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### OSU's nutrition campaign makes kids 'Food Heroes'

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CORVALLIS, Ore. – Starting this month, grade-school students across Oregon will learn about healthy eating, thanks to a program from Oregon State University's Extension Service.

It's part of OSU Extension's Food Hero campaign, which encourages Oregonians to eat more fruits and vegetables using inexpensive, easy-to-make recipes from its website at [www.foodhero.org](http://www.foodhero.org). The site also offers tips on topics including food safety, meal planning and eating on a budget.

For the next five months, nutrition educators with Extension will hold events at 58 elementary schools in 27 of the state's 36 counties as part of the initiative. Wearing Food Hero aprons and superhero capes, they'll demonstrate how to make dishes from the website and will serve samples in cafeterias, hallways and classrooms.

The educators also will give students cookbooks, calendars and Food Hero hand stamps saying "Ask Me What I Tried" so their parents can learn about the website and get advice for nutritious eating, too.

"Food Hero is a 24/7 resource," said Lauren Tobey, the coordinator for the website and the OSU Extension Service's nutrition education program. "It's a great option for busy parents to find healthy recipes that are easy and taste good, as well as tips on healthy eating."

Stephanie Russell, an Extension nutrition educator who works with schools in Jefferson and Crook counties, said Extension will offer table displays and tasting samples of Food Hero recipes at "family nights" at up to seven elementary schools in Prineville and Madras.

"Kids love the Food Hero recipes," Russell said. "We've been using many of them in hands-on nutrition cooking classes in local middle schools and high schools. One favorite is the Popeye smoothie. Students are always saying they can't believe how good a smoothie can be that has spinach in it. One student told me she liked it so much she shared it with her grandmother in Mexico.

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The Oregon State University Extension Service's Food Hero website includes this recipe for a barley summer salad at <http://bit.ly/VOJx0M>. (Photo by Laura LaMotte.)

"The students often report they've taken the recipes home and asked Mom to make them, or they've made them on their own," Russell added.

Oregonians will find Food Hero advertising over the next several months on grocery store shopping carts, billboards and radio stations. Twenty-seven Grocery Outlet locations will display ads and recipe cards on shelves and check-out counters, and announce healthy eating tips on their public address systems. Depending on the county, Extension nutrition educators may also offer cooking demonstrations to teach Food Hero recipes at grocery stores, parent nights at schools and at Boys and Girls Clubs.

Within the last year, Extension has added about 50 new recipes to the Food Hero website. It has also made the website easier to use, and it's now accessible by mobile devices. Additionally, it now offers its electronic publication in Vietnamese. Known as Food Hero Monthly, it's emailed to thousands of subscribers and will continue to be offered in English and Spanish as well. People can sign up for it at [www.foodhero.org/monthly-magazine](http://www.foodhero.org/monthly-magazine).

Parents can also follow Food Hero on Facebook at <http://on.fb.me/VsARez>, Twitter at <https://twitter.com/BeAFoodHero> and Pinterest at <http://pinterest.com/foodhero>.

Food Hero was developed by the OSU Extension Service and is funded by Extension, the Oregon Department of Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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