to share it with me.

Another student “Emily” was very excited with the first recipe demonstration and to take the recipe home to share with her mother. After several recipes were sent home, she shared with me that she and her mother are making each recipe together and the mother loves it! ~Cindy Culbertson

4th Grade Boy Rethinks His Pizza

After having the 6 lessons for “Enjoying Our Healthy Harvest”, “Josh” excitedly came up to me and said “I think I know how to make my pizza healthier.” “Oh, what would you do differently?” I replied. Well, he said, the crust is bread, there is tomato sauce which is a vegetable and some cheese, but I think instead of all that meat to add vegetables like green peppers and mushrooms. That’s how I would make it better.” ~Cindy Culbertson

4th Grade Student Chose Corn Critter Salad over Spaghetti.

“Maria” was in the class as the Nutrition Educator was setting up for one of the “Enjoying Our Healthy Harvest” lessons. She said her mom had spaghetti on the menu but “Maria” said “no, no, no! Please can we have the Corn Critter Salad instead?” The class had received their Fruit and Veggie Recipe Cards the week before and learned how to make the Corn Critter Salad in our lesson and tasted it. The cookbooks were taken home that day to share with their families. “Maria” said she just loved that recipe and wanted to share it with her family. ~Cindy Culbertson

Happy, Healthy Holiday Parties

4th graders participating in OSU Nutrition classes in one Bend elementary school classroom are learning about fruits and veggies grown in Oregon using the Enjoying Our Healthy Harvest curriculum. Halloween came at the end of their 6-week nutrition series. In a classroom celebration of Halloween and incorporating their nutrition program knowledge, the students decided to include healthier treats into their Halloween-themed party.

One 4th grade teacher from Central Oregon sent this email to her Oregon State University Extension Educator: “We decided to make Halloween healthy too. We went with a goblin theme, so here is our menu: Goblin Poison – 100% fruit juice, Goblin Brains – cupcakes, Goblin fingers – mini carrots, Goblin blood – Ranch dipping sauce, Goblin guts – Humus, Goblin eyes – grapes (green of course)” ~Lynette Patterson
Students Are Asking for More Vegetables and Fruit

Recently, while in a medical office waiting to be seen by my doctor her assistant asked me where I work. When I told her that I worked for Oregon State University Extension in the Oregon Family Nutrition Program and that I teach nutrition to local elementary students she said, “Oh! So you are the one who has me buying kale and broccoli!” When I asked her to explain she stated that her children have both had our program and now ask for more vegetables and fruit when they are shopping at the grocery store. The assistant must have mentioned it to my doctor because when she came in she made similar comments to me about how her child also asks her to purchase vegetables that had been tried at school during our nutrition lessons. This encounter was a good reminder that children can have a positive influence on purchases that their families make when grocery shopping and how important our food sampling can be.  ~Becky Teater

OSU Healthy Recipes save the Day!

An elementary school mom stopped me in the hall to say that her family really made use of the OSU Healthy Recipes. Her fourth grade daughter took the “Pumpkin Yogurt Smoothie in a Bowl” recipe home.

“We make it frequently for snacks and dessert,” she said.

The Peanut Butter Granola Bars that were sampled at Open House “saved the day.” “I mixed up a batch this morning, right before we left for school,” she continued. “I hadn’t gotten to the store to purchase snacks.”  ~Kristine Hiaasen

Students bring nutrition lessons home to their moms!

A Deschutes County “Nutrition Lady” happened to attend a workshop on vermicomposting at a Terrebonne farm on a weekend in early June. As she waited for the workshop to begin, she struck up a friendly conversation with another woman waiting to learn about ways to improve the health of her edible garden. The woman mentioned that she had a son in 4th grade at a Redmond elementary school. The Nutrition Lady soon discovered that she had taught nutrition in her son’s class earlier in the year. The mother shared her own enthusiasm for the recipes sent home and gratitude for the nutrition program.  ~Ashley Joyce

Healthy Holiday Fruit Salad

One Central Oregon, a 4th grade class expanded their nutrition lessons into activities for their winter holiday party. Students were invited to bring one fruit to school for their classroom
 party. Just like the version of “Stone Soup”, these students created a “Healthy Hopeful Fruit Salad,” naming the various fruits as they washed, peeled and prepared the fruits to add together for their colorful fruit salad. They added kiwi as winter wreaths, bananas as snowballs, fresh raspberries were jingle bells and pomegranate seeds as holly berries. The students had a fabulous time creating their treat and more fun eating all the colors of the rainbow. We thank the parents for supporting their child in making this healthy party treat.

~Lynette Patterson

Elementary school students enjoy fruits and vegetables!

Over the course of their year in fourth grade, three classes of students at a Redmond elementary school greatly benefited from fifteen 45-minute nutrition lessons. They learned about Oregon grown fruits and vegetables through six weeks of the Enjoying Our Healthy Harvest curriculum. They also participated in nine lessons of Garden Enhanced Nutrition Education later in the school year. Just before summer break, the 4th graders went on an all-day field trip to a local vegetable farm.

