



# Food \$ense

## Nutrition Education



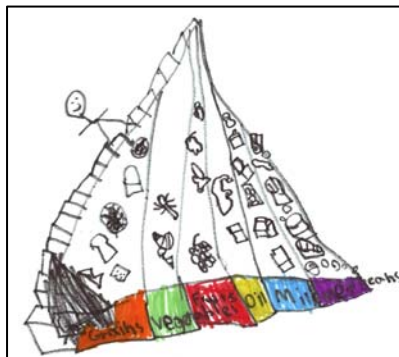
*Students learn fun ways to move their bodies, knowing being active is an important part of staying healthy.*

*Photo: V. VuSabido*

Over 100,000 King County residents, primarily women and children, receive Basic Food assistance (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance formerly Food Stamps). This figure may still underestimate the number of residents unable to meet their basic food needs. A limited income puts families at risk for consuming foods of low nutritional quality and for decreased physical activity. Low-income families consume fewer fruits, vegetables, whole grain foods and low fat milk than families without limited incomes. Their diets contain more high fat foods, sweetened beverages, and other non-nutritive foods. Consequently, they are at increased risk for nutrition-related health issues, including obesity and chronic disease.

### Program Goals

- **Teach nutrition** through gardening, cooking and hands-on activities to limited-income youth and their families, resulting in the consumption of more fruits and vegetables and higher quality, nutrient dense foods.
- **Train school teachers** to integrate nutrition education into their existing curricula resulting in the delivery of consistent messages about healthy eating.
- **Encourage behavior changes** in Food \$ense schools to create an environment of healthy eating.



*MyPyramid drawn by a first grade ELL and special needs student.*

Working primarily in public schools, Food \$ense educators teach students how to make healthier food choices, how to grow food, how to prepare healthy snacks and meals, and encourages them to remain physically active. Students also learn where their food comes from and make connections between what they eat, their health, and the environment.

### Program Scope

Food \$ense enjoys successful collaborations with 20 schools in four school districts - Auburn, Highline, Renton, and Tukwila. Sixteen highly qualified Food \$ense educators presented nutrition lessons in nearly 200 classrooms during the 2008-2009 school year, serving over 5,000 students. Supplemental lessons, delivered by classroom teachers in collaboration with Food \$ense instructors, insure that every student receives an average of 24 hours of nutrition education over the entire year. Many of these nutrition lessons also incorporate core subjects of reading, math and science, as well as computer studies, art, and other subjects.

### 2009 Program Highlights

#### Connecting With All Students

Diversity at Food \$ense schools encompasses not only children of many ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds, but also a wide range of learning abilities and English language skills. To meet this diverse level of learning needs, educators participate in ongoing training as well as collaborate with classroom teachers and other educators to find creative ways to teach effectively to all students. One teacher writes, "A special needs student in my class really latched on to the idea that you can group foods into categories. He enjoyed spending his time drawing the food pyramid, color-coding it and reading it out to anyone who would listen. He was happy when he saw 'nutrition' on our daily schedule. Without this program, he would not have had this exposure to nutrition and the pyramid."

“I wanted to thank you for the great job you have been doing at Shorewood Elementary. I have noticed a marked improvement with my kids’ eating habits. When we go to the store or when they choose snacks at home, they usually make healthier choices than they have made in the past. My older daughter regularly asks for avocado or asparagus. They eat whole wheat while telling me how much better it is for them. They like more fruits and vegetables. They choose Veggie Booty or Sun Chips instead of regular potato chips or Doritos. Your program has made a great difference. Thank you. “

Chrissy Ryckman,  
Shorewood Elementary Parent



*Food Sense educator, Carolyn Lee, helps students understand the importance of healthy foods and teaches them to sort foods into groups using food model cards.*

*Photo: V. VuSabido*

Contact:

Vanessa VuSabido  
Food Sense Program Manager  
WSU King County Extension  
200 Mill Ave. South, Suite 100  
Renton WA 98057-2175  
Voice: 206-205-3210  
Fax: 206-296-0952

[Vanessa.VuSabido@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Vanessa.VuSabido@kingcounty.gov)  
<http://king.wsu.edu/nutrition/change.htm>

**Award Winning Posters**

More than 300 students at Madrona Elementary participated in a school-wide Nutrition Poster Contest. Carolyn Lee, the Food Sense educator at Madrona organized the contest as a way to get the whole school involved in a fun activity that would encourage students to learn about eating healthy foods. Madrona Elementary is one of the three schools this year that have been part of a collaborative program called Eat Better Feel Better. As school districts work toward implementing Coordinated School Health, the Eat Better Feel Better program supports this model by encouraging school-wide involvement. The winners of the contest were pictured in the Highline School Districts blog “eHighlights”.

**Marty Moose**

“Wash your Hooves Lots!”, “Graze on Plants” and “Romp and Play” are some of the things you will hear Marty Moose say when he talks about how to be healthy. Marty is the newly adopted mascot for a curriculum Food Sense teaches to kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. A constant companion and teaching assistant, Marty Moose encourages kids to be healthy in a fun and loving way that younger students really connect with. Students are able to ask Marty questions and send him letters through “Marty’s Mailbox”.



*A portrait of Marty received in his Mailbox.*

**Adult Food Safety Education at Food Banks**

Adult Nutrition Educator Martha Hykel has been focusing on food safety and hand-washing more often when she goes to food banks since the break out of the H1N1 “swine flu” virus in our area. Using ‘glow’ lotion that appears under a black-light to represent fake germs, Martha presented a number of activities showing how easy it is to spread germs without knowing it. One activity involved putting a little of the lotion on an apple. The apple was passed around the class, being handed back and forth to everyone. The students used the black-light to see all the “germs” they had picked up from touching the apple. Martha reports, “Many clients exclaimed that they were happy to have any teaching tool that helped them to understand the issue of how germs spread and how they can be minimized”.



**Highline Public Schools**

