

# DAYS OF TASTE: A FHT-Community Partnership for Promoting Nutrition Education in a Local School

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## INTRODUCTION

The Jane Finch FHT is located in a highly diverse neighbourhood, with a high proportion of immigrant and low-income families who experience significant barriers to accessing health services.

The FHT prioritizes a culture of local outreach among its team members to:

- strengthen connections with community organizations
- deliver health promotion beyond the walls of the primary care office, and
- foster relationships with hard-to-reach and underserved members of the local community.

Recognizing that many of her young patients lacked an understanding of the power of food in enhancing health and preventing disease, the RD at the Jane Finch FHT partnered with staff from the Culinary Arts Program at George Brown College to bring Days of Taste to a nearby school.



## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Days of Taste is an interactive, discovery-based program that empowers grade five students to learn about the elements of taste and the journey of food from farm to table. The RD co-facilitated nutrition education components of the program which integrated key elements of nutrition literacy through hands-on learning. The program was comprised of four components: a classroom presentation, a visit to an indoor farmer's market, a trip to an organic garden, and a participatory cooking class and tasting through the culinary arts program at a local college.

**"The Days of Taste program has been an incredible opportunity for our students and staff to become involved in the community and learn about all aspects of food cultivation, harvesting and food preparation. When we work, hand in hand with others, we learn from their expertise and they learn from us. Our lives are enriched because of the interactions that we have with others. The marker of success, has been observing the beautiful smiles on the faces of our students as they work and learn side by side with our partners."**

**- Feedback from local school principal**



## STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

### Students reported learning:

- "Eating healthy food is important"
- "If you don't have nutrition you can get sick or your body won't be strong"
- "Before you say no to any kind of food you will need to try it"

### Students identified that the program changed how they think about food:

- "I tasted a variety of foods and they all tasted good so I know I can taste new foods"
- "All the things that they told us inspired me to try new foods"
- "I would only take a small amount of vegetables and now I take more vegetables"

### The school's principal agreed strongly that students benefited from the partnership with the Jane Finch FHT in myriad ways:

"Health and well being continues to be a key focus area in our school. This partnership has helped our students and staff focus on how we create healthy environments for ourselves. The simple act of planting food is a stress reliever in itself. Knowing the food will help to nourish our bodies and our minds is a powerful contributing factor to our mental health and well being. When our bodies are nourished, our minds are calm and incredible learning happens."

## STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

### Benefits of community outreach for FHT's:

- Creates greater awareness and visibility of the FHT in the community
- Enhances patients' sense of community and connection to the FHT
- Educates community members about allied health services and programs provided by the FHT
- FHT clinicians gain a deeper understanding of the community's experience thereby enhancing their ability to provide culturally-responsive and community-specific care
- Enables FHT to develop and strengthen relationships with community partners

### Challenges of community outreach:

- Finding partners and working collaboratively to ensure mutual benefit
- Funding (for staff time, transportation, and materials)
- Culture of the FHT – strong leadership needed that supports community outreach



## COMMUNITY PARTNERS



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to our community partners: Tony Garcia and Danielle Bailey (George Brown College), Danny Glenwright and Naomi Garneau (Action Against Hunger), Darshini D'Souza and Ravi Bhatia (Toronto District School Board)