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Changing the way our children eat

Recipe for Success Foundation Celebrates National Nutrition Month With 5-A-Day Teacher Challenge

In its fourth year, the contest encourages faculty pledges to eat healthier—and to walk the talk for their students.

Dateline February 20, 2012, Houston, Texas. On February 27, twelve Houston elementary schools will launch the Recipe for Success Foundation (RFS) 5-A-Day Teacher Challenge, which will run two weeks until Friday, March 9. Prizes include signed cookbooks, RFS boutique gear and restaurant gift cards. The grand prize is a catered lunch by Green Plate Kids for the winner's entire class.

In its quest to combat childhood obesity by changing the way children eat, RFS normally works with elementary-aged students, but it's annual 5-A-Day Teacher Challenge places adults in the spotlight. The contest dares participating faculty and staff to improve their diets by eating more fruits and vegetables and reporting daily progress to their students. Students hold the adults accountable and urge them to stay on track to win. This role reversal excites everyone involved, initiates a campus-wide focus on healthy eating and strengthens relationships between the students and faculty by promoting teamwork and solidarity.

The task is simple: Faculty—teachers, staff and administrators—keep track of the number of servings of fruits and vegetables they consume every day for two weeks. Using a prominently placed RFS 5-A-Day Tracker Calendar, each participant gets a sticker for every day they reach their goal of eating five servings of fruits and vegetables. Many classes make a ritual of placing the sticker each day that their teacher reports success. Teachers



take advantage of the moment to engage their students in conversations about what healthy eating means to them.

The contest goal is to get faculty and staff onboard to regularly reach for the healthier option just as RFS is teaching their students to do. Teachers “shape up their plate” and put their healthiest foot forward while sharing the experience with their students. The process brings the entire faculty

more inline with the healthier attitudes their students are absorbing by participating in RFS Seed-to-Plate Nutrition Education™. School leaders have found many ways to engage faculty in the RFS 5-A-Day Teacher Challenge, including launching it with a cooking demo, recognizing daily and weekly winners and reporting on progress during the principal's daily PA announcements.

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Although RFS's ultimate goal is to encourage teachers to be healthy role models for their students, challenges have produced some unexpected additional results: Faculty members' pant sizes and cholesterol counts shrunk and children's desire to mimic the adults' healthy eating habits grew. Participants even noticed positive changes in their own families as their healthier eating habits hit the dinner table.

About Recipe for Success Foundation

Recipe for Success Foundation's *Seed-to-Plate Nutrition Education*™ has taught over 16,000 Houston elementary children how to grow, harvest, and cook their own healthy food. A growing list of 80 high-profile Houston chefs volunteer their time to help. The only initiative in the country of it's scope, the RFS *Seed-to-Plate Nutrition Education*™ program introduces children to the entire cycle of food along with taste and flavor combinations, techniques, and skills that will serve them for a lifetime, and empowers them to prepare healthy meals and snacks for themselves.

After just five years and 15,000 children, the Foundation's efforts are reaping big rewards. Parents report that their kids are now cooking at home, turning away from foods they have learned are unhealthy, and they display a solid awareness of what healthy eating is all about. Children are surprising themselves by trying, and even liking, vegetables that they would never touch before. And teachers are reporting improved behavior and attention spans in class.

Planned Expansion for Recipe for Success in 2012

In 2012 The Foundation is poised to answer demands from over 200 schools and districts across the country waiting to implement its signature programming. The national deployment of RFS *Seed-to-Plate Nutrition Education*™ is now in the final pilot stage. With S2P Pilot Phase II, RFS is conducting an e-learning S2P Instructor Training and Certification program for teachers at five appointed affiliate locations. Applications for S2P Affiliate Licenses and Instructor Training will be available nationwide in 2012. *Eat It! Food Adventures*™, a kids cookbook/adventure story is scheduled for release in March and television show of the same name is in pre-production with Houston PBS in preparation for national syndication.

The Recipe for Success team is putting the finishing touches on Hope Farms Coop™, an urban farm project. Hope Farms will support on-site markets and a rolling green market to deliver affordable produce for neighborhoods marooned in "food deserts," job opportunities for urban youth and market growing business incubation opportunities.##

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