

# Pawtucket schools eat healthy

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## Recipe Day held at city elementary schools



PAWTUCKET – Students at Flora S. Curtis Elementary School last week snacked on apple and cucumber salad while Nathanael Greene Elementary School students nibbled on roasted carrots, and their healthy selections at lunch were all part of a “Recipe Day” event.

The project is funded by the Regional Nutrition Education Center of Excellence. The goal of the center is to improve the health of Americans through multiple strategies, including complementary nutrition education and public health approaches. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program at the University of Rhode Island received the grant to empower students to affect policy, systems, and environmental change in their lives.

At Curtis Elementary, the students sampled a recipe created by fifth-grader Josley Sosa. Josley explained that the apple and cucumber salad is a family recipe first created by her grandmother and passed down to her mother.

Her grandmother was “the first to make it and everyone in my family likes it,” Josley said. “I like it a lot. I asked my mom and she said it was a great recipe.”

Students from the entire elementary school enjoyed her salad Wednesday. Josley said she was “really excited and proud” to have her recipe be what her fellow classmates enjoyed as a healthy option at lunch.

“Healthy eating is important,” she said. “I play a lot of sports, so I make sure I eat healthy.” Josley added that she hopes to continue cooking into the future, as she would one day like to become a chef and cook for celebrities.

Katie Mulligan, URI's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program director, explained that fifth graders at Curtis and Greene elementary schools have been learning about policy, systems, and environmental changes. She said that the students have also been taught "how to make the healthy choice the easy choice."

Mulligan said she was hopeful that the recipe day and the months leading up to it would change the environment for children so that they eat more fruits and vegetables.

"I hope if kids like it, that it shows up as a regular menu item," Mulligan said of the healthy snack options.

"Any time you can get kids excited about eating fruits and vegetables, you're doing a good thing," Mulligan said, adding that she hoped to see future generations raised to eat healthier.

Joy Robinson, a community nutrition assistant with URI, said that the recipe day and the months of education prior to it taught the fifth-graders at both schools that "they have the power to make changes."

The fifth-grade students at both schools taste-tested a variety of recipes but ultimately selected Josley's apple and cucumber salad and Greene Elementary fifthgrader Rick Fernandes' roasted carrots. Also included among the finalists at both schools was a mango and sunflower seed salad.

At Greene Elementary, Rick said he was "very happy" to see his classmates enjoying his roasted carrots recipe. He said the snack is something that his mother liked and he decided to give it a try.

"I sometimes have it at home," he said. "I love it. It's one of my favorite meals that my mom cooks." However, he remained tight-lipped about the recipe, suggesting it was a family secret.

When Rick found out it was his meal that would be served to his classmates, he said "I was so surprised. I didn't expect to be chosen."

"I hope they like it," he said, adding that being the star for the day at school was "awesome."

Rick's future interests might not include cooking, but they do include maintaining a healthy lifestyle. He said he wants to become a professional soccer player and said that eating healthy is "very important."

"When I grow up, I want to be one of the best soccer players in the world and I'll have to eat healthy to do good," he said.