

SWAC of the Year Award

My group, this year, was made up of 4th grade students that attended the after-school program. Many of these children came from low income, single-parent homes. My hope was to teach some nutrition facts and basic cooking skills, while incorporating math and science along the way



My concept was based on a lesson I had in my 7th grade home economics class, many years ago. It was a lesson I both enjoyed and remembered. It sounds simple: cook a dinner, on a budget, and good enough to serve to company. I decided to call our group "Dinner at 4".

To get things started, I had to do three things. First, I needed funds. With the help of Dr. Bracciale, our school counselor, I applied for, and gratefully received, a FUTURES, Inc. grant of \$700.00. Second, I needed to collect permission slips from the kids. The last task was to decide who to invite to dinner. The children and I decided to invite the FUTURES board, the Director of School Way Cafe, our coordinators, the director of the after-school program, our principal, vice principal, and the superintendent of schools. We had 35 people enjoying dinner with us.

To prepare for that wonderful meal, the children met every Wednesday for eight weeks. The first week, we took a quick test to see how much knowledge they had. We toured the kitchen, which they loved. We planned our menu, budget, and made ice cream in a bag. We learned how to properly measure and explored the science of making a liquid into a solid using a chemical reaction of salt, ice, and friction. This ended with yummy ice cream.



On week two, we made butter, again teaching ways of cooking with different methods. We discussed fractions as well as chemistry. We changed a liquid to a solid. Each child took a jar of butter home. Also, I introduced fruits and vegetables in a different way. We have a garden at Sugar Mill and I would offer samples from our garden. We have a few papaya trees here, so we sampled papaya. It was not well-liked but tried by all.

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Week three was fun. We made scratch chocolate cake. We discussed the importance of accurate measuring, as well as downsizing a recipe to fit our needs. This was another way of turning a liquid to a solid using heat. This weeks' taste test was sampling a fruit in three different ways. We tried pineapple that was fresh, canned, and frozen. Fresh was by far the favorite.



Week four was probably the most fun. We made icing for our cake. The kids, now pros at measuring and downsizing recipes, did the icing with ease. Each child was allowed a teaspoon of icing to try. At this point, it was everyone's favorite class. This week's taste test was how one item could be dessert or dinner. We tasted apple pie and apple stuffing. Both were great successes.



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Week five was hands on, so we made meatballs. The kids mixed with their hands and rolled 70 meatballs. They learned the importance of keeping consistent size. The meatballs were frozen for the big day. In keeping with the size lesson, the children mixed and pinched rolls. They were amazing, and pinching rolls is not easy! We tasted blackberries, raspberries, and blueberries. We found out we had a lot of berry lovers.



During week six, we made sauce and learned about spices and how they changed the way things tasted. In keeping with trying different things, we had candied carrots. Much to their surprise, we found several children that now like cooked carrots.

Week seven was our final meeting before the big dinner. We went over timing of cooking and assigned everyone a job. We covered how to set a table and proper table manners. We made croutons for our Caesar salads. The kids loved them! I was afraid we wouldn't have enough for our salads because they wanted to eat them as fast as we made them. That week, I brought Indian apples, also known as pomegranates, and showed how to cut them and eat them. That was a huge success and enjoyed by all. Everyone went home with purple stained fingers and faces, and a new fruit to enjoy.



Week eight - the big day! The children arrived full of excitement and split into 4 groups. One group set tables, one group made salads, one group plated cake, while the fourth group cooked spaghetti and heated the sauce and meatballs. We decided to serve "family style" because here at Sugar Mill, we are family. It was a wonderful dinner party. Our guests enjoyed the great meal as well as the company of the children. The children were delighted by the compliments they received and "talked the ears off" our guests. Everyone left tired, full, and very happy.

