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No Twinkies on this menu!



STORY AND PHOTOS BY KAREN BOSSICK

They called it a “scratch lunch” to emphasize that everything on the plate was made from scratch, not processed or canned foods.

And when 150 teachers and students had cleaned the plates, the Community School eighth-graders encouraged them to polish off their meal with the nasturtium and other flowers sitting in vases on the table.

“Everything is edible. And if you eat at least two bites of what’s on your plate, we’ll reward you with chocolate, which is healthy for you –in moderation,” added Christine DuFur.

Community School eighth-graders served up the lunch as part of a 12-week course examining food and its impact on the environment. They did it with the help of Nurture, an organization which helps families improve nutrition and health.

Since it was Halloween, they created banana ghosts with raisins and pumpkins with Clementine oranges and celery sticks. They also served classmate Elena Guylay’s Fiesta Casserole featuring quinoa, salsa, beans, cottage cheese and brown rice, and a salad using greens they’d picked in Guylay’s garden.

The result: a colorful platter that reinforced the message “Eat a rainbow” of food groups.

“We’re trying to educate ourselves and the community about how we can eat healthier and treat the environment better,” said Christine DuFur.

“We’re also trying to explore ways we can make our carbon footprint as small as possible, using local ingredients,” added Elena Guylay. “The materials for the salad, for instance, traveled one mile from my house to the school.”

Students serving the lunch included Lily Fitzgerald, Madison Ferris, Katherine Estep, Ella Wolter, Tatum Fuller, Giselle Harmon, Leyla Ba, Christine DuFur, Elena Guylay and Mayanna Llewelyn.

Over their 12-week study, they and other eighth-graders have visited a chicken farm in Burley. They made veggie burgers from garbanzo beans, Swiss chard, tomatoes, onion and garlic in order to learn about different ways to get protein than meat.

They studied how using ingredients like palm oil contributes to deforestation in the Amazon, and they watched the movies “Cowspiracy” and “Fed Up.”

“Often kids eat healthy at home but unhealthy at school,” said Mayanna Llewelyn. “My parents, for instance, are big into healthy and they talk to me a lot about how to be healthy.”

“‘Fed Up’ talked about how it used to be that one in 20 Americans were obese and now it’s one in five...although we don’t see that so much because we live in a bubble. It also told how one in eight of us now have Type 2 diabetes because we eat so much sugar and processed things.”

All of the students must complete personal experiments concerning food. Llewelyn said she will either try going vegan for a few weeks or cook a dinner for her family to show them what she’s learned.

“I will definitely cook more after this because it’s fun and tastes good,” she said.

The teens said they have learned a lot about food, such as how athletes need to consider food as fuel, since Kathryn Guylay and Nurture began injecting nutrition into the curriculum when they were in fifth-grade.

“One of the things that’s stuck with me is ‘slow’ foods and ‘go’ foods,” said DuFur. “Sugar might give you energy for 20 minutes, but then you crash and you’re exhausted. Vegetables and stuff like that stay with you. It’s been a great impact on how I eat and I’m going to try to pass that on to the little kids today.”

Nurture changes approach

Nurture Idaho has transformed itself.

Last year Nurture took nutritional programs into classrooms at The Community School and Blaine County schools, providing nutritional education for a thousand children. It also provided cooking classes for The Hunger Coalition and other organizations.

But the cost of doing that was too high. So the program has reframed itself to provide hands-on and financial support for teachers and organizations, rather than instigating events itself.

“We want to tap into the excitement and passion of others. The idea is to leverage the resources that are already here,” said Kathryn Guylay, who started Nurture Idaho in 2008 after moving from Chicago where she had started Nurture Illinois.

“We took on the program ourselves for a year to prove that it worked. The evaluations from kids, parents and teachers showed that it was worth it. We’re hoping we can do something like this for a few hundred dollars versus thousands.”

Information: nurtureyourfamily.org/nurture-idaho/

PHOTOS: Mayanna Llewelyn shows off the banana ghosts and Clementine pumpkins that she and her classmates made to serve to fellow students. Leyla Ba shows off some Swiss chard that

students picked in classmate Elena Guylay's garden that morning. Jay Blackburn checks out a ghostly banana. Steven Salas tries a flower. Students like Nelly Sammis, Avery Griffin, Bella Maurtua and Isabelle Thomson staged a frenzy to try the flowers once a fellow student pronounced them "good." But chocolate was a big hit, too.

Owen Thompson black striped shirt

Sebastin Phillips in blue







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