The following September, their “Nutrition Lady” patiently waited in the main office to speak with the principal about plans for nutrition education for the school year. A now fifth grader was also in the office, waiting to be picked up by a parent for an appointment. She chatted with the Nutrition Lady about her summer, specifically about the garden she had planted. Her family had actually never planted a garden before, but she had been inspired by what she learned the previous year, and she encouraged her family to plant seeds. She excitedly told of her plentiful zucchini harvest and her plans for cooking up zucchini in the upcoming week. She had no idea she liked summer squash before she grew it herself.

Months later, the Nutrition lady began teaching the fifth graders. During their fruit and veggie lesson, an overwhelming majority of the students could not only easily recount the benefits of eating from these two important food groups, but they reminded one another of the many dark leafy greens they had sampled the previous year, from chard to bok choy to kale. In each of the three 5th grade classes, students erupted in excitement at the memory of kale chips. They begged the nutrition lady to bring copies of the recipe the following week so they could make them at home. ~Ashley Joyce

Child Helps Family Add New Foods at Home

As I was packing my things into the back of my car in the elementary school parking lot, a van pulled up and stopped beside me. The mother at the wheel asked if I was the Nutrition Lady. I told her that I was indeed and she went on to say how much she appreciated our program. She said her child was coming home every week telling her about the new foods he had tried and
what he had learned about nutrition. She said the family had tried every recipe that was sent home and had incorporated many new meals and foods into their daily life.  ~*Sandi Boley*

**5th Grader and Mom Discover and Share Enthusiasm for New Veggies and Fruits**

As I walked into my first day teaching 5th grade this spring at an elementary school in Central Oregon, I was stopped by a boy who was so excited to be starting Nutrition Class again this year. He asked me if we were going to be making Watermelon Salsa or Corn Critter Salad in class. I told him that we wouldn’t be making those exact recipes in 5th grade but that we would be making some fun new ones for him to try. He proceeded to tell me that he and his mom made Watermelon Salsa and Corn Critter Salad all summer and really enjoyed the recipes we sent home as well as the fruit and veggie wheels. He said that they had a great time picking out new and fun fruits and veggies to try every time they went to the store. So...when it was time for me to teach the calcium lesson when we make the Popeye Power Smoothies he was really excited that one of the ingredients was spinach! He couldn’t wait to get home and show his mom. The reason I like this story so much it that it shows how much of what we teach to these kids can really sink in and impact their lives and the lives of their family members. It made me feel like I made a difference in the way this child will think about food and nutrition for the rest of his life!!  ~*Allison McIntyre*

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**THE POWER OF PUMPKIN!**

The following week, after teaching about pumpkins in the Enjoying Our Healthy Harvest curriculum, I had a fourth grade girl come up and tell me that she told her mom about the pumpkin smoothies we made. She convinced her mom to go buy the ingredients to make it at home. They did and her mom really liked the pumpkin smoothie, too. I asked her what do pumpkins do for us and she responded with, “They help us see better at night.” I dug a bit further and asked what’s in pumpkin that helps us see better at night? She said, “Vitamin A. We get 300% (daily value) from a 1/2 cup.” The following classes that I went to that day I had one or more students come up and share that they made the pumpkin smoothie at home and everyone really liked it! *Dorian Haugen, Education Program Assistant*

**Nutrition lessons inspire students and families to try new foods!**

At a family event night at a Redmond elementary school, the mother of a 4th grader who had benefited from six weeks of Enjoying Our Healthy Harvest and nine weeks of Garden Enhanced Nutrition Education curricula, approached the Nutrition lady to thank her for introducing her family to new foods and recipes. She shared that her son helped in making almost every recipe that was sent home after the nutrition lessons. She explained that her family frequently eats
Brussels sprouts and cabbage, but had never had kale before her son had tried kale chips in class. Now they make kale chips all the time. They even shared the recipe with their relatives on a recent vacation to California. The student’s mother is looking forward to accompanying her son’s class on an upcoming field trip to a local vegetable farm. *Ashley Joyce, Education Program Assistant 1*

**A Healthy Birthday Party**

Fourth grade students always enjoy the “Pumpkin-Yogurt Smoothie in a Bowl” that is presented with the *Enjoying our Healthy Harvest, Powerhouse Pumpkin Lesson*. Not only does it taste great, it is a fun activity for students to prepare as table groups.

The following week, one of the students said she and her friends had made the recipe for her birthday party treat. All agreed, Pumpkin-Yogurt Smoothie in a Bowl is healthier than birthday cake and just as delicious. *Kristi Hiaasen, Education Program Assistant 1*

**FROM CUPCAKES TO FRUIT CUPS**

I teach about the importance of fruits and vegetables in my fourth grade classes. On one particular occasion, I gave the students a fruit cup with canned peaches, frozen blueberries and vanilla yogurt. The kids went crazy for it and were saying it taste better than cake! The teacher agreed and suggested to the students that at their next classroom party they serve this fruit cup instead of cupcakes. The class enthusiastically shouted, “Yeah!” *Dorian Haugen, Education Program Assistant 1*