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On week nine, the children came back for one last class. They retook the test from the first week and, much to our delight, scores were much higher. Each child was given a bag with some basic cooking tools, along with their aprons, hats and copies of the recipes we used over the eight weeks. Now, four months later, I am often greeted with a huge smile and comments like, "Miss Carol, I made a cake, or cookies". "Dinner at 4" was a great experience for the kids and for me as well. I feel I have a special connection with them. I am receiving lots of parent requests to have their children participate the next time.

In conclusion, I feel our program not only met, but exceeded the expectations of the SWAC award. The children left their class with knowledge, cooking skills, real-life experiences using their improved math and science skills, and a love of our café. Community feedback was beyond our hope, including newspaper articles, thank you notes from dinner guests, as well as many thanks from parents and children alike.

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Sugar Mill Elementary School Pre-test / Post test

Dinner at 4 Cooking Club Carol Pugliese, Dr. Bracciale

- 1. Name the four food groups?**
- 2. Which is bigger $\frac{1}{2}$ cup or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup?**
- 3. How many cups in a quart?**
- 4. What food groups would you put grapes in?**
- 5. If you use sanitizer on our hands do we have to wash them too? Yes or No**
- 6. How many teaspoons are in a tablespoon?**
- 7. Name 3 fruits, put the one first, you like the best.**
- 8. Name 3 veggies, put the one first, you like the best.**
- 9. What is the 1st thing we do in the kitchens?**
- 10. What veggie do we use to decorate for Halloween?**

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Dinner at 4- Cooking Group at SME Extended Day- Parent Information

Your child is invited to our Dinner at 4 Cooking Group. Working with School-Way Cafe certified staff we will be using a STEM approach to improve student knowledge regarding nutrition, through food tasting/cooking and having fun. Improving student's science scores is a part of our school improvement goals. We will provide a pre-test and post-test using FTAIC curriculum Food for Nutrition, menu planning and preparation, and my plate (4 food groups). This is being offered as an 8 week program to our 15, 4th graders enrolled in our Extended Day Program. Most students will benefit from Nutrition Education. This program will also utilize some of the produce grown "Edible Garden's" program at Sugar Mill Elementary.

Dates: October 11th, 2017- December 6th, 2017

Time: Wednesdays from 1pm to 2pm unless there is no early release (all Wed. in Dec. do not have early release) and then the group will be run from 2pm- 3pm.

What will be done with our students

Course Objectives:

1. Menu Planning (Create a My Plate Meal on \$10 budget)
2. Budget Planning (calculate and look through ads to plan meal)
3. Understanding "My Plate" formerly food USDA pyramid
4. Safe Food Handling and Preparation
5. Table Manners and Table Setting
6. Nutrition Education integrating S.T.E.M. objectives
7. "Edible Garden's to "Cafeteria" philosophy utilizing school grown produce into our classes, providing "Food to Table" philosophy.

Benefits to our students

Students will understand food sources and how to use it for fuel. They will develop social skills, life skills, and work skills through this class. They will develop the menu for the various items from local food ads. Students will be given the opportunity to taste different foods, especially various fruits and vegetables in recipes. They will understand "Food to Table", learning how to grow the food then prepare it fresh from the garden. They will be taught math skills to calculate a budget for a special meal that they will write the menu for. They will learn math and science skills for reading recipe measurements and combining ingredients in the proper amounts.

Results:

As a result of this cooking club, the students improved their behaviors and attendance. Not wanting to miss a class, the students worked on their behaviors and improved their social skills with other students. The benefit was seen in the group sessions, in the lunch rooms and with peers outside of the group. Other students were also interested in participating in this club and a wait list was formed. We developed a second group with our 4th graders called "Breakfast at Sugar Mill" which looked at breakfast meals students could make on their own, their nutritional value, what things could make it low calorie, and even breakfast smoothies. Students took pre-and post-test before and after each group sessions and we could see an improvement in their nutritional knowledge, and an improvement in their cooking and measuring skills, kitchen safety also improved, but the biggest change was in improved self-confidence and a better attitude as a result of their participation.