

SNACK ATTACK

HOW CAN STUDENTS MAKE HEALTHY
SNACK CHOICES IN SCHOOLS?



New York City public school students eat almost 1 million meals every day! These meals are pretty healthy. But, many students get a lot of their calories from unhealthy junk foods – and they're buying lots of those in school.

WHO DECIDES WHAT FOODS ARE AVAILABLE IN SCHOOLS?



HOW DO THESE FOODS IMPACT OUR HEALTH?

HOW CAN STUDENTS BE INVOLVED IN SCHOOL FOOD CHOICES?

In the summer of 2019, CUP and Bronx Health REACH collaborated with Teaching Artist Susana Arellano and students from the Comprehensive Model School Project 327 (CMSP 327) in the Bronx to investigate school foods. Students got out of the classroom to document food options in the neighborhood, survey community members, interview stakeholders working on the issue, and create art to show what they learned.

Students created this booklet to help other students get involved in their school food choices.

There are two kinds of food available at NYC public schools:

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

"[NYC DOE Office of Food and Nutrition Services] offers free breakfast and lunch for everybody in every school so nobody has to pay."

— Stephen O'Brien, Director of Strategic Partnerships and Policy at the NYC Department of Education, Office of Food and Nutrition Services



COMPETITIVE FOODS

"Competitive foods are anything sold in schools besides what's served through the school meal plan [such as] in vending machines, school stores, snack carts, and fundraisers."

— Kelly Moltzen, Program Manager, Creating Healthy Schools and Communities, Bronx Health REACH



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FREE MEALS AND COMPETITIVE FOODS?

Both foods have to meet federal nutrition standards, but free meals provided by schools are generally healthier than the snacks sold in schools.

"All of our food is not allowed to have anything that is an artificial color, an artificial flavor, and no high fructose corn syrup. We try to make sure that we're making a really good recipe and a really good product before we serve it to you."

— Stephen O'Brien



FREE MEALS



COMPETITIVE FOODS

COPYCAT SNACKS ARE AN EXAMPLE OF COMPETITIVE FOODS SOLD IN SCHOOLS



"Copycat snacks meet the ... nutrition criteria that [school] snacks need to meet, but [food companies] market the snacks using the same brand names, product names, logos, and characters that are also used to market junk food."

— Kelly Moltzen

Copycat snacks can create confusion about what's healthy, and what's not.

"You [may] go to the bodega after school and get a bag of Doritos and think that it's healthy because it's allowed to be sold in school, but in reality, it's just an unhealthier version of the one served in school."

— Kelly Moltzen



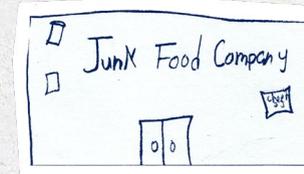
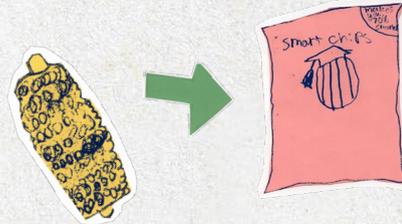
WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM? WHO PAYS?

Money from taxes supports free meals in schools. The federal government also uses tax money to make it cheaper for companies to make junk food.

FREE MEALS FOR STUDENTS

"We're only allowed to spend about \$1.40 [per meal per student]... We constantly fight the federal government ... to give us more money. The only way that we will have more money to spend on school food is if your parents and you as students demand that's what you want the government to do because money [for school food] comes from taxes."

— Stephen O'Brien



CHEAP JUNK FOOD

"It's really cheap to get a bag of chips. How did those companies make those products so cheap? It's because the government [puts] money into growing more grains like corn and soy – foods that make their way into junk food... Food companies have a lot of power over the [federal] government to say...give us this money...to grow the main ingredients in junk foods."

— Kelly Moltzen

FOOD COMPANIES

"Food and beverage companies are really the ones who benefit because they make a lot of money from the snacks that are sold in schools. They're providing a tasty snack, but it's at the expense of children's health. They're also providing a lot of extra fat, sugar, salt, and other additives that you don't really need."

— Kelly Moltzen

WHO BENEFITS FROM COMPETITIVE FOODS?

STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS

"You could say students [also] benefit from the vending machines [because] a percentage of that money goes to the school itself [and] provides funding to PSAL, the high school sports organization for the whole city."

— Stephen O'Brien

WHEN SCHOOL'S OUT

Many factors outside of school, such as family income and local food options, can impact your health.

"In some families, parents have to work multiple jobs in order to make a good living. [They may] not have as much time to cook at home...It can make it more difficult to find healthy food or to afford a wider variety of fresh fruits and vegetables."

