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### Kids in the Kitchen

March 3, 2010



Two attendees of last year's Kids in the Kitchen Fit-n-Fun Fest enjoyed face painting and snacks at the annual event that addresses healthy eating and living for children.

*Photo courtesy of Junior League of Greater Orlando*

By Karen McEnany-Phillips  
Observer Staff

Luscious brownies and yummy banana bread may seem out of place at an event promoting healthy food but kids can devour these delicious samples at the Junior League of Greater Orlando's 3rd Annual Kids in the Kitchen Fit-n-Fun Fest on Saturday, March 6. They don't need to know that pureed carrots, spinach and whole grains are among the ingredients.

Stephanie Garris, president of the Junior League of Greater Orlando, is glad that the number of vendors and public interest has grown since Junior League's Kids in the Kitchen was formed in 2006.

"March is National Nutrition Month and our message is the same — to eat healthy and find time to exercise," Garris said. "But today there are so many facets about nutrition-making healthy choices, personal fitness and serving sizes for example."

"Our society has changed and it's very appealing for kids to sit before a computer instead of exercising. We want to help families and kids make conscientious choices through education and fun."

More than 30 vendors will be on hand at the free event including food retailers and fitness experts. Medical professionals and nutritionists including Executive Chef Jay Mahoney of Winnie Palmer Hospital and Linda Ammon, specialty dietitian from Orlando Health, will share nutritional tips and recipes for healthy snacks.

Ammon has been a dietitian for three decades and has seen a rise in children treated for Type 2 diabetes, which is usually found in adults.

"We want to educate children on portion sizes, watching soda and sugar intake and encouraging them to drink more milk and water," Ammon said.

She became interested in healthy eating at an early age cooking for her family. She said that sports drinks are an issue for kids.

"We try to educate them that sports drinks are meant to replenish minerals after extreme exercise, not to drink because they are thirsty. Kids need more milk with calcium and Vitamin D for healthy bones and teeth."

Ammon will share the "go, slow, and woe" foods using green, yellow and red colors to identify foods to eat more, less or in moderation.

Executive Chef Jay Mahoney said parents should start introducing kids to a variety of healthy foods early in life. Mahoney has been in the food industry for 30 years and stresses the importance of setting an example.

"Try cooking food together as a family or have fun wearing deli hats and aprons in your kitchen," he said, adding that parents can start with fruit to get kids on the right nutritional track.

Junior League has been working on behalf of women and families for more than 60 years with a current membership of 720 women in Orange, Seminole and Osceola counties. Garris is passionate about her organization's goals and year-round projects working to alleviate childhood hunger and poverty and to improve family and childhood health.

"Not only have we started focusing our efforts on a new community program specifically aimed at the well-being of children," Garris said, "but our country's first lady, Michelle Obama, is also putting her efforts into combining the growing problem of childhood obesity."

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**Fit-n-Fun Fest**

South Central Park  
(South Park Avenue/New England Avenue)  
Winter Park, FL 32789  
Saturday, March 6, 2010  
10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Admission: Free

**Junior League of Greater Orlando**  
407-422-5918  
[www.jlgo.org](http://www.jlgo.org)  
[kidsinthekitchen.ajli.org](http://kidsinthekitchen.ajli.org)



## MonkeyMix

Courtesy of Association of Junior Leagues International

**Ingredients:**

- 1 cup dried banana chips
- 1 cup flaked coconut
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 3 cups Cheerios

**Directions:**

Mix all the ingredients in a gallon-size zip-top bag.  
Shake well. Yield: 6 cups. Makes: 12 servings

**Nutritional information (serving size: 1/2 cup):**

Calories: 290
Fat: 16g
Carbohydrates: 35.4g
Sugar: 23.5
Protein: 3.3g
Potassium: 205mg
Fiber: 3g
Sodium: 127.3mg
Calcium: 83.1mg



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