



TEACHING WITH YOUR MOUTH FULL

Using food to teach nutrition, inspire healthy living and fuel new careers

CHIPOTLE'S TEACHING GARDEN

John Rife has a knack for bridging the gap between hippies and yuppies; probably because he's equal parts of both. So when the commercial real estate developer turned local food crusader noticed an extra half-acre of land outside an east Orlando Chipotle restaurant, his creative juices started flowing.

Rife reached out to the Chipotle contacts he had made through the Winter Park Harvest Festival, which he founded, and began a dialogue focused on converting the space into a teaching garden and community education site. He then brought in My Yard Farm, and within a few months the land was cleared and outfitted with irrigation and 12 garden beds.

Besides giving Chipotle produce like onions and cilantro from what's now dubbed "the salsa garden" (pictured below), the garden additionally serves as a teaching resource for UCF students learning about urban agriculture. In the coming months, the space will also be used for community classes and a venue for showing foodie-focused films.

"This is the first time Chipotle has done this nationwide," says Rife. "But it connects really well with Chipotle's mission to have food with integrity." Likewise, it connects well with Rife's mission to continue the momentum of Orlando's local food movement.



MAKING THE CONNECTION

In 1997, Howard Phillips Center for Children and Families launched a mobile medical unit staffed with nurse practitioners empowered to draw blood and deliver lab results that made the link between lifestyle choices and the body. While the move sounds impactful, even revolutionary, it wasn't making the grade as far as program administrators were concerned.

"We realized we needed to give these kids more than lab results and a prescription," says Program Manager Rita Vento. "We had

to figure out a different way to get the message across that food and physical activity matter." With a team of dietitians, fitness instructors and chefs, Vento launched the Healthy Me initiative.

"The program facilitates a 12-week afterschool program that incorporates nutrition classes and physical education," says Vento, who will also offer the program for six weeks in the summer. Cooking demonstrations and a community garden are part of the plan. Funded through grants, including \$200,000 from the Orlando Magic Youth, the program recently partnered with Planet Hollywood for an iron chef competition, which gave 20 students the opportunity to pair off with chefs to create a salad using a mystery ingredient.

"Schools are teaching them reading and math and science, but along the way we've dropped some basic skills about making healthy choices," Vento says. "Nobody is teaching this and somebody has got to."

COOKING UP CAREERS

When it comes to lunch, teachers at Winter Springs High School have it made—literally. Every Wednesday, faculty gets the opportunity to break bread at Grizzly Grill, where a student-prepared, three-course meal is served for just \$5. But it's not simply an administrative perk; Grizzly Grill is the culinary lab that's giving students the chance to hone their epicurean skills and possibly pave a path to culinary school.

Thanks to food-focused television shows with celebrity chefs, Steve Efland, an instructor in the school's culinary program, isn't surprised to see more students interested in the program. What's exciting is how the school's four-year culinary program, now in its 10th year, has quickly become a hotbed for future chefs.

"We are a direct line into culinary school," says Efland. "Recruiters are always visiting and doing presentations about their programs. We're a weeding out process for them because they are getting kids who already have experience and really love this work. They're college ready."

There also job ready, thanks to an intensive curriculum focused on food safety and real restaurant experience. "Students in this program are completing key industry certifications, which means direct access to management-level hospitality jobs right after high school," Efland says.

—Kristen Manieri