

In your community

January
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Improving youth nutrition

FOOD POWER CHANGES YOUTH EATING HABITS

In a fun and exciting way, Food Power brings good food and physical activity to life for Missouri's students. Developed by University of Missouri Extension this powerful program teaches students about nutrition, food safety and physical activity. In Missouri, 21.5% of 5-11 year olds are overweight, according to statistics from

Missouri Dept. of Health and Senior Services. Childhood obesity can lead to adult obesity and increased risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Targeting kindergarten to fifth grade the Food Power program teaches healthy eating and physical activity behaviors through three key components: (1) Food Power Adventure, a walk-through interactive exhibit; (2) Food Power Classroom Activities; and (3) *Power Digest*, a newspaper for students. Food Power is an integral part of the Family Nutrition Education Program (FNEP) and often opens doors for other programming in participating schools.

In 2004-2005 school year, 42 schools hosted Food Power in the West Central Region. Approximately 12,115 students were able to participate along with 901 teachers and 750 volunteers.

Jo Nelson, school nurse at Lone Jack C6 Public Schools, credits Food Power for helping to lower student Body Mass Indexes (BMIs) at her school. She said students really bought into the information that was presented and made changes in their eating habits and activity levels.



Students learn how to read nutrition labels



12,115 students in the West Central Region participated in Food Power last year



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FOOD POWER ADVENTURE

A nine-stop tour of how food is grown, packaged, sold and finally its trip through the body. At each station, a volunteer presenter engages the students in a five minute activity that teaches and reinforces healthy behaviors.

FARM: Students visit a pizza farm. They learn that food from all five food groups is grown and raised on farms.

FOOD PACKAGING PLANT: As assembly line workers, students add labels to milk cartons on a conveyor belt. They learn how to use the information on food labels.

CAFETERIA: Students learn about eating a variety of foods. They select a food tag that is their ticket to discover what happens to the food they eat.

MOUTH: Using an oversized toothbrush and floss, students learn that good dental health and nutrition are important for healthy teeth and gums.

STOMACH: Following a trip through the esophagus tunnel, students enter the stomach to watch a puppet show. They learn that healthy food choices give them energy to grow and play.

SMALL INTESTINE: Students turn over their food tags to identify the main nutrient in their food. They learn through a hands-on experiment about nutrient absorption by villi.

MUSCLES: Students test their flexibility and feel their heart rate increase after exercise. Students learn that choosing healthy foods and exercise are important for their heart and other muscles.

BONES: Students add calcium-rich foods to a bone model to make it strong. They learn that exercise and foods containing calcium make strong bones.

HANDS: Students experience the invisibility of germs with invisible ink and a black light. They learn how to wash germs off of their hands.

FOOD POWER PARTNERS

Family Health Partners of Children's Mercy Hospital provided \$10,000 in donation for the upkeep of the Food Power exhibit and water bottles for every student participating in Food Power in the West Central Region last year. They also assisted as volunteers at many of the events. Also participating in a local coalition to support Food Power are representatives from the American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Midwest Dairy Council, Score 1 for Health, North Kansas City, Independence and Hickman Mills School District Food Services.

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