

Exshaw School, Exshaw, AB

Kindergarten – grade 8

BEFORE School Makeover

Since many of the students at Exshaw School live out at Morley Reserve it is more difficult for families to provide healthy lunches on a daily basis due to poor access to convenience and grocery stores. Earlier initiatives included a removal of soda pop and snack foods such as chips from the vending machines in 2004. These foods were replaced with 100% fruit juice and water and all machines were eventually removed in 2007. The Exshaw school was already well on their way to providing nutritious foods by offering a “Healthy Start” breakfast program which now serves about a half of their student population.

Fund raising activities during special events provided items such as freezies, cookies and other treats.

THE PLAN

The staff at the school wanted to help families provide healthy lunches and snacks. Their solution was to create a school lunch store that they called “Snacketeria” through a “Food for Learning” staff committee. The Snacketeria offers a pay-as-you go lunch program that offers healthy economical lunches and snacks. Offerings are made-to-order sandwiches, fresh fruit, veggies and dip, etc. There are daily specials and full week discounts. The program was completely run by volunteers. The grade 8 students are actively involved by taking orders, making sandwiches and selling food at lunch. These students receive a free lunch and \$3/hour wage that goes towards their grade 8 farewell costs. The program was so successful over 2007 that by February 2008 other students became involved in the running of this program.

ROADBLOCKS AND CHALLENGES

The initial obstacle of staffing for this project was overcome through the student volunteers. Since the popularity and need for this program was proven they have received funding for a full time staff person improving the sustainability of this program.

To help keep costs of the meals down many local businesses in the community have assisted with food or financial donations. To overcome the hurdle of providing funds for emergency lunches to those unable to pay they have the support of their local Food bank.

AFTER School Makeover

Since the inception of the Snacketeria School staff has observed positive changes in students' behavior such as better attention spans and involvement. There are no longer hungry students in their school which also helps to support student learning. Students are gaining valuable hands on experience learning about money and store etiquette. They are learning rules about food preparation, banking and balancing books.

Students are eating more veggies and dip and often talk about their favorite vegetable, fruit or sandwich filling. The school no longer sees candy wrappers and chip bags on the ground. Students have learned about the importance of recycling juice and water containers and use the funds to go back into the program. The school is hopeful that being exposed to healthy food choices during the day will change behaviors back in their homes.

FUTURE Plans

Having added a staff person to the lunch Snacketeria program has helped with the sustainability of the program. The school is very proud of the changes this initiative has made to the students and the school.