

SPOTLIGHT

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Teen Cuisine Culinary Camp: West Carroll Parish

by Brittney Newsome

Louisiana has one of the highest rates of childhood obesity in the country. According to the The National Survey of Children’s Health, 19.1 percent of Louisiana children ages 10 to 17 were obese, much higher than the national average of 15.8 percent. Fighting the high rate of childhood obesity in Louisiana and across the United States is key to preventing deadly and destructive diseases such as Type 2 Diabetes and Cardiovascular issues which affect communities today and in the future.

West Carroll Parish has a population of approximately 9,500 people with an obesity rate of 40%, ranking #29 of 64 parishes in overall health outcomes. Due to these factors and planning with the West Carroll Parish Family & Consumer Sciences Advisory Leadership Council Members, we deemed it critical to offer more cooking camps throughout the year to the youth population of the parish. For some teens from the Oak Grove, Forest, Epps, and Kilbourne areas, their spring break consisted of cooking up nutrition in the kitchen during the Teen Cuisine Culinary Camp.



Teen Cuisine is a nationally recognized nutrition education curriculum that is designed to teach important life skills to promote optimal health for teens in grades 6th-12th. Eight teens in West Carroll Parish learned all about nutrition, food preparation and cooking, food safety, and physical activity using approaches and strategies that enhance learning and behavior changes. During the camp, the teens focused heavily on meal and snack planning and preparation, reading and following recipes, safe knife handling skills, using the proper cooking and measuring techniques, and practicing food safety. A variety of dishes prepared consisted of Chinese Vegetable Stir-fry, Waldorf Salad, Apple Fruit Salad, Quick & Yummy Omelets in a Bag, Basic Quiche, Whole Wheat French Toast with Fruit, Granola Bars, Mexican Casserole, and Italian Mixed Vegetables. This culinary camp was funded through the Walmart Foundation Healthy Habits Mini Grant.

