



May 2010

Crowning Moments newsletter

Brought to you by the King Street Center

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The mission of the King Street Center is to promote personal and social wellness through educational, recreational, and social programs.

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King Street's Food Revolution

If you've turned on the TV lately, you probably know something about the ABC series, *Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution*. The show features celebrity chef Jamie Oliver as he attempts to change the eating habits of Huntington, West Virginia, which the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) identified as America's unhealthiest city.

Scenes from the show are shocking. Entire classes of children who can't identify a tomato. Kids who eat pizza with strawberry milk for breakfast and chicken nuggets and fries for lunch—in the schools!

The list of horrors goes on (it is reality TV, after all), but the basic message is the same: Americans' relationship with food is in real trouble.

National statistics show that nearly 7 in 10 adults are overweight, and 1 in 3 is obese. Children do slightly better, with "only" 1 in 3 categorized as overweight, but all the trends point to kids getting heavier as they mature into adults. According to the CDC, today's generation of children could be the first to die at a younger age than their parents because of obesity-related health problems.

If only we could get Jamie to come to King Street. Then he could see what a real food revolution looks like. From



preschool through high school, our programs focus on teaching children how to grow, prepare, and eat healthy, nutritious foods. For example:

- Each day our preschoolers eat a nutritious lunch, made from scratch in our own kitchen using quality ingredients.



- Preschoolers also benefit from weekly visits to Shelburne Farms, where they see first-hand where real food comes from.
- Every summer our children grow their own vegetables at nearby Champlain Street Park. Produce from their garden is used for snacks and meals that the kids prepare themselves, all summer long.
- Our "Kids' Café" program teaches teens how to plan, shop for, and prepare a healthy meal together. Pad Thai, anyone?
- Several times a year we invite families into our gym for one of our home-cooked community dinners.
- We even have our own food service business—Kids' Lemonade—where youth 11 and up serve freshly squeezed beverages on the Church Street Marketplace.
- Our food programs were showcased as a model for others during a recent visit by Lisa Pino, Deputy Administrator for the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service.

Food and nutrition are not "extras" at King Street—they are necessary ingredients for producing healthy, happy children and families. We believe that cooking is one of the most important skills a person can have. People who cook eat better, pay less at the grocery store, and live healthier lives. What's cooking in your kitchen?



From the Director

Vicky

With spring officially here, who among us isn't thinking about food? Whether I'm dining at an outdoor café on Church Street or shopping at the Burlington Farmers' Market, now is the time of year when I am reminded of just how great Vermont's food scene really is.

We are truly blessed to live in a state that takes food seriously. And we're a healthy bunch, too: according to the Centers for Disease Control, Burlington ranks as one of the fittest places in the country.

Vermonters should be proud of these accomplishments, but we still have a long way to go. If you ask our afterschoolers what they had for dinner last night, you'll hear a familiar refrain: chicken nuggets. Hot dogs. Mac 'n cheese.

Such answers should not be surprising. Foods like these are filling, tasty, and cheap. In households where food can't be wasted, parents don't have the luxury of "trying out" new foods on their children. Instead, most tend to stick to foods that they know their children will eat. The result is that poor eating habits are passed from one generation to the next.

At King Street we try to break that cycle by introducing children to healthy foods early and often. As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, it starts in our preschool (see *Candie's Kitchen*, below) and goes right through high school with our Kids Café program (see *Cooking Up Healthy Choices*, at right).

Such programs are possible, in part, because we live in a community that cares about food. A grant from the Food Works at Two Rivers Center buys supplies for our community garden. Support from the Vermont Health Foundation keeps our pantry stocked. The Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger secures federal dollars for summer lunches and afterschool snacks. Gift cards courtesy of City Market allow us to purchase bulk items at low prices.

Exposing kids to different experiences, different people, and yes, different foods is central to our mission. By providing the kids and families of King Street Center with these opportunities, we help ensure a great Vermont food scene not just for some, but for all.



Mentor Moments

Sam and Seraphin participated in the 2009-2010 Just for Boys mentoring program, meeting each Wednesday for an hour and a half along with other mentoring matches.

