



FOOD & DRINK

Local Summer Camp Children Learn About Healthy Eating at 5th Annual Growing Healthy Kids Day

By TAPINTO MORRISTOWN CONTRIBUTOR August 17, 2017 at 4:26 PM







MORRISTOWN, NJ – What better way to teach kids about healthy eating than –you guessed it – a vegetable dance party!

More than 80 summer camp children jammed and boogied with a twirling carrot and a prancing peapod at the fifth annual Growing Healthy Kids Day on Friday, August 4, hosted by the Community Soup Kitchen & Outreach Center and sponsored by The Walmart Foundation. The “Letter B” headlined the morning, with food tastings featuring blueberries, broccoli and green beans. The jam-packed event, held at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Morristown, gave children of local working families a fun way to learn about nutritious eating and healthy lifestyle habits. The Riverdale Walmart provided take-away goodie bags filled with school supplies.

“This event is a great way for kids to learn about eating right, and we’re grateful to the Walmart Foundation for supporting us and making this day possible,” said Nancy Rudgers, Community Soup Kitchen director of development. “To see the kids’ smiles is priceless. It’s great to know that with the help of our corporate partners, like Walmart, we’re able to help local families and make a difference in the community.”

Recently, the Community Soup Kitchen & Outreach Center has seen a dramatic increase in the number of families it serves, particularly through its Free Farmer’s Markets that distributes fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy produce and meat three times a week. For some families, feeding children during the summer proves particularly challenging for kids who do not have access to free and reduced school lunches. This summer, to address this need, the Community Soup Kitchen & Outreach Center provided more than 100 lunches five days a week for children attending the local summer camp and served 125 dinners to families of the campers every other week. And last year alone, more than 3,375 lunches and healthy snacks were distributed to children who qualify for free or reduced lunches during the school year.

A longtime supporter of the Community Soup Kitchen & Outreach Center, The Walmart Foundation gave a \$42,000 grant through the Foundation’s State Giving Program that helped keep the Soup Kitchen & Outreach Center’s doors open 365 days a year and feed hundreds of local neighbors who needed a hot meal and help getting back on their feet.

“We’re proud to support this program, and look forward to attending the Growing Healthy Kids event every year,” said Kellilyn Auryansen, Market Human Resources Manager for Walmart. “The impact that this camp and the Community Soup Kitchen & Outreach Center have on the community is immeasurable.”

This corporate support is crucial, because even in an area such as Morris County, many children and working families do not have access to healthy food, which is critical for children’s development and academic success. The United Way reports that nearly a quarter of households in Morris County are struggling, with 5% living below the U.S. poverty line. For these families, it becomes difficult to buy expensive fresh fruits and vegetables. In response to this community need, the Community Soup Kitchen & Outreach Center holds three weekly Free Farmer’s Markets and last year distributed 475,000 pounds of nutritious food.