

Rainbow Day at Hemingway

STORY & PHOTO BY KAREN BOSSICK

Volunteers whipped up a rainbow of fresh berries and other fruit last week as Hemingway Elementary School students headed out to recess last week.

Heidi Mickelson, Laura Curd and others formed an assembly line, plopping berries and yogurt into blenders, then pouring the finished smoothies out in little cups which they handed to the students.

“I like Rainbow Day,” enthused student Jackson Bevers. “I’ve learned that you should eat a rainbow of fruits and vegetables every day. And I learned that you find the colors of the rainbow only in plant foods.”

Rainbow Day is part of an ongoing campaign by a non-profit organization called Nurture to teach Wood River Valley children about healthy eating choices.

In addition to the smoothies, cafeteria workers prepared a rainbow of variously colored vegetable choices for lunch, handing out stickers to students who loaded up on at least three different colored vegetables.

And Amy Schlatter, Nurture’s program coordinator, went into classrooms, using games and flash cards to teach students about the value of eating at least five fresh fruits and vegetables a day.

“A serving fits in the palm of your hand—it’s really not that much so it’s not hard to get five servings a day. But 90 percent of Americans do not eat five servings a day,” she said.

Schlatter used the program gives the kids time to talk about diet and nutrition—“they have a lot of questions.”

“The idea is to get kids excited about eating fruits and vegetables and to show the kids that nutrition is all about variety,” said Kathleen McCabe. “It doesn’t have to be just about broccoli.”

Rainbow Day was part of the Nurture Elementary Nutrition and Wellness Program, which Kathryn Guylay helped develop in Chicago.

Guylay introduced the program to The Community School in Sun Valley last year. She took it to the public schools this year, introducing it as a pilot program at Hemingway Elementary School. Nurture has also had the opportunity to take a few segments to Hailey, Bellevue and Woodside schools.

The program includes monthly nutrition lessons, healthy food tastings and handouts that suggest low-cost nutritious recipes that students can make at home.

One program focused on the importance of breakfast and how children who eat a healthy breakfast perform better on academic tests. Students learned



Amy Schlatter, a former teacher-turned-nutrition counselor, holds court with the students in Jackie Woodruff’s classroom.

“The idea is to get kids excited about eating...”

-KATHLEEN McCABE

which cereals are “go” cereals—healthy ones that give them lots of energy. They also learned which cereals you want to go “slow” with—ones that contain more than 9 grams of sugar and less than 3 grams of fiber per serving.

On Rainbow Day, Schlatter cautioned kids against thinking a food they find at the grocery store has vegetables or fruits in it just because fruits or vegetables are pictured on the box.

“I read to the end and I didn’t find any fruits or vegetables, but I did find something that said, ‘artificial flavoring,’” she said, holding up one box.

“Here’s a tough one,” she produces another box. “It says, ‘Fruit Roll-ups,’ but there’s no fruit in it. It does have artificial corn syrup, though. That’s definitely not a fruit.”

The very last item says ‘fruit juice.’ Maybe it’s got a little. But do you think it’s as healthy as an apple? “You have to be a smart shopper,” she added, tapping her head.

The program is funded by donations from individuals and local organizations, including The Papoose Club, which provided \$1,000 for snacks and supplies for the Hemingway program, and St. Luke’s Wood River Foundation, which gave Nurture a \$5,000 grant.

Fifth-grade teacher Brad Stansberry said his kids love the programs that Nurture has done.

“I’ve had numerous parents telling me that their kids are bringing home ideas from these ladies,” he said. They’re going home and telling their parents that something has more fats than they need. And they’re reminding their parents that they need to eat whole grains. The parents think it’s awesome.”

RECIPES - Here are a few recipes kids can try at home:

MYPLATE PIZZA

The cheese in this dish provides calcium, which strengthens bones and teeth.

1 whole wheat English muffin or mini whole wheat bagel

¼ cup tomato sauce

1 slice low-fat sandwich meat, such as ham or turkey

¼ cup shredded mozzarella cheese

4 chunks pineapple

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Slice meat into bite-sized pieces. Assemble the pizza, spreading the sauce on the muffin. Then add meat and pineapple. Top with cheese, place pizza on baking sheet and bake 5 minutes.

YOGURT PARFAIT

The yogurt in this dish contains a good bacteria that helps people digest food. It also contains calcium, which keeps bones strong.

Whole grain oats

Fresh berries or other cut-up fruit

Vanilla yogurt

Raisins, Kashi cereal, pepitas (optional)

Cook the oats in a rice cooker or on the stove. Layer the yogurt, berries and oats in a glass. Sprinkle raisins, cereal and pepitas on top.

BREAKFAST PIZZA

Bananas are a good source of potassium. They help bodies stay balanced and hydrated.

Ingredients:

1 whole wheat tortilla

1 banana

2 tablespoons nut butter

Honey, optional

Spread nut butter on the tortilla. Slice banana into quarter-size slices and place on pizza. Cut a slice or roll into a burrito if you’re on the go.