Go Wild with Fruits and Veggies - Ward County

The Situation
According to the United States Department of Agriculture, less than 1% of elementary students eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. Poor nutrition affects students’ energy level, ability to learn and school attendance. Poor nutrition is also linked to obesity and chronic disease.

Extension Response
Go Wild with Fruits and Veggies! was offered to 31 students at two 3rd grade classrooms in Ward County. The selected school has the highest percentage of students receiving free or reduced price meals, putting them at a greater risk for malnourishment.

Go Wild is a series of seven nutrition lessons aimed at encouraging students to eat more colorful fruits and vegetables and be more physically active. An animal character is associated with each lesson to make learning more enjoyable and to educate the students about area wildlife.

Lessons included nutrition and food safety games, music, dance, tasting opportunities and other activities to stimulate all five senses and keep students engaged throughout. Students sampled less common produce such as mango, jicama, avocado, brussel sprouts, sweet peppers, figs, and dried plums.

Education was provided to the families and students were given the opportunity to participate in wellness challenges at home.

Impacts
An evaluation was given to the students after the completion of six lessons.

- 90% of youth indicated they ate more fruits of a variety of colors and 48% eat more variety of vegetables
- 83% of youth are more willing to try a wider variety of fruits and vegetables than before Go Wild.
- After completion of the lessons, 83% of youth indicated they are more physically active.

Feedback
“I learned to stay more active during the winter.” ~ 3rd grade student

“The kids loved Go Wild! I asked them to write down some feedback to send to you. Here are a few of the things they said. Many put down that they enjoyed the food. They thought it was fun to try fruits and vegetables they had never had before. Many students also enjoyed jeopardy and loved the interactive review activities you had. The song/dance and home challenges were some more things they enjoyed as well. They loved your class!” ~ 3rd grade teacher

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