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Bronx School Children Learn Healthy Eating Habits The Groovy Way

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According to the Department of Health, about half of city school children are overweight, posing serious risks to their long-term health. One Bronx school is taking a unique approach to helping students trim the fat. NY1 Health & Fitness reporter Kafi Drexel was there for the kick-off and filed the following report.

Students at P.S. 59 in The Bronx were feeling the beat. But instead of "50 Cent," it was more about learning what 50 calories are.

Taking a new approach to learning about healthy eating, kids got a special treat from the Groovy Pyramid Performers who got them fully involved with rapping and singing songs about diet and exercise.

"With the power of melody, we're able to broach subjects that kids might not consume in a normal lecture or brochure format. We think that with the problem of childhood obesity, it's important to develop innovative ways to reach them," says performer Steven J. Logwood.

If that wasn't enough, they also got a special visit from New York Giants star Tiki Barber with his own message of eating well and staying fit. The big celebration was all part of getting ready for an intensive 2-month nutrition program for students in the third through fifth grades, brought to them by St. Barnabas through a grant from the American Dairy Association.

"The message we're sending today is it's work. It's something you have to pay attention to, eating healthy, eating the five food groups and getting some exercise," says Barber.

The lessons weren't only taking place in the auditorium, but in the school cafeteria as well, where students also learned a milk mustache and staying away from the junk food can go a long way.

"I can eat sweets, but not that much. Sugar diabetes you can get it by eating a lot of sweets, and you can lose your teeth," says student Amber Brown.

"Childhood nutrition is vital, because what we teach children now really helps throughout a lifetime," says Milton Stokes, RD, Chief Dietitian at St. Barnabas Hospital. "The habits they form now helps them to become healthier teenagers and healthier adults."

There may be a lot of excitement here today, but the adults and parents involved are really hoping their kids take away some serious lessons about healthy eating, and it looks like that for many of these students, it's working.

"If you eat healthy, you grow to be a healthy person," says student Angie Castellon. "And if you grow to be a healthy person, you might go on living a good life and be healthy, not to take bad muscles or anything. You have to have a healthy body."

- Kafi Drexel

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