— Kelly Moltzen

SCAVENGER HUNT

Students searched their school and neighborhood stores to investigate local food options. They used paper cut-outs of healthy and unhealthy food and rearranged real foods to imagine healthier options for their community.



WHO DO YOU THINK IS MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR PROMOTING GOOD NUTRITION & HEALTHY EATING HABITS?



5 CHILDREN



5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT



7 FOOD COMPANIES



8 FEDERAL GOVERNMENT



8 ADVERTISING COMPANIES



10 SCHOOLS



12 DOCTORS



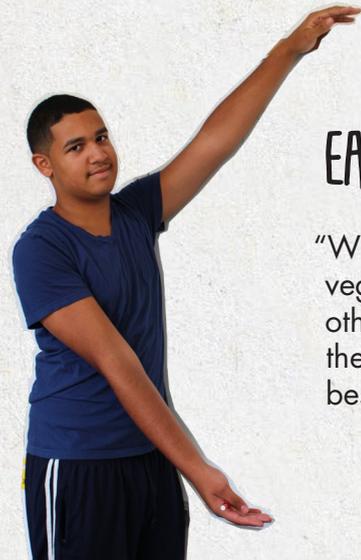
16 PARENTS



COMMUNITY SURVEYS

Students conducted interviews in school and the community to better understand what type of food they consider healthy versus unhealthy and who is most responsible for promoting good nutrition and healthy eating habits.

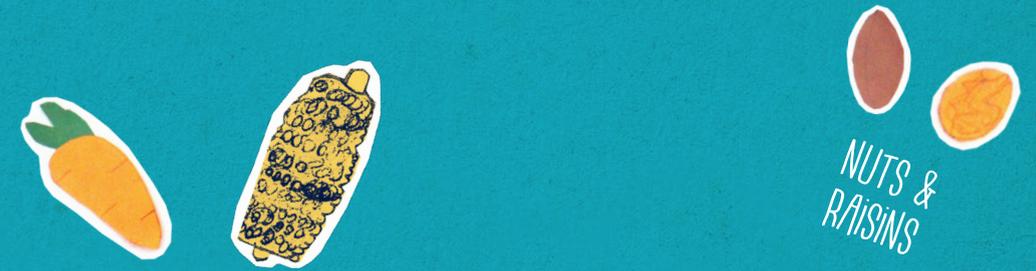
WHAT ARE SOME HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES?



EAT WHOLE FOODS...

"Whole foods [are foods like] fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and other legumes. [These foods] have all the nutrients we need, and [they] are best for us."

— Kelly Moltzen



CHOOSE FARM FRESH FOODS!

"Another snack option is to sell fruits and vegetables from a farm. [Those foods] benefit the farmers, which is not the same thing as benefitting processed food companies."

— Kelly Moltzen



... INSTEAD OF PROCESSED FOODS

"Processed foods have been changed from their natural state. These foods have less of the nutrients your body needs. Ultra-processed foods have added fat, salt, sugar, and other additives like preservatives – ingredients that are linked to poor health and diseases like diabetes, heart disease, or cancer."

— Kelly Moltzen



ORGANIZE FUN & HEALTHY FUNDRAISERS

"[Instead of selling junk food] you could hold a dance-off or [organize] a walk, where you're going to get a donation for every half mile that you walk... The Office of School Wellness has some really cool tools!"

— Stephen O'Brien

For more healthy fundraiser ideas, visit:
institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Healthy-Celebration-Toolkit-September-2018.pdf

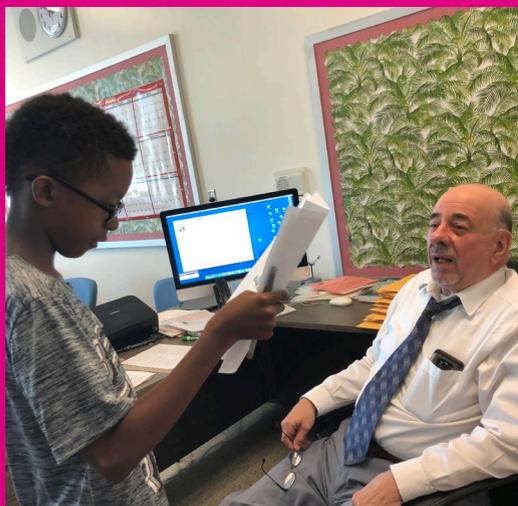
GET INVOLVED...

TALK TO YOUR PRINCIPAL

"There are different menus that schools can choose from. It's up to the principal to decide which menu to tell the Office of Food and Nutrition Services to provide."

