

## Principals: CookShop Helps Students, Families Make Healthy Choices

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by Katherine Mancera

As today is the last day of public school in New York City, it is a perfect time to reflect on an exciting year of CookShop, the Food Bank's nutrition education program. Our workshops for children, teens and adults reached more than 15,000 people in all five boroughs, including students in more than 700 public elementary school classrooms.

Last year, in a survey of participating teachers, more than 97 percent reported their students more likely to try a new healthy food because of CookShop, while 96 percent reported their students want to eat healthier and 92 percent said their students are making healthier food choices because of CookShop.

This year, participating principals sent letters describing their CookShop success stories, and we were thrilled to hear their rave reviews. We're especially excited that so many people involved with CookShop will continue cooking and eating fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains at home. Here are a few of their stories:

"CookShop became a catch phrase in our building, and the amount of enthusiasm it built among our teachers and students was amazing. The children in grades pre-K to second and in our special needs class learn to make healthy, nutritious recipes that they eagerly share with their parents at home. CookShop's lessons have students readily eating vegetables in our cafeteria that my nutritionist and our parents have told me they were not eating before. It provides a bonding experience, a motivational tool and a new way of talking about food and nutrition for our teachers, our parents and our students.

"CookShop is an essential weapon in our healthy-living, healthy-eating fight to change the obesity rates in our school and in our neighborhood."

—Harold Anderson, Principal, C.S. 21 – Crisups Attucks Elementary School

"Our cook tastes the recipes and is going to start serving [CookShop] dishes at lunch time. This program has not only taught our community about healthy eating, but it has brought our community together....Parents are volunteering in the classroom and cooking with the staff."

—Carin Ellis, Principal, P.S. 212 Queens – School of CyberScience and Literacy

"The teachers and students love the program. I just walked into a bilingual classroom and it was the first time they have seen cauliflower and collard greens. They were amazed with the texture."

—Melissa Acevedo-Lamarca, Assistant Principal, P.S. 19 Queens

"This is the first year my school is participating in the program and we LOVE IT!!! My little kindergarten, first and second grade students enjoy Fridays when their teachers do the CookShop lessons. I often have a little visitor coming to give me a small sample of what they made in class. My kids are always eager to explain what they made and how they did it."

—Vanessa Christenses, Assistant Principal, P.S. 48 Queens – The William Wordsworth School

"This Thanksgiving my family had a potluck and we all had to bring something. My sister, who teaches second grade at a school in the Bronx, surprised us with the three-bean salsa, which she too learned to make in CookShop at her school. This was full circle for me...CookShop is touching the lives of so many near and far. It makes me smile every time I think of my sister serving a CookShop dish at Thanksgiving because she knows we all need to eat healthier."

—Dora Danner, Assistant Principal, P.S. 17 – The Henry David Thoreau School

As **improving child nutrition** becomes **a national priority**, the Food Bank is proud of CookShop's success in moving children and families toward a healthier lifestyle — and is working to bring the program to more communities in need.

*Katherine Mancera is the Food Bank's Public Education Associate. For more information on our CookShop program go to [www.foodbanknyc.org/go/CookShop](http://www.foodbanknyc.org/go/CookShop), or watch our CookShop video below:*