



Julie Berman, Gardening and Cooking Instructor, Beth El Day Camp New Rochelle, NY

March 2020 Participant – Teaching Food and Nutrition for All

I joined this course because I feel passionate about the need for children to be empowered to choose to eat nourishing, simple food. I teach cooking and gardening to children ages 4-8, and I see first-hand how motivated my students are to learn about and eat foods that they grow and cook themselves. However, I felt there were holes in my background knowledge, and I hoped to become a more effective educator by becoming more well-versed in the topics and methods of teaching food and nutrition. For example, I didn't know enough about the connection between our food system and the environment, and I wanted to be able to educate without using fear to communicate the urgency of climate change. I needed ideas of how to motivate students to make good food choices that positively impact climate change without scaring them to act.

This course provided me with so many excellent resources and activities I can use with my students to help them make good choices around food. I learned specifically what I need to do to be an effective teacher - like how to inspire students and create supportive environments that will make it easier for them to make good choices. I also learned what food and nutrition educators are up against: a food supply that is highly-processed, unhealthful, and has a large carbon-footprint, and a global food system that focuses on corporate profits and disregards health, ecological sustainability and social justice. I now feel better-equipped to teach students how to be media- and advertising- savvy, to implement hands-on experiences that change behaviors and increase confidence and to empower students to be "food literate" - to know which foods are healthy, ecologically sustainable and socially just.

I have to say, I loved this course. Topics ranged from heavy and light, and the learning activities were fun and interactive, and can bolster our lesson plans. The learning resources were plentiful and very informative, but they were digestible and it hasn't been daunting to figure out how to synthesize the information for teaching. I enjoyed connecting with other



educators and learning about their experiences and challenges. Reading reflections were encouraged to be personal, and so when we wrote, we could demonstrate what we learned from the reading by weaving in our individual experiences as educators. I look forward to using everything I learned in the course to be a more effective educator and a more thoughtful consumer.