



Healthy Desserts at Gordon Neighbourhood House

LFS 350 | Faculty of Land & Food Systems

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Group 10



INTRODUCTION

Our project is in collaboration with our community partner Gordon Neighbourhood House located in the West End of Vancouver. At Gordon Neighbourhood House, they strive to improve the lives of the people living in the community through activities and services offered throughout the year. GNH uses food as a method to connect with the community as well as to assist in decreasing the prevalence of food insecurity. Through these food initiatives, they strive to facilitate community building, improve access to nutritious food while recognizing that all people have the right to food. As a part of their Out of School Care program, Chef Peter comes in once a week and teaches cooking skills in the Kids Community Kitchen. We will be working with their after-school program offered for kids ages 5 through 10. Our goal is to successfully plan and facilitate a food literacy workshop for kids focusing on making healthy desserts. We hope to inspire nutritional awareness with the kids by teaching them simple, fun cooking skills while displaying the importance of using healthy ingredients.

SIGNIFICANCE

As contributing members of our food system and students of the faculty of Land and Food Systems, we are well-positioned to engage with our surrounding community and its food system. Programs and projects facilitated at Gordon Neighbourhood House hold great potential to be influential in terms of enhancing food literacy across a variety of age groups. Enhancing the food literacy of members of a food system is one of the most significant aspects to reducing food insecurity, as individuals will have greater knowledge regarding how to use, access and be sustainable with food. Many of these concepts and conventional ideals relevant to the food system are often instilled in the early years of childhood. The children will gain knowledge about their nutrient needs and the foods that will provide them with these nutrients, local and seasonal produce in their food system as well as skills for food preparation. It is crucial that the population, especially the youth, understand the origins of and have positive relationships with food (Cullen *et al.*, 2015) and be able to utilize it for the benefit of themselves as well as their food system. When children have the interest in, as well as have what they need, for preparing wholesome meals, they not only boost their own health status, but also impact the food system favourably before they know it. With robust comprehension of how to maintain a healthy diet, children will be able to minimize their risk of developing certain diseases (eg. type II diabetes & obesity) (Hu, 2011). This can lead to improved physical health, which can also be advantageous in supporting mental health (Pappa E *et al.*, 2009). A healthy desserts workshop will equip the children with essential food literacy skills such as food preparation, nutritious food choices,

and concepts like locality and seasonality of foods. By contributing to a broader aim of achieving appropriate food literacy for responsible, literate citizens will ultimately help them establish food security and shape their own food system.

OBJECTIVES

The overall aim for our project is to inspire nutritional awareness among youth by developing their food literacy skills.

Hence, our project objectives are:

- Plan and execute a food literacy workshop to introduce healthy, flavourful desserts for the children in the Out-of-School Care (OSC) Program at Gordon Neighbourhood House.
- Develop nutrient-dense, healthy dessert recipe(s) that the children will be able to make and enjoy and have as an after school snack. We will provide them with printed recipes of the desserts so the children can take them home and prepare it with their families.

METHODS

1 | Designing the recipe

- Nutritional assessment: Review the literature about the nutritional needs of the targeted age group as well as gather information about local, seasonal foods rich with these nutrients.
- Consider the age of the children, and any diet restrictions (nuts, peanuts etc.) while designing the recipe(s)
- Explore different sources (the web, books, magazines) for ideas for healthy and easily prepared desserts using the foods we have chosen.
- Write 1-2 healthy desserts recipes; 1 baked recipe; recipe(s) will:
 - Have few ingredients and fairly inexpensive
 - Be easily prepared
 - Be prepared from ingredients available at home
 - Focus on nutritional content: essential nutrients for the targeted age group
 - Be culturally appropriate
- Develop a budget for the materials and tools needed for workshop.

2 | Planning the workshop

- Decide with the project coordinator from GNH on appropriate dates and times for executing the workshops.
- Plan a 1-hour workshop plan including an introduction, an icebreaker activity, dessert making within teams, and wrap up.
- The desserts will be prepared with the children as part of their after-school day care program at the GNH. Three members will work on the food preparation with the children with the assistance of the GNH day care program chef. One member will be responsible for the observation to evaluate the progress of workshop.
- Make printed copies of the recipes including the ingredients and preparation method for children to take home.

3 | Evaluation of the workshop

- Observations of one group member on children's involvement and workshop progress.
- Feedback from the children who participated
- GNH day care program coordinator/supervisor evaluation and feedback.
- Reflection and evaluation of team members executing the workshop.

OUTCOMES

The final outcome will be the developed recipe prepared with the children and distributed to share with their families. The project will be scoped through a report which will include an outline of the workshops, the developed recipes, evaluation, and major challenges. The evaluation will be based on the feedback from how the kids reacted to the workshop (observational notes), our group impressions and those given to us by the Gordon Neighbourhood House staff. Lastly, we will include further changes we would make to improve the project as a whole.

REFERENCES

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