



home > city hall > press releases

Chef Lee Burton to Help Perris Kids Eat Healthy

Eating healthy doesn't begin only in the grocery store, restaurant, vending machine or food truck.

Sometimes it starts in school.

Perris City employees have spent a lot of time going back to school—schools actually—in recent weeks gauging the eating habits of elementary-grade students and eight campuses.

Nearly 500 students were asked a variety of food-related questions aimed at establishing the amounts and variety of foods they consumed. The surveys were distributed as part of a nearly \$ 1million grant to continue City's "Live Well Perris" program for the next three years. They mark the first step on what the City hopes is a bridge that leads youngsters to adopt healthy-eating lifestyles for themselves and their families that last a lifetime.

Students taking the surveys did so anonymously.

The questionnaires asked students whether and how often they and their families consume cheese, cottage cheese, hot or cold cereal, chips, fries, vegetables, fruits and sodas. Many students will be asked these questions again after receiving lessons focusing on choosing, cooking and consuming healthy foods. Classroom cooking is part of that effort.

Chef Lee Burton will visit several campuses in the coming weeks talking about healthy foods and demonstrating how to prepare them.



Chef Lee Burton will begin conducting classroom cooking demonstrations at several Perris schools as part of the ongoing Live Well Perris health initiative.

Burton is a long-time veteran of teaching healthy cooking to children and has demonstrated his techniques in schools in several communities. His work is a collaboration that involves the City, the Val Verde Unified School District and the THINK (Teaching, Helping, Inspiring and Nurturing Kids) Together after school program on behalf of Perris Elementary School District.

Burton praised the City's efforts, saying few other communities appear as committed to helping their citizens improve their lives.

"I have not seen this level of structure support in other cities," he said. "Perris is ahead of the curve. I'm very impressed."

Burton said his demonstrations will focus on fruits and vegetables. He labels the classes "edutaining," a combination of educating and entertaining.

"Kids are an easy sell if you get them early," he said. "They want to be part of the growing and preparing process. They're willing to try different kinds of foods if you can make it fun."

Michelle Ogawa, the City's liaison with the schools, said educating the next generation is a vital component of the Live Well Perris program. It's a responsibility the City takes seriously, especially with nationwide surveys show increasing levels of obesity in children along with the onset of diabetes and high-blood pressure.

"The City took a pledge to help its residents improve their lives through exercise and healthy eating," she said. "Since then, Perris has embarked on a series of events— aerobic workouts, walks, hikes, bicycle rides—that have been extremely popular. Now we are stepping up the healthy eating component of Live Well Perris. We are extremely excited for the opportunity to reach out to elementary school children and help them understand the importance of good eating. Healthy eating encompasses the grocery store to the kitchen to school and to work."

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch said the City wants to steer youngsters on the path of healthy eating because "a healthy community is a happy community."

"Once you get started on the wrong path, it's hard to change," he said. "We are excited to expand our Live Well Perris program to meet the needs of the next generation!"



Perris City employee Michelle Ogawa collects food-education surveys on a recent afternoon at Val Verde Elementary Schools

Media Contact

Joe Vargo
Public Information Officer
951-956-2120
jvargo@cityofperris.org



Perris City Hall
101 N. D Street
Perris, CA 92570

Hours: Mon. - Thurs. 8 am - 6pm
Offices are closed on Friday.
Phone: (951) 943-6100
Map to City Hall
Get our mobile apps:
Apple • Android

Contact Perris
Call: (951) 943-6100 (available 24 hours/day)

Report a Problem/Ask a Question:

Contact Form



In this website

- ▶ [City Hall](#)
- ▶ [Government](#)
- ▶ [Residents](#)
- ▶ [Business](#)
- ▶ [Visitors](#)