



Photo by Emme Spickler

### Chefs for Kids Accomplishments

Research assessments show that among second-grade students:

- 76% identified foods correctly from each food group with no errors.
- 18.6% chose three unhealthy snacks before intervention, following the education, only 8% chose three unhealthy snacks.
- 94% listed two activities considered “active”; another 6% listed an activity that would get them moving.
- 72% responded with no steps omitted for hand-washing skills.

## Chefs for Kids: Nutrition education program expands to northern Nevada

With a national focus on childhood obesity, nutrition education must begin early. Chefs for Kids educates first- and second-graders in how to choose healthy foods, develop active lifestyles and use good food safety skills, such as proper hand-washing.

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension teamed up with the American Culinary Federation Chefs of Las Vegas to design the educational program, Chefs for Kids. The partnership works to eliminate malnutrition through education and awareness – including breakfasts and classes in high-needs Clark County elementary schools.

“Cooperative Extension has developed a nutrition curriculum for children, tailored to their needs and abilities, enabling them to adopt healthful eating habits,” said Chris-

topher Johns, executive chef at South Point Hotel/Casino and a federation member.

Participating chefs donate 500 hours yearly, preparing much needed breakfasts for the students with food donated by local properties and purveyors. “It’s so rewarding to see the faces of these children light up when they see the breakfast we prepared for them,” Johns added.

Susan Lednický, Cooperative Extension program coordinator, reports that Chefs for Kids has reached more than 26,400 students since its inception 18 years ago. This year, however, the program expanded its education to reach youth outside Clark County.

“Expanding to Washoe County has brought Chefs for Kids close to statewide,” Lednický explained. “The teachers at Desert Heights and Sun Valley Elementary Schools were very

*Cooperative Extension nutrition educator Robin Collins explains the nutritional value of nuts and beans to second-grade youth at Cortez Elementary School in North Las Vegas.*

interested in bringing this nutrition education to their children.”

Each year, a gourmet dinner and auction is held to fund teaching positions for Chefs for Kids. This year’s event, held at Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, was attended by nearly 600 people and raised more than \$130,000. This event has generated more than \$855,000 since 1991.

For more information about Chefs for Kids, contact Susan Lednický, at (702) 257-5548, or lednickys@unce.unr.edu.

—Marilyn Ming is Cooperative Extension’s Las Vegas marketing and public relations specialist.