

## Nutrition Ed Boot Camp Launches Exciting Changes for CookShop

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Big changes are coming to CookShop this year, with big impact for New York City students and families struggling to make healthy, affordable food choices.

CookShop is the Food Bank For New York City's largest nutrition education program, helping children, teens and adults gain the knowledge and skills to make nutritious food choices on a limited budget. On Saturday, at a daylong nutrition education boot camp, the Food Bank trained nearly 1,000 New York City public elementary school teachers and staff to implement the program.

The Food Bank also debuted a new name for CookShop's component for parents and caregivers, CookShop for Families, and announced an exciting joint effort with SchoolFood to bring CookShop foods into school cafeterias. These changes could have especially far-reaching impact this year, as CookShop nearly doubles in size from approximately 15,000 to 28,000 participants.

Held at the headquarters of the United Federation of Teachers, Saturday's training was the largest such event in CookShop's 17-year history. Karen Alford, the UFT's Vice President for Elementary Schools, and Chris Proctor, the organization's Director of Health and Safety, were on hand to welcome attendees to the event, joining Áine Duggan, the Food Bank's Vice President for Research, Policy and Education, and Jeannie Fournier, the Food Bank's Director of Nutrition and Health Education.

Mildred Peguero, a kindergarten teacher at P.S./I.S. 180M who has implemented CookShop in her classroom for the past five years, also welcomed attendees to the training, sharing her own insights about the program's impact. CookShop integrates well with the core subject areas like math, science and language arts, she said, adding she's always impressed to hear her kindergarteners use sophisticated concepts to talk about nutrition.

"They know what they're eating, and why it's good for them. They know where the plants come from, and it's not the store," she said. The bottom line: "They have learned how to eat healthier."

Saturday's nutrition education boot camp featured hands-on cooking lessons and engaging nutrition seminars, through which participants develop the nutrition knowledge and cooking and food safety skills they will pass on to their students when the program begins in December. This year, CookShop will be taught in approximately 1,300 public elementary school classrooms and after-school programs.

But CookShop's impact will also reach beyond the classroom. CookShop for Families (formerly CookShop for Adults) is offered in schools that implement CookShop Classroom for Elementary School. With workshops that complement the children's curricula, CookShop for Families' new name emphasizes its core goal: involving whole families in preparing meals and choosing food. Similarly, CookShop's partnership with SchoolFood aims to engage entire school communities in the program's lessons about why and how to eat wholesome foods including fruit, vegetables, legumes and whole grains.