Just for Boys is a one-year mentoring commitment where King Street boys are matched with men from the community. Because the matches meet as a group and participate in pre-planned activities, JFB is a great introduction to mentoring.

Throughout the year, matches meet to take part in activities like game design, park trips, cooking, football, and bowling.

Seraphin says he and Sam had a lot of fun together this year, especially during Just for Boys drawing contests. "It's good for kids to have Big Buddies," adds Seraphin. "They can have fun, and they help kids make good decisions."



Candie's Kitchen

Candie Ladue has been cooking meals for our preschoolers for more than 10 years, and she is constantly looking for ways to keep the kids' meals fresh and innovative. Three years ago, our preschool staff totally revamped the menu to include a much wider variety of foods prepared in new and imaginative ways. Candie embraced the updated menu, adding her own touches and embellishments.

Each day's lunch is lovingly made from scratch, using fresh ingredients, following recipes from gourmet cookbooks or the pages of *Eating Well* magazine. Lunchtime favorites include Cranberry Herb Turkey Burgers, Tofu Pad Thai, and Spicy Black Bean Corn Cakes, among others.

All meals meet (and usually exceed) government nutritional requirements. More importantly, the kids actually eat the food. Veggies and fruit disappear just as quickly as the entrées, and children are introduced to new foods on a regular basis. "Candie, you're a good cooker!" says four-year-old Eric. We couldn't agree more.

Photo courtesy AMV Photography

Meet OUR Youth



Jada age 6
Flastine age 5

Years at King Street:
Jada: 1 Flastine: 2
School: Champlain Elementary
King Street Activities:
Play with toys, cooking, reading books, Junior/Senior Buddies, dance class at the Flynn.
When I grow up I'll be:
Jada: Big Buddy Flastine: Teacher
Why King Street is important:
Jada: You learn to listen to the people that are speaking.
Flastine: Because kids learn your name.



Photo courtesy AMV Photography

Melisa age 13

Years at King Street: 3
School: Edmunds Middle
King Street Activities:
Photography, Marathon Relay, Each One Reach One, & Kids' Café.
Favorite King Street activity EVER: Snowboarding with CHILL
When I grow up I'll be:
A nurse
Why King Street: It's fun and my friends are here. I get help on homework, so my grades have improved.

Cooking Up Healthy Choices

"Hey Laura, do I dice or chop?" asks Angelus, knife poised over a pile of onions.

Teen staff member Laura Howland turns from helping another teen decide how much paprika to add to the vegetarian chili. "What does the recipe say?"

Angelus peers at the paper. "It says to dice. Can you show me how again?"

The Kids' Café recipe is simple: gather five teens and one staff member, prepare a delicious, healthy meal, then eat together. Like all good recipes, though, the results are far more intricate.

Teen Futures staff members choose many of the recipes, like today's vegetarian chili; however, the teens frequently request items, search for recipes online, and bring in recipes traditional to their homes and cultures.

Next, a teen futures staff member takes one or two teens shopping, where the teens learn about selecting fresh ingredients, purchasing items in bulk, and budgeting their meals.

When it's time to make the meal, the teens take over, dividing up jobs, prepping ingredients, and cooking. The teen staff member plays the role of guide, helping when necessary and stepping back whenever possible. Through this model, the teens develop the confidence necessary to make healthy food from scratch as adults.

After cooking, the teens clean the kitchen together, making sure that every surface and utensil sparkles, focusing on

best practices regarding food and kitchen sanitation.

Finally, with the meal prepared and the kitchen cleaned, the teens are ready to eat. Everyone sits around the table, where the meal is served family-style.

Teen Futures Coordinator Jim Young notes that Kids' Café emphasizes manners. "For example," he says, "we don't allow cell phones. It's important for teens to learn when it's appropriate to be on the phone and when it's not."

The program is wildly popular with the teens, many of whom hope to become chefs - one former teen attends NECI; another attends the Culinary Institute of America.

The ultimate goal, though, is to prepare teens for life on their own, when they'll be making all their own food choices.

Still, maybe it won't be long before Angelus dices onions on *Iron Chef!*



The 20th Annual Bob Aldrich Memorial King Street Center Golf Invitational

Monday, June 28th
8:30 AM Shotgun Start
Burlington Country Club

more information at:
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or
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