



Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program Significant Change Stories

- ♥ Last spring when the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program first started, Denise Gomber, principal of BJM, shared a story about a student who was complaining about "all these fruits and vegetables." He wanted more ice cream instead. She offered to meet with him in her office to discuss his concerns. When it was time for them to meet, he had already changed his mind. He is now active proponent of the program.
- ♥ A child was playing in The Cat's Pajamas toy store with another child who happened to be in the store. He was overheard by owner Jennifer Engel who is on the IPEI board, one of our program funders, bragging about how in his school he gets fruits and vegetables every day in the classroom.
- ♥ A first grade teacher told Amie Hamlin, Executive Director of the New York Coalition for Healthy School Food, that she received a call from a parent. Her child had never before eaten beets, but came home all excited saying that they must go out and purchase beets, slice them very thin, and eat them raw. The parent was very appreciative.
- ♥ There were a few beets left over so we sliced them and took them around the school in a bowl, offering them to children. Children took them by the handfuls and were enjoying beets as if they were candy.
- ♥ A 4th grade student approached Amie Hamlin in the cafeteria while she was preparing the fruits and vegetables. She said that it was very nice that someone thought to do this for the children of the school and that she really appreciated it, and thanked her. She then came to visit on a regular basis to talk about eating healthy.
- ♥ This winter, a kindergarten teacher told us, "We had a birthday party with chocolate cupcakes--about half stopped eating their cupcake to eat the grapes. And many (half) then chose broccoli and tried the turnips. Four kids had seconds on turnips." At the beginning of the school year, this teacher asked the program

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- manager not to give any vegetables to her students since they wouldn't eat them (of course we did not agree to her request!)
- ♥ Amie Hamlin asked a fifth grade student how she liked the program. She told Amie that when she eat vegetables she feels smarter!
 - ♥ At a staff meeting, Denise Gomber disclosed that parents are now telling her that they're becoming "junk food closet eaters" because their children nag them not to eat junk food anymore.
 - ♥ At a staff meeting we asked teachers if they are still serving other snacks in addition to the fruits and vegetables (we had asked them not to as part of the program). One third-grade teacher commented that they no longer serve other snacks, just the fruits and vegetables, and the kids finish everything. A kindergarten teacher shared the same comment, and also noted how appreciative the parents are that they no longer have to bring in snacks.
 - ♥ When we asked what types of snacks the fruits and vegetables have replaced, teachers rattled off a long list of snack foods including Goldfish, Wheat Thins, Fruit Chews, raw Ramen noodles, popcorn, Cheezits, pretzels, and Cheerios.
 - ♥ A third grade teacher told us that an overweight student in her class had been bringing in unhealthy snack foods to eat in her classroom during the day. She has noticed that he eats all of the fruit and vegetable snacks and has not been bringing in as many snack foods from home. She never says anything when he goes for a fifth serving of vegetables.
 - ♥ In the primary autism classroom, the teacher shared that one of her students has a very limited diet. Yet after being presented with raw kale over and over again, he finally tried it and likes to eat kale now.
 - ♥ A third-grade student told the Program Director that her classroom has their morning fruit before they start Math work. She finds it easier to focus on her Math problems after eating the fruit.
 - ♥ A third grade teacher reported that although there were some "hard words" on the information sheet, students were interested in looking them up to understand all of the new fruit and vegetable facts.
 - ♥ Several teachers have shared that the fruits and vegetables served at school are often the only ones that both teachers and students eat all day. They let us know that both students and teachers are exposed to new fruits and vegetables that they had never known about, e.g., celeriac, fennel, pomegranates, and parsnips. For

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many, it's the first time they have ever eaten raw, fresh fruits and vegetables as opposed to canned or frozen.

- ♥ Kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Thomas, reported, "My daughter, Ava, is in Nancy's Pre-K class. Today after school she said 'I'm mad she read such a long story because I didn't get to eat the sugar snap peas.' She did have some, just not as many as she wanted."
- ♥ A fourth grade teacher told us about a student who wasn't trying the snacks at all. He had never eaten an apple in his life. After his friend encouraged him to try some apple, he tried it and liked it and the class cheered. A few days later he tried melon.
- ♥ Pre-K teacher, Mrs. Siegele reported, "One child made a "sandwich" with three carrot slices between two asparagus. They were very excited about the raspberries and told us about all the berries they love, blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, etc."
- ♥ A student reports that she now likes vegetables more than potato chips.
- ♥ Several students have told us that they don't feel "right" when they don't get their fruits and vegetables on weekends and school breaks.
- ♥ When asked if they ever feel any different after eating the fruit and vegetable snacks, across the grades, students are reporting that they feel healthier, happier, stronger, faster and smarter!
- ♥ A fifth grader wrote, "I feel more focused."
- ♥ A second grader commented that he remembers things better now that he eats fruits and vegetables.
- ♥ A first grader noted that she now that she is eating fruits and vegetables everyday that she has "better luck."
- ♥ A second grader compared eating fruits and vegetable to "eating energy."
- ♥ At the end of the school year, a pre-K teacher noticed that two of her students who hadn't been eating the vegetable snack at the beginning of the year were now eating the vegetables!

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- ♥ A fourth grade teacher has noticed that student's bodies have become used having the snacks, have adjusted to the snack routine and now have more awareness of hunger. She also noticed that she hasn't seen students with as many "sweet snacks."
- ♥ A third grade teacher has a student for whom English is a second language who likes to read the daily information sheets to the class.
- ♥ A parent of a fifth grade student wrote, "It's a great program. Keep it up. It reinforces the message we are trying to convey at home."
- ♥ A parent of a fifth grade student wrote about her daughter, "She is inclined more now to eat raw fruits and veggies."
- ♥ A parent has noticed changes in the child's eating/snacking behavior, "When she goes to the grocery store, she asks for fruits and vegetables."
- ♥ A fourth grade teacher shared that he didn't think everyone would be as excited about it as they are. They stopped asking for other snacks.
- ♥ A third grade teacher commented that the program alleviates correspondence with parents about snacks and uncertainty of snacks coming so it's a double bonus.
- ♥ A teacher noted that the program addresses the "equity issue" for many families who either cannot afford to provide snack or who don't eat the typical snacks brought into school.
- ♥ The FFVSP Program Director, Lara Kaltman, ran into a BJM student over the summer at a local supermarket. His mom reported that he had just asked her if she would buy him some green peppers!
- ♥ A teacher from the primary autism classroom told us that one of her students asked for field greens as a reward.
- ♥ A mom with a home garden was surprised when her son expressed interest in eating the beets she had grown and also in expressing a preference for how they were cut.
- ♥ The FFVSP Program Manager, Vanessa Wood, overheard a BJM student talking to her mother in a local grocery store. The six or seven year old girl told her Mom, "I ate spinach at school today. I told my teacher that I liked it. We should buy some spinach."

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