

THE MAGIC OF KIWIS AND RED BURRITOS

Most of us had some experience with summer camp growing up. But *nutrition camp*?

The Boys, Girls, Adults Community Development Center held one this summer. That's right: a *nutrition camp* for kids—not doctors, nurses, dietitians, or school chefs. They don't learn how to tie a rope, memorize Bible verses, make art, or get along with each other, but something that could be even more important to their generation: how to stay healthy and live a longer, happier life. They are introduced to grains and vitamin-rich foods—even weird things like *kiwis*—that will help them avoid the banes of the modern world: obesity and diabetes.



BGACDC partnered with the University of Arkansas's Co-operative Phillips County Extension Service to conduct the camp. We wanted children to interact with the foods through smell, taste, and touch while introducing them to foods they may not have ever seen or tasted before. Not only does the nutrition camp teach the children about where their food comes from or how to eat healthier, but also the importance of cleanliness and safety in the kitchen. Ashley Griffith from the Phillips County Co-operative Extension taught seven lessons for six- to nine-year-olds.

The first lesson was on kitchen sense. It showed the children the importance of washing their hands before eating or preparing meals. They were given soap and told to wash their hands for twenty seconds. After washing their hands, they put their hands under a black light to see if the germs were gone. The second lesson was on teaching the children about the incredible, edible five food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy. They received a plate containing different foods and were told to put them in the correct food group.

The third lesson was called "Rice is Nice." It was about the importance of grains for the human body. Whole-grain foods help lower the risk of diabetes and control cholesterol, which is a common reason for heart attacks. Rice is an excellent substitute to enjoy healthy snacks. The children were given rice cakes and peanut butter to try as a new snack.

Of course, some liked it, and some didn't. The fourth lesson was called "I'll Eat These Veggies." It helped them to see the importance of eating vegetables, which are packed with healthy vitamins and minerals, such as vitamins A, C, E, and potassium, which kids need to stay healthy. They made a nutritious snack called "ants on a log." It consists of a stick of celery covered with peanut butter and raisins.

The fifth lesson was called "Did You See a Kiwi?" It introduced them to new fruits and cream cheese and taught them about the fruit group, which is high in fiber, vitamins and minerals. They tried kiwi and plums with cream cheese.

The sixth lesson was "Ole Bean Ole," which introduced them to the protein group. Proteins are an excellent energy source. The kids tried bean dip as a new food choice.

The seventh lesson was "Does It Taste the Same?" It was about the dairy group and calcium. Calcium, vitamin D, and phosphorus are essential for building bones. The children made red- white- and blue breakfast burritos, consisting of strawberries, bananas, blueberries, and vanilla yogurt, all in a tortilla wrap.

Maybe they will pass along their new knowledge to the house chef.