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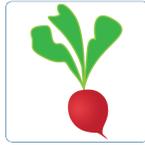
March 2020 Participant – Teaching Food and Nutrition for All

I am a health and wellness professional with my Master's in Health Promotion, and a certified Holistic Health & Wellness Coach and Holistic Nutritionist, so I am no stranger to the importance of nutrition education. I firmly believe that the relationships we have with food, our bodies and health/wellness develop at a young age and follow us throughout adulthood. That is why I am committed to empowering students to become the best version of themselves through educating and supporting students in their understanding of what it means to be healthy. A key component of this is nutrition education.

My position is funded by a city sugar-sweetened beverage tax (Health Equity Fund), which helps fund programs to increase the health equity of those in our community experiencing health disparities. I knew I wanted to take this course because it perfectly aligns with my position and the goals of the Health Equity Fund. This course helps equip educators with the tools and strategies they can use when they teach food and nutrition, which is a catalyst to build community, support health, increase equity, and heal the planet. It has provided me with a clear framework, lesson ideas and resources on how I can make a meaningful, lasting change within our school with the goal of creating nutrition education that inspires and builds confidence for students to make food choices that support their health.

Since taking this course, I plan to change my health and wellness lessons to include more action plans, and reinforce the framework that was introduced in this course, so that students KNOW what to eat to be healthy, they have a WHY behind eating healthy and they know HOW to do it.

One major focus of this course is the importance of school lunch in nutrition education. Something that was very eye-opening to me was how politically driven school lunch is. While this topic may be too abstract for elementary students to fully grasp, we have the ability to start small and talk about other outside influences, such as advertising. Many ultra-processed foods companies target young children, in the hopes of them becoming customers for life. If we help



students learn how advertising influences them, and how they can push back from it, we help them become more well-informed and stewards of their own health and food choices. Starting small and teaching kids the tools to navigate their food environment is so important and can be a catalyst for activism as they move through life.

With type 2 diabetes and other preventable lifestyle-related diseases on the rise, it is our duty as educators to help students understand our food system and to take part in conversations that can influence policy change. Knowledge is truly power and I believe that many of those in our communities are not aware of all of the factors that influence what kids are eating in our schools and how that impacts the future of our country. While I am very lucky that our school district has a truly amazing school lunch program, many others are not so lucky. It is up to us to educate our students about the importance of food and nutrition, while giving them the confidence and tools they can use throughout their lifetime.

If you are considering taking the Teaching Food and Nutrition Course, I would urge you to not think about it any longer and sign-up! You will not regret it. Whether you are well-versed in nutrition education or know nearly nothing, you will take something tangible away that you can implement in your schools and communities.