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## Residents Appreciate Diabetic Cooking Class Healthy Tips



Dieticians Brittny Harris (right) and Janet Ramirez conducted a bilingual class for diabetics at the Perris Green City Farm Program.

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Black beans the secret ingredient to tasty and healthy brownies?

Perris residents attending a July 12 cooking class geared toward diabetics learned that, along with cacao powder, almond butter, dark chocolate chips and maple syrup, black beans perk up a recipe to make a lower fat, lower-calorie and high-fiber treat that tastes just as yummy as traditional chocolate brownies.

More than 25 people attended the session in the Perris Community Garden, including several battling diabetes. Registered dietician Brittny Harris led the class. Harris works for the Riverside County Health Foundation and praised the City for sponsoring a class on cooking healthy for diabetics.

"It introduces the community to whole food ingredients to get them excited about eating healthy and to show them that sweet treats can fit into a healthy lifestyle," Harris said. "It opens peoples' eyes to the benefits of eating healthy. It's wonderful that the City of Perris supports such efforts to improve the lives and health of its residents."

Perris resident Juan Torres has battled diabetes for 10 years and said he is grateful to Perris for sponsoring cooking demonstrations geared for people like him. Diabetics cooking classes are among a host of activities the City sponsors to encourage healthy eating and active living. Other elements of the "Live Well Perris" initiative include an annual health fair, adopting the healthy drink ordinance, regular workouts and Zumba lessons, a walking Wednesday exercise class for seniors and Chef in the Classroom and Chef in the Garden demonstrations.

Torres said the free diabetes cooking class is great for people coping with diabetes.

"It's a chance to get some knowledge so they can take better care of themselves," Torres said.

Harris and Janet Ramirez conducted the class in English and Spanish. The hour-long session included advice about balancing a diet of fruits, grains, vegetables, proteins and dairy products, choosing whole-grain breads and pastas, mixing mayonnaise for mustard and catsup, selecting clear salad dressings over creamy offerings, drinking water instead of soda and other sugary beverages and exercising at least 30 minutes daily.

Following the discussion and question and answers, it was time to enjoy the brownies. All agreed they were tasty. Some could not distinguish the flavor of black beans in the recipe.

"It was delicious," Torres said. "I could taste the butter and dark chocolate. It was excellent."



Perris resident Becky Turnage and her daughter, Amber, taste the healthy brownies prepared for the diabetic-cooking class in Perris.

Another attendee, Becky Turnage, said she would incorporate the cooking tips into preparing meals for her family. She attended with her daughter, Amber.

"I need to learn to cook healthier," said Turnage, who has suffered from diabetes for 25 years.

She also praised the class for whipping up a tasty dessert and the City for its commitment to improving community health.

"The City of Perris is doing a very good job," she said. "It has been promoting the Live Well program. That makes me feel good as a resident."

Resident Angela Reliford attended with her daughter, Jacqueline, a member of the City's Youth Advisory Committee. Angela Reliford said the class taught her the importance of balancing various food groups while planning meals for the family. She also plans on turning cooking into a family activity by having her children assist with meal prep.

"I thank the City of Perris for showing me things I didn't know," she said. "I will be more conscious when I go grocery shopping. I'm glad I came to this class. I needed this."



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