https://www.hoodrivernews.com/gorge-life/osu-extension-food-hero-program-is-kid-approved/article_ae657dbe-86de-11e9-8a12-336b7a235d53.html

OSU Extension: Food Hero program is 'kid approved'

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Photo courtesy of OSU Extension

Food Hero, a social marketing campaign, was developed 10 years ago by Oregon State University Extension Service. Food Hero's mission is to work with Oregonians and community and state level partners to improve health outcomes through the increased consumption of fruits and vegetables and healthier meals cooked at home.

The Food Hero website offers over 300 recipes in English and Spanish that are quick, healthy and delicious, and include ingredients available at local food pantries.

In addition to its web-based features, Food Hero offers in-person programs to educate Oregon students and families about healthy eating. These programs are available in every Oregon county in schools, food pantries, grocery stores, health clinics and low-income housing sites. Food Hero is present in Hood River County at Cascade Locks Elementary, Parkdale Elementary, Mid Valley Elementary, Wy'east Middle School and the FISH Food Bank.

You might have seen Food Hero at work in our community. One way students engage with Food Hero is through the Tasting Table Program (TTP). With TTP, a featured ingredient is offered to students once a month at lunchtime. A key goal of TTP is to increase students' exposure to healthy foods, some of which they might never have tasted before.

Throughout May, for example, Food Hero partnered with Mt. Hood-based Flower to Flour Farm to offer students local salad greens dressed in Food Hero's easy and delicious Honey Mustard Dressing (recipe below). The students loved the salad greens!

Through TTP, Food Hero has conducted over 350 of these in-school tastings, one of which even led to the Food Hero Un-beet-able Berry Smoothie (recipe below) being served on the school breakfast menu at Mid Valley Elementary. Following the tastings, students have the opportunity to vote on how they liked the food. If more than 75 percent of student participants across Oregon like a particular recipe, then the Food Hero campaign rates the recipe "kid approved." To date, more than 100 Food Hero recipes have been kid approved. Food Hero is continually working to create healthy recipes that incorporate fruits and vegetables and appeal to kids.

If you'd like to volunteer with Food Hero through TTP or other Food Hero programs in Hood River County, please contact Bridget Hinton at bridget.hinton@oregonstate.edu or 541-386-3343 ext. 38256. Also, at www.foodhero.org, you can find all the Food Hero recipes and sign up to receive the free award-winning Food Hero Monthly in your inbox. Every month, Food Hero Monthly offers shopping and storage tips for a featured healthy ingredient, with great recipes on the back side.

Honey Mustard Dressing

Ingredients
½ cup low-fat plain yogurt
3 tablespoons nonfat or 1 percent milk
1 tablespoon honey
2 teaspoons mustard

Directions
1. Combine all ingredients in a small bowl and stir until smooth. Cover and chill for 30 minutes before serving.
2. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Notes
1. For a stronger flavor, add an extra 1 to 2 teaspoons mustard.
2. This recipe works with all types of mustard.
3. Honey is not recommended for children under 1-year-old.

Un-beet-able Berry Smoothie

Ingredients
1 cup pineapple juice
1 cup low-fat or nonfat vanilla yogurt
1 cup fresh or frozen strawberries
½ cup fresh or frozen blueberries
½ cup canned sliced beets, drained

Directions
1. Combine all ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Serve immediately.
4. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers within 2 hours.

Notes
1. For a thicker smoothie, use frozen fruit instead of fresh fruit.
2. Use plain yogurt and 1/2 teaspoon vanilla.
3. Add a banana.