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# Cooking with Kids

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*hands-on food and nutrition education for a healthy future*

## **2008-2009 Program Report**

*Cooking with Kids* (CWK) works to improve children's nutrition by engaging public school students in hands-on learning with fresh, affordable foods from diverse cultures. *Cooking with Kids*' Spanish/English bilingual curriculum provides interdisciplinary applied learning opportunities in math, science, social studies, language arts, music, and art. The program models healthy food choices in elementary school classrooms and cafeterias.

### **2008-2009 Program Summary**

- Twelve schools: 4,434 students (K-6) in 223 classrooms
  - Agua Fria, Alvord, Cesar Chavez, Gonzales, Kearny, Salazar, Sweeney, and Turquoise Trail elementary schools participated in eleven cooking and tasting classes (16 hours)
  - Kaune, Larragoite, Nava, and Chaparral elementary schools participated in five one-hour Fruit and Vegetable Tasting classes, taught by classroom teachers (5 hours)
- Classes: 1917 food and nutrition education classes - 925 taught by classroom teachers
- Volunteers: 1001 family members volunteered a total of 2485 hours in cooking classes
- Summer program: Kaune Elementary/United Way Summer Learning Center and Santa Fe
  - Public Schools Nutrition Education fruit and vegetable promotions

### **Curriculum**

- Classes taught by food educators & classroom teachers
  - *Exploring Healthy Foods and Tomato Tasting*
  - *Stovetop Pizza with Tri-color Salad*
  - *Potato Pancakes with Applesauce*
  - *Black Bean Tostadas with Salsa Fresca*
  - *Ethiopian Lentils, Injera, Couscous, and Cucumber Salad*
  - *Asian Noodles and Coconut Rice Balls*
- Fruit and Vegetable Tasting classes taught by classroom teachers include varieties of fresh fruits and vegetables: Tomatoes, Root Vegetables, Citrus, Pears, & Salad
- *Cooking with Kids* school lunches offered several times a month in all twenty-one elementary school cafeterias
- Bilingual curriculum for grades K-1, 2-3 & 4-6 aligned with New Mexico Department of Education Academic Standards and National Health Education Standards

### **Collaborations**

- Santa Fe Public Schools Student Nutrition Program and the NM Dept. of Agriculture in *Farm to School* cafeteria meals, which includes locally grown produce in school meals.
- Partnership for Healthy Schools and Agua Fria Family Resource Center collaboration provided four family cooking classes at Agua Fria Elementary School.

- *Super Chefs* is a new CWK program that is collaborating with local chefs who are donating their time and talent in cooking classes, inspiring students with their skills, sharing their stories, and acting as professional role models to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- *Farmers in the Schools* connects New Mexico farmers with elementary school students. Farmers enrich cooking classes by sharing their expertise and passion for growing and eating a variety of fresh, healthy foods.

### **Funding and Community Support**

Program funding provided by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAPed) through the New Mexico Human Services Department through New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service, Santa Fe Public Schools, City of Santa Fe Children and Youth Commission, New Mexico Department of Agriculture, Buckaroo Ball Committee, Con Alma Health Foundation, New Mexican Charitable Fund, Santa Fe Community Foundation, and United Way of Santa Fe County.

- Grocery Store Partners provide major contributions of food for classroom use
  - La Montanita Coop: Gonzales Community School
  - Smith's Food and Drug Stores: Kearny Elementary School
  - Whole Foods: Salazar and Sweeney Elementary schools:
  - Trader Joe's: donation is not site specific
- Community Contributors
  - Localflavor
  - Santa Fe New Mexican
  - Gonzales Elementary School PTC
  - Alvord Elementary School PTC

### **Research and Evaluation**

USDA Research grant: *Cooking with Kids: Integrating Classroom, Cafeteria, and Family Experiences to Increase Fruit and Vegetable Preference and Intake*. This four-year project investigates students' attitudes and behaviors towards eating fruits and vegetables, and examines family food preparation and eating practices. Las Cruces Public Schools is involved in feasibility evaluation and program dissemination. Results are promising from initial data collected from 700 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in eleven Santa Fe Public Schools. Preliminary results below are from the first year of a 2-year data collection in this evaluation of the *Cooking with Kids* program:

- Children enjoy cooking, whether it is in the classroom or at home;
- Confidence in cooking abilities (self-efficacy) increased significantly in children participating in *Cooking with Kids* compared with children from non-treatment schools;
- Preferences toward fruits and vegetables were greater in children from *Cooking with Kids* schools than in children from non-treatment schools.

## Teacher Questionnaire

- Teacher surveys were conducted during May 2009. In the eight schools (171 classrooms) with both tasting and cooking classes, the response rate was 62.6%. In the four schools (52 classrooms) where only Tasting classes are taught, the response rate was 78.8%.
  - 93.0% of teachers rated their students' overall experience with fruit and vegetable tasting classes as good to excellent.
  - 92.2% of teachers answered that *Cooking with Kids* strengthen their students' learning in other areas.
  - 98.0% of teachers believe that applied learning opportunities in cooking classes increase students' learning in mathematics.
  - 96.0 % of teachers believe that applied learning opportunities in cooking classes increase students' learning in language arts.
  - 99.0% rated their food educator as good to excellent

## Success Stories

A first grade girl reported that she and her mom are collecting the CWK recipes and putting them in a book and that they plan to invite their relatives over for dinner.

A Kindergarten teacher described one of her students as her “picky little bird” when it comes to food. She was excited to see him eat all his tostada and come back for seconds.

One 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher was almost brought to tears as she watched a student who is never involved work one on one with Chef Rios—he was so engaged!

I had one little girl in second grade come up to me while I was cooking noodles and tell me that she doesn't like mangoes, but that today she would try them, because that is what CWK is all about, trying new things.

## Student Voices

*I've never used chopsticks before and I'm good at it!*

*It has a blast of flavor—it amazes me what different cultures eat.*

*I liked all the food because it is healthy.*

*I was afraid to taste them, but now... can I have more?*

*The lentils were very good, just right, perfectly cooked, very flavorful.*

*When we were cooking, they showed me how to mince—that was new.*

*One thing I like about CWK is you get to cook delicious food and eat it and then bring the recipe home.*

*It's very amazing—the couscous is so small.*

*I liked to do the dishes.*

*I'm going to show my mom how to make this.*

*I liked it all the way to the moon and back.*

Cooking with Kids, Inc. is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization  
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