

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What is the Food Committee?

The Food Committee is a small group of Calvin Hill parents who are interested in promoting nutrition and improving the diversity and quality of food served at the school. This is the second year of our *Food For Thought* newsletter, which highlights healthy food activities throughout the school and addresses nutrition issues of special interest to parents. If you would like to join the Food Committee or if you have suggestions for topics that you would like addressed, please drop a note in the parent pocket of Rebecca Puhl in the Preschool.



FOOD NEWS

Kindergarten: Veggie Scientists

Since the beginning of the year, the Kindergarten class has been observing and investigating various vegetables. Using microscopes, children have explored colorful vegetables (like cherry tomatoes) on their 'science table', drawing pictures of their findings. The children also enjoyed tasting yellow tomatoes from their garden outside, and observed the vegetables over time as they decomposed. The photograph below displays the many vegetables that have been collected for children to study. The carefully written signs for the vegetables were made by Michael.



The Kindergarten has recently celebrated several birthdays with classroom baking activities, including chocolate chip muffins for Jasmine's birthday baked in the class with her father (pictured below).



Preschool: Tomato Fest

Vegetables have also made many appearances in the Preschool this fall. The children have enjoyed exploring, observing, and drawing cherry tomatoes and carrots brought to school from the gardens of John (teacher) and Leo's family, and carrots grown in Alex's garden.



Linda helped the class make delicious tomato sauce from their tomatoes. The children enjoyed eating their tomato sauce over pasta for lunch, almost as much as crushing the tomatoes!



Threes' Room: The Joy of Cooking

There is a class full of chefs in the Threes' Room this fall! The children have made many new recipes, including chocolate zucchini bread, blender applesauce, and chocolate and vanilla pudding (pictured right).



Most recently, children enjoyed making their own freshly squeezed orange juice. Stay tuned for more recipe reports from our littlest bakers and taste-testers!



New Birthday Tradition at Calvin Hill

If your child will be celebrating a birthday this school year, please be aware that Calvin Hill has started a new tradition of preparing birthday treats at school, and parents are encouraged to bake a recipe with the class during a morning. The new policy does not allow home-baked goods to be brought to school. As part of these efforts to encourage fun, healthy, food celebrations, Calvin Hill has prepared a list of delicious, simple, and healthy birthday recipes for parents and children to choose from. A few examples include muffins, apple crisp, frozen banana treats, chocolate chip zucchini bread, and fruit pizza. Parents are asked to supply the ingredients for the recipe, and to plan ahead with their child's teacher for the cooking and celebrating. Even if you aren't able to come to your child's class to cook (a teacher can stand in for you), you can still select a recipe for the class to bake, and you are always welcome to arrive in time to celebrate!



Pictured left:

The Three's Room recently celebrated Kurt's birthday with chocolate chip zucchini bread, baked in the classroom!

Recipes Worth Celebrating!

With so many birthday parties, holidays, and special occasions that are celebrated with food, the amount of "sweets" and "treats" that children consume can really add up. Instead of the traditional cake and ice cream, why not try some healthier alternatives? Here are two recipes for frozen yogurt (made with real fruit and fat-free yogurt), and chocolate chip zucchini bread. Both recipes have measured up to the taste buds of many preschoolers, and are often enjoyed just as much by parents!



Fruity Frozen Yogurt

- 6 cups of chopped frozen fruit*
- 1 ½ cups fat-free plain yogurt
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice

Pour ½ of the frozen fruit and ½ of the sugar into a large blender. Blend until fruit pieces are very small and crumbly. Transfer into a large bowl. Add remaining fruit and sugar into blender, and repeat. Once blended, add to the mixture already in the bowl. Combine lemon juice and yogurt in a separate bowl or measuring cup. Add yogurt mixture with the blended fruit/sugar, and stir with spatula. (If mixture seems to dry, you can add additional yogurt). In batches, pour the mixture back into the blender and blend until smooth. Pour mixture into Tupperware containers and freeze until consistency is similar to frozen yogurt/ice cream.

*You can buy bags of frozen fruit at most grocery stores and places like BJ's or Costco – most bags come with a variety of pre-cut fruit, such as berries, watermelon, pineapple, cantaloupe, grapes, etc.



Chocolate Chip Zucchini Bread (Also great as cupcakes)

- 2 ½ cups flour
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 ½ tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp each baking powder and cinnamon
- ¾ tsp salt
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- ¾ cup fat-free egg substitute (or 3 whole eggs)
- ½ cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 2 cups packed, grated zucchini
- ½ cup chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray two 8x4 inch loaf pans with non-stick spray. (OR, use muffin tins – makes about 18 muffins I think).

In a large bowl, combine flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt. Set aside.

In a medium bowl, whisk together sugar, egg substitute, applesauce, vegetable oil, and vanilla. Stir in zucchini. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients. Stir just until dry ingredients are moistened. Fold in chocolate chips.

Spread batter evenly into loaf pans. Bake for 50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in center of loaf comes out clean. (If making muffins/cupcakes, they won't take as long to bake – check them around 20-25 minutes).



Juice: How much is too much?

Fruit juice is a common staple in most refrigerators. But when it comes to children, how much juice is too much? The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) asserts that drinking too much fruit juice can be a problem for children's health, contributing to obesity, cavities, and other gastrointestinal problems.

Certainly there are benefits of 100% fruit juice. Many juices contain vitamin C and some are fortified with calcium. However, drinking too much juice can decrease a child's appetite for other more nutritious foods. Children who drink too much juice tend to consume less milk, which is a good source of calcium and other vitamins and nutrients. While juice provides calories, they are mostly from sugars or carbohydrates, and juice offers no nutritional benefits over whole fruit. Research studies also show that we tend to be poor at compensating for calories that we consume in liquid form – in other words, we tend to eat more food when we drink beverages that have calories, rather than eating less food to displace the calories already consumed in beverages.

The AAP has released guidelines to prevent over-consumption of juices, with limits recommended for different ages. Recommendations include:

- Infants under 6 months of age should not be given juice
- Children aged 1 to 6 years should have only 4 to 6 ounces of juice per day
- Children should be offered 100% fruit juice and not fruit drinks.
- Older children should be limited to 8 to 12 ounces of juice a day
- Instead of juice, children should be encouraged to eat whole fruits

Sometimes it's not clear whether products that appear to be juice are actually the real thing. Juice products often have claims that they "*are made with real fruit juice*", leading to confusion about the nutritional content. To tell the difference between fruit juice and fruit-flavored beverages, look for the nutrition label. All beverages that contain juice or imply they contain juice must indicate the percentage of juice on the label near the top of the Nutrition Facts panel.

Here are some helpful juice terms to remember:

Fruit juice -- the product contains **100 percent** fruit juice from a single juice or a juice blend, and does not contain additional sugar.

Fruit drink, juice beverage, juice cocktail -- the product contains less than 100 percent juice. Some juices contain only 5-10% juice, and have sweeteners added.

Fresh -- the juice is not processed (it has not been frozen or pasteurized).

The AAP recommended servings of fruit juice are actually limits, which means that children should not consume more than 4-6 ounces of fruit juice per day. To reach this goal, try offering fresh fruit and water for a snack, rather than juice. When offering 100% juice, dilute it with water. And perhaps the easiest way to stay on track is to enjoy fruit in its original form rather than from a container.

The full AAP report on juice consumption can be viewed at:
<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;107/5/1210>