**YUCKY BECOMES YUMMY!**

One of my teachers replied back in an email to me that she didn’t like broccoli and so wouldn’t be sampling the snack I was planning to bring to her class the next day. Later that evening, I ran into her at a school conference and I was serving the same pasta salad that I planned to bring to her class. I talked her into trying it. She reluctantly agreed and with a grimace on her face she walked off with soufflé cup in hand. She returned, her face all bright and happy; she liked it! She really, really liked it! She told her class the next day the importance of trying new foods because even at her age you may like foods that you didn’t think you would. Her students liked the salad as much as she did and many returned for seconds! *Dorian Haugen, Education Program Assistant 1*

“**My Mom is Cooking Healthier Now!”**

As I was finishing my session with 4th graders in Bend schools using the “Enjoying our Healthy Harvest” curriculum, a teacher asked her students if they or their families did anything different after having these classes.
All these hands shot up. As we went through each child, many varied comments included; “now I know how to help pick out fruits and vegetables at the store when I go with my parents”, “I know some ways to help prepare broccoli in a way that I like it” “I know that I need to eat more than one kind of fruits or vegetables to get nutrients.” (Nearly all my students had some “AHA” moments as we did number lines for percentages of Vitamin A or Vitamin C found in the fruits and vegetables they were sampling, then we picked another fruit or vegetable they were interested in to come as close to “100%” for the day.)

One Hispanic boy said “My Mom is cooking healthier now with the recipes I bring home. She didn’t cook so healthy before.” Cindy Culbertson, Education Program Assistant

One Whole Classroom Avoids the Flu, While the Rest of the School Ails

In the spring of 2008, I had done a “pilot” class with a fourth grade teacher at an elementary school in Central Oregon, using the “Enjoying our Healthy Harvest” Curriculum. When I came back in the fall of 2008 to teach her fourth grade class again (EOHH curriculum), this teacher mentioned that she continued to use the hand washing techniques I had taught them and were more careful to keep their desks clean because of the lesson I had done on germs on surfaces. Later that school year, “there was a flu that swept through most of the school but none of my kids got sick, and I believe it was because we were diligent in keeping hands, desks and surfaces clean like you taught us.” Cindy Culbertson, Education Program Assistant

Super heroes of vitamins!

The previous week during the Professor Popcorn subgroup lesson I had mentioned to the kids the ‘Mean Green Vitamin Rich Machines’ that were the ‘Superheroes’ of vegetables. As I was setting up for the next week’s lesson in a crowded 5th grade classroom Max came up excitedly. He enthusiastically shared with the class that he was trying to eat more fruits and vegetables each day. He especially wanted to try more green ones. Max said some he likes and some he doesn’t. He is eating more of the ones he discovers that he likes. I told him I admired his curious nature and willingness to explore new things! Denise Chick (Education Program Assistant)

The Lessons I’ve Learned!

“Dear Ms. Emily, Thank you for coming to our class and teaching us health. I really enjoyed it. I thought it was awesome when the glitter buddy showed us germs. My finger nails were dirty! I thought it was great when you showed us how to buy different fruits and veggies. After that I went to the store and showed my Mom how to buy Broccoli. We like the fruit and vegetables
which were great. The fruits were apples, blueberries and pears. The vegetables were carrots and broccoli and they were yummy. Clearly I really liked you coming.” The following story was taken from a 4th grader in Central Oregon. Emily Brungardt, Education Program Assistant

I CAN BUY FRUITS AND VEGGIES!

“Dear Ms. Emily, thank you for all that you have been doing for us. All because of you I learned how to buy and store fruits and veggies. I tried a lot of food that I did not like before. Thank you for the frozen broccoli, I did not like broccoli until I tried it. The apples, carrots, pears and the blueberries I liked all of them.” The following story was taken from a 4th grader in Central Oregon. Emily Brungardt, Education Program Assistant

Oregon’s Healthy Harvest lesson prompts 4th/5th graders to choose produce for a snack instead of high calorie snack foods.

At an elementary school in Central Oregon, I had done the apple lesson and had the kids compare the calories from a small apple to a small candy bar plus nutrient information from an apple. Kids got to sample a variety of apples. The following week, when I asked them to tell me what they knew about apples, Most of the class, had stated that while shopping with their parents, they had requested to get more fruits and vegetables. One girl was with her mother in the chip aisle of the store, and convinced her mom that they did not need any of this stuff, she wanted fruits and vegetables instead and steered the cart out of that aisle and led her to the produce aisle. Cindy Culbertson, Education Program Assistant

4th Grader Takes His Family’s Health in his Own Hands!

After a series of nutrition lessons in a 4th grade classroom, one young student decided to make changes in his own home. He told his OSU Extension nutrition educator that he had taken all the recipes home and shown them to his parents. He was so excited about the fruits and vegetables that were featured in his 4th grade nutrition classes; he took it upon himself to prepare all the recipes for his family. He took his mom to the store and showed her what a jicama was and they made the Carrot Jicama Salad for the rest of their family. His family’s favorite was one of the smoothies, which they continue to make for breakfast. Just one single person in a family can initiate healthy changes. Jamie Fitch, Education Coordinator