— Kelly Moltzen

PRINCIPALS CAN ALSO NEGOTIATE WITH COMPANIES TO SELL HEALTHIER OPTIONS IN SCHOOL VENDING MACHINES AND SCHOOL STORES.



AT SCHOOL!



TEST NEW FOODS AT THE NYC DOE OFFICE OF FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

"Every year we have field trips come to our headquarters ... and the students taste the recipes and the foods that we're thinking about putting on the menu next year. Two thousand students a year come and make the decisions as to which food is tasty and which food is not. If the students fail an item, we don't put it on the menu."

— Stephen O'Brien



FORM A SCHOOL WELLNESS TEAM

"Students can be part of a team that works directly with school staff to taste test and [make] recommendations about the meals. That input can be provided directly to the cafeteria staff in their schools and the NYC DOE Office of Food and Nutrition Services"

— Kelly Moltzen

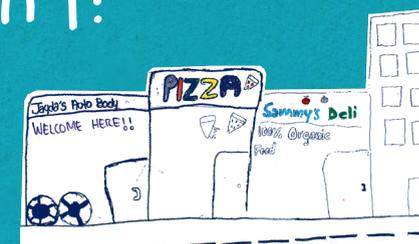
For more ideas, check out:
schools.nyc.gov/school-life/get-involved/school-wellness-councils

IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

TALK TO YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

"If we all advocated more for our government to [make] it cheaper to grow a wider variety of fruits and vegetables [and] to make those fruits and vegetables cheaper in the store, affordable healthy food would be more accessible."

— Kelly Moltzen



TALK TO LOCAL STORES

"Bodegas [and other local stores] are usually willing to sell healthy food if people are willing to buy the healthy food."

— Kelly Moltzen

WHAT DO STUDENTS SAY?

"Food is a big part of our lives and what we consume should be more healthy choices."

— Andre Netty



"School foods can be healthy sometimes and sometimes not."

— Angelina Paulino



"I would make sure that there are no copycat snacks [in schools] and I would make the food healthier and unprocessed."

— Nikosi Whyte

"I would make [school food] more healthy, but also better. For example, [instead of] chicken nuggets... I would serve grilled chicken which is more healthy and more tasty."

— Daniyah Brown

"I would [offer] more food choices [in schools] that we like."

— Jayda Bitihene

"I learned that foods in schools are healthier than food outside [schools]."

— Tanih Singleton



"I would want more supermarkets and delis [in my community]."

— Victor Perez

"I would make eating healthy affordable [in my community]."

— Phenix Scurry



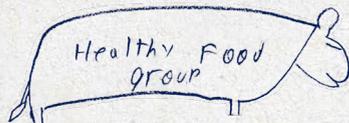
"I would want [schools] to have more fruit."

— Rockland Whyte



"[Schools] should sell foods from [local] farms."

— Jeremiah Nigaglioni



The **Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP)** is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to increase meaningful civic engagement, particularly among historically underrepresented communities.

City Studies are CUP's project-based, in-class and afterschool programs that use design and art as tools to research the city. To learn more, visit **welcometoCUP.org**.

Bronx Health REACH, a project of the Institute for Family Health, works within communities to make health equity a reality. Through health education and outreach efforts, policy and system change, and community partnerships, Bronx Health REACH works to affect change in policy and practice. To learn more, visit **institute.org/bronx-health-reach/**.

The **Comprehensive Model School Project (CMSP 327)** is a 6th to 12th grade New York City public school of over 700 students with the belief that all students can and will learn.

CUP

Teaching Artist: Susana Arellano | Project Lead: Fielding Hong | Project Support: Leigh Taylor

BRONX HEALTH REACH

Program Manager, Creating Healthy Schools and Communities: Kelly Moltzen, MPH, RD
Program Coordinator, Creating Healthy Schools and Communities: Moria Byrne-Zaaloff, MPH

NEW SETTLEMENT AT CMSP 327

Principal: Alix Ricci | Director, Creative Leaders After-School Program, AIM For Success College Prep Program at CMSP 327: Carmen Julia Hernandez | Teacher: Bilal Raza
Creative Leaders is a DYCD funded program.

Students: Andre Netty, Angelina Paulino, Daniyah Brown, Elianny Echavarría, Farida Abdulkarim, Helen Diaz, Jayda Bitihene, Jendry Gutierrez, Jenny Mateo, Jeremiah Nigaglioni, Katelynn Medina, Katherine Saldana, Lisveth Disla, Nikosi Whyte, Octavio Novas, Phenix Scurry, Robiliana Santos, Rockland Whyte, Silmane Koita, Tanih Singleton, Tomas Polanco, Victor Perez

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Kelly Moltzen, Stephen O'Brien

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