

Hello, my name is Tylor Richardson. I work as a residential service coordinator for Cornerstone Community Housing in Eugene, OR. I have worked with the Oregon State University extension for roughly two years now providing "Kids in the Kitchen" programming. "Kids in the Kitchen" is an after-school activity offered to the youth of our communities and teaches them about healthy foods and how to prepare them. Each session gives the kids a chance to learn a new, fun recipe.

I have noticed over this stretch of time, the children's ability to grow and learn with the knowledge we provide to them. I have been told by a few kids at our properties that this was a great class because it taught them how to perform the basics of cooking. One child has voiced to me her love for cooking after attending the "Kids in the Kitchen" classes. Every time she sees me now, she is sure to tell me what she has been cooking lately and confirm the date and time of the next class.

On one occasion, we made banana splits and one of the kids went home after and made the dessert for her parents. The next time they saw me, they expressed their deepest appreciation of the program. They were exceptionally thankful she was learning how to cook and they mentioned she had been recently volunteering to help with dinner. Teaching young kids the fundamentals of cooking, along with healthy recipes, goes a long way in exposing them to food and treats that are nutritious. It encourages building healthy habits early on to continue during their lifetime.

This class helps the kids get comfortable with the measuring devices and the tools of the kitchen. Different measuring cups are used, and the units are explained accordingly. Additionally, this helps kids distinguish between different culinary vernacular like a "cup" and a "heaping cup". We provide a safe environment and ensure all proper precautions are in place so the children can work with the instructor to use more advance equipment such as an oven. This is great experience for kids who do not get to spend as much time helping in the kitchen at home and provides a safe, supervised environment to do so.

Our retention rate for the class is very high. The children love it and they attend every session. They get off the bus and come straight in ready for a snack. It provides the children a pastime to look forward to after class as well as a chance for them to build friendships with other kids with the same interests. Further support for OSU Extension and Statewide Services makes a dramatic impact on the betterment of Oregon's youth.