



## Wellness in the Schools (WITS) Accomplishments in Broward County 2017-2018

WITS Chefs work with schools and partner with school counties to teach scratch cooked recipes, train school staff, and provide nutrition education to students. This was our second year working in Broward County. WITS Chef Leonor was in both McNicol Middle School and Watkins Elementary School modeling our Tier 2 Program for the schools. This means that she was in each school 2-3 days a week. Our daily goal is for students to return to class after lunch ready to focus and learn. Our long-term goal is to teach children healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

- **Chefs Move to Broward:** Each month, from October 2017- May 2018, a local South Florida Celebrity Chef introduced one of their recipes to the Broward School Cafeteria. Tastings were conducted where the WITS chefs would prepare the dish, Celebrity Chef would pass out samples, during the students scheduled lunch time, and discussion with the chef would take place with the microphone.
  - **Due to the success of these tastings, we will be conducting CookCamps this summer to train 7-10 Broward County Schools on how to implement these on the School Lunch Line Starting Fall 2018.**
    - **October:** Chef Michael Schwartz from Harry's Pizzeria served his Kale Pizza
    - **November:** Chef Clarke Bowen, Boulud Sud, served his Black bean and plantain quesadilla
    - **December:** Nancy Easton and WITS Chef Leonor demo'd the vegetarian chili at the 2017 Broward Food Show.
    - **January:** WITS Chefs passed out samples of Scratch Made Salad Dressings
    - **February:** Chef Aria Kagan, from the Food Network, served her Pesto Panini
    - **March:** Chef Julie Frans, from the Wynwood Yard served Roasted Vegetables
    - **April: No CM2B**
    - **May:** Whole Foods Market will be serving their Pesto Pasta with Tomatoes.
  
- Chef Leonor taught 4 **WITS Labs** (seasonal culinary and nutrition education classes for students) at both schools.
  - 1) **Applesauce**
  - 2) **Vegetarian Chili**
  - 3) **Braised Carrots**

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- 4) **Salad Greens Lab** (Lemon Honey & Fresh dressings with greens and a healthy yogurt dip with fresh strawberries).

In the Labs, students prepare simple, affordable, and healthy recipes. At each school we teach about 500 students per lab throughout the course of a week. The lessons introduce students to the importance of healthy eating and seasonal ingredients, inspiring them to share their newly acquired knowledge with their families. The students get to participate hands on in the classes where they learn nutrition facts, knife skills and safety, how to read food labels, what their food looks like before being processed and where it comes from geographically, and team building skills. The teachers love these lessons as they tie into their math and science curriculum like using ratios when measuring and the chemical bond of emulsification when making dressings. Most importantly the students leave with the knowledge and power to re-create these recipes at home. Programs like these have been shown to positively influence children's food preferences and behaviors, according to recent studies. Chef Leonor is constantly being stopped in the halls and told by students how they have made these recipes at home with great results.

- This year we also taught 3 **WITS BITS** lessons. These are simple 20-minute classroom lessons that use hands-on demonstrations to emphasize basic nutrition concepts.
  - 1) **My Plate:** (To teach students the components of a balanced meal, and the importance of each component)
  - 2) **Brown Bag Challenge:** (To help students become more confident in reading ingredients and nutrition labels in order to help them make better choices; and to help students become cognizant of processed vs. fresh foods.
  - 3) **Vegetable ID:** To get students excited about vegetables.

#### **Other accomplishments:**

- **Family Fitness Fun Nights at both schools-** During Family Fitness Fun Night (FFFN), up 200 student's and family members participate in exciting fitness classes led by local WITS Fitness Partners (e.g. yoga, Zumba, and soccer). Complete with a complimentary healthy dinner of wraps and salads. FFFNs provide an opportunity for the entire family to come together in a fun and festive atmosphere. Both schools have requested more fitness nights next year.
  - This year at **Watkins Elementary** we had a record breaking attendance of over 200 people!

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- **Track Tuesdays at McNicol-** Chef Leonor noticed a large group of students sitting in the media center each morning before school eating junk food. She decided to create an exercise program and each Wednesday morning, she and about 80 students began walking the track to get moving before class begun. The feedback has been amazing and both the students and teachers are now involved.
  - This has been taking place for two years now and the school has taken hold of the morning walk. This is a great example of creating sustainability.
  - Due to the start of this, Leonor has been able to build a successful Wellness Committee at McNicol. There is not a Wellness Committee Meeting at McNicol consisting of about 5-6 teachers who meet on a regular basis to promote wellness activities.
- **McNicol Tower Gardens** - Chef Leonor partnered with Mr. Torres and applied to a Whole Kids Foundation Grant. This year, with the help of the grant, Chef Leonor & Mr. Torres launched 4 tower gardens to grow produce in the classroom!
  - Leonor was able to come to visit classrooms from time to time to conduct salad tastings with homemade salad dressings.
- **Painting at Watkins!** - Wellness in the Schools strives to become a part of the school culture throughout its course. If help is needed somewhere besides the Cafeteria, we try to help! A group of 15 volunteers were brought in to help paint the School Library in March.