

Pittman, Dave W.

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To: Pittman, Dave W.
Subject: per your request

Hello again, Dr. Pittman. You requested a copy of the article when it ran. It was published in Tuesday's edition of The Item.

Oakland Primary celebrates eating healthful foods

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[Oakland Primary celebrates eating healthful foods](#) BY JADE ANDERSON janderson@theitem.com The Item

One Sumter school benefited from the expansion of a Spartanburg school program this year.

Oakland Primary partnered with Wofford College for the Healthy Eating Decisions Program. The goal of the three-year-old program is to help students and parents become aware of how healthy eating decisions affect their lives now as well as in the future and to help reduce obesity in children.

"Statistics right now show 1 in 3 or 30 percent of children in the country are overweight or obese," said David Pittman, associate professor of psychology and the program's director. "That statistic holds true for South Carolina, too. If a child is overweight or obese, they are 70 percent more likely to be obese as an adult."

This year, 18 elementary schools actively participated, he said. These schools supplied Wofford with nutritional information from their lunch menus. The college then ran an analysis to find the healthiest combinations for each school and supplied this information back to the schools, Pittman said.

Posters were placed in the cafeteria to encourage students to make the healthiest choices. If they did, they got to ring a bell placed in the cafeteria.

"It's public recognition and positive reinforcement," Pittman said.

Students who brought their lunches to school could also have them reviewed by teachers and get a chance to ring the bell, said Principal Shirley Tomlin.

"They enjoy ringing that bell," she said.

Teachers talked to students about the program.

"We talked about the healthy choice symbols," said Shawn Rearden, kindergarten teacher. "We looked at the white milk, the chocolate milk and the strawberry milk, and we talked about how the white milk has the least sugar. Obesity is an epidemic. We need to start at an early age and make them aware every year."

The students took to the program well.

"I like it," said kindergartner Slade Custer. "Carrots are my favorite because they help your eyes see better, and they taste good."

Jaden Edgecomb, another kindergartner, said the program was fun.

"I like how all the fruits and vegetables are so healthy," he said. "I like the green fruits (apples and pears) best because they have a nice taste."

Through its participation in the Healthy Eating Decisions program, Oakland was entered and won a drawing for Wofford representatives to contribute a bounce house, Gatorade, temporary tattoos and a box of goodies to their field day. The activities were provided through a HEROES Grant from Youth Service America awarded to Wofford senior Jordan Hardy, a research assistant for the Healthy Eating Decisions program. She was present at Oakland's Fun Day.

The program will continue in the fall at Oakland, Tomlin said, and she hopes to add a fresh fruit and vegetable grant "to tie it all together." That grant is funded by the USDA and administered by the State Department of Education.

Pittman hopes to work on expanding the program to other schools this summer.

For more information, visit www.HealthyEatingDecisions.com.

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