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Mindfulness and Nutrition

Families explore healthy eating and mindfulness

Monroe County 4-H worked together with Cornell Cooperative Extension's SNAP-Ed Program and Eugenio Maria de Hostos Charter School (EMHCS) to present a mindful cooking class this spring. The class occurred virtually with families assembling recipes with bilingual nutrition educator, Iluminada Vilca.

The class, *Virtual Mindfulness Cooking: An Introduction to FVRx*, had one session. In the session, families learned a new healthy recipe chosen by Nutrition Educator Iluminada Vilca, in collaboration with Damaris Ortega, Parent Educator for 21st Century at EMHCS, and Verónica Cisneros, Family Development Analyst VISTA. FVRx stands for the Fruit and Vegetable Prescription program offered by SNAP-Ed and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

The class was supported by Ortega, the 21st Century Extended Learning Program, local pantry donations, and Vilca. Local pantries graciously donated ingredients for the healthy recipe. The EMHCS culinary team cut and portioned the produce. Vilca and Ortega worked together to prepare the kits for each family. Vilca provided 3 vouchers of 15 dollars each for every family that participated in the class. Families will later use those vouchers at the Rochester Public Market, Wegmans, TOPS stores, Curbside Foodlink truck and/or Abundance Coop. The vouchers will help families increase their fruit and vegetable intake as well as encourage them to purchase more nutritious food. Participating in the introductory workshop for FVRx allows families the choice to continue with the nutrition classes online or in person and receive more vouchers after each class. Finally, Ortega ensured that each family received their ingredients in time to cook along with the group.

Ortega, whose passion is working with families, welcomed participants by sharing a quote from Natasa Pantovic Nui: "We do food every single day! Conscious eating is a big step toward conscious living." A member of the Rochester Youth Year AmeriCorps VISTA program, Cisneros

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opened and closed the session with mindfulness activities. Vilca then led participants through a "Broccoli and Everything" salad recipe, sharing facts about healthy eating as well as mindful eating throughout the session. The SNAP-Ed Educator emphasized the importance of each food group featured in MyPlate and what the Dietary Guidelines for Americans outlines.

Parents expressed some reservations about the recipe, but then later remarked, "We are definitely adding this to our collection of recipes," due to its versatility and ease.

This is the third time that a nutrition and mindfulness class has been offered to families at EMHCS. Each party has been excited to bring research-based information to each family and encourage healthy living.

The Monroe County 4-H Program is offered through Cornell Cooperative Extension to the youth of Monroe County. 4-H is a worldwide youth development program open to all youth aged 5-to-19, who want to have fun, learn new skills, and explore the world. In return, youth who participate in 4-H find a supportive environment and opportunities for hands-on or "experiential" learning about things that interest them.

Learn more about 4-H at <http://monroe.cce.cornell.edu/4-h-youth-development>.



Photo provided by V. Cisneros. Program applicants and their food creations are featured.

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