



Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program Most Significant Change Stories

- ❖ Last spring when the program first started, Denise Gomber, principal of BJM, shared a story about a student who was complaining about "all these fruits and vegetables." He wanted more ice cream instead. She offered to meet with him in her office to discuss his concerns. When it was time for them to meet, he had already changed his mind. He is now active proponent of the program.
- ❖ A child was playing in The Cat's Pajamas toy store with another child who happened to be in the store. He was overheard by owner Jennifer Engel who is on the IPEI board, one of our program funders, bragging about how in his school he gets fruits and vegetables every day in the classroom.
- ❖ A first grade teacher told Amie Hamlin that she received a call from a parent. Her child had never before eaten beets, but came home all excited saying that they must go out and purchase beets, slice them very thin, and eat them raw. The parent was very appreciative.
- ❖ There were a few beets left over so we sliced them and took them around the school in a bowl, offering them to children. Children took them by the handfuls and were enjoying beets as if they were candy. It was very gratifying to see this.
- ❖ A 4th grade student approached Amie Hamlin in the cafeteria while she was preparing the fruits and vegetables. She said that it was very nice that someone thought to do this for the children of the school and that she really appreciated it, and thanked her. She then came to visit on a regular basis to talk about eating healthy. We have asked her to create a piece for our website (we are working on a complete re-design) for a children's section.
- ❖ This winter, a kindergarten teacher told us, "We had a birthday party with chocolate cupcakes--about half stopped eating their cupcake to eat the grapes. And many (half) then chose broccoli and tried the turnips. Four kids had seconds on turnips." At the beginning of the school year, this teacher asked the program manager not to give any vegetables to her students since they wouldn't eat them!
- ❖ A teacher told us about a student who now prefers vegetables to potato chips.
- ❖ Amie Hamlin asked a fifth grade student how she liked the program. She told Amie that when she eat vegetables she feels smarter! Several other students have now told us that they also feel smarter the more fruits and vegetables they eat.

- ❖ At a staff meeting, Denise Gomber, school principal, shared that parents are now telling her that they're becoming "closet eaters" because their children nag them not to eat junk food anymore.
- ❖ At a staff meeting we asked teachers if they are still serving other snacks in addition to the fruits and vegetables. One third-grade teacher commented that they no longer serve other snacks, just the fruits and vegetables, and the kids finish everything. A kindergarten teacher shared the same comment, and also noted how appreciative the parents are that they no longer have to bring in snacks.
- ❖ When we asked what types of snacks the fruits and vegetables have replaced, teachers cited a long list of snack foods including Goldfish, Wheat Thins, Fruit Chews, raw Ramen noodles, popcorn, Cheezits, pretzels, and Cheerios.
- ❖ A third grade teacher told us that an overweight student in her class had been bringing in unhealthy snack foods to eat in her classroom during the day. She has noticed that he eats all of the fruit and vegetable snacks and has not been bringing in as many snack foods from home. They never discourage him when he goes for a fifth serving of vegetables.
- ❖ In the primary autism classroom, the teacher shared that one of her students has a very limited diet (mostly cheese crackers). Yet after being presented with raw kale over and over again, he finally tried it and likes to eat kale now.
- ❖ The food service manager at BJM is absolutely convinced that the turnips dramatically reduced her asthma symptoms for hours.
- ❖ A teacher shared a story about a student who refused to try the fruits and vegetables. He had never before had apples. One day, he finally tried them and the whole class cheered!
- ❖ A third grade teacher reported that although there were some "hard words" on the information sheet, students were interested in looking them up to understand all of the new fruit and vegetable facts.
- ❖ Several teachers have shared that the fruits and vegetables served at school are often the only ones that both teachers and students eat all day. They let us know that both students and teachers are exposed to new fruits and vegetables that they had never known about, e.g., celeriac, fennel, pomegranates, and parsnips. For many, it's the first time they have ever eaten raw, fresh fruits and vegetables as opposed to canned or frozen.
- ❖ In our end of the year evaluation process, we are finding out that many students have learned of new fruits and vegetables that they like by trying them at school, and then go home and ask for them.