Teaching Children about Reading Across MyPlate/MyPyramid (RAMP)

The Issue:
In Riverside County, 38.2% of public school students in grades 5, 7, and 9 have Body Mass Index (BMI) in the overweight or obese ranges (2010, kidsdata.org). Riverside Youth EFNEP is working with school teachers and youth leaders to reverse the increasing trend in childhood obesity. Teaching children to adopt a healthy lifestyle needs to start early in life. Youth EFNEP is working with young children in early elementary level to instill the idea of healthy food, healthy and active body.

What EFNEP Has Done:
During 2011-2012, Youth EFNEP partnered with Anna Hause Elementary (10 classrooms); after school programs at THINK Together (8 schools), Hemet Unified (1 school), Beaumont Unified (3 schools) and Moreno Valley Parks and Community Services (4 schools); Day camps at Hemet YMCA, Community Settlement Association and at 3 Community Parks sites. Youth EFNEP staff Nicole Ogosi worked with the teachers and youth leaders to deliver Reading Across MyPlate/MyPyramid (RAMP) curriculum. The children read storybooks related to the 5 food groups and participated in fun activities from the lessons. Nicole also conducted some food demonstration and taste testing with the children.

The Pay Off:
Riverside Youth EFNEP reached 31 youth groups and enrolled 1469 students in RAMP this year. Eighteen teachers/leaders representing 688 students from 18 classes at 11 sites completed the RAMP teacher retrospective evaluation. The results of the youth impact indicators show 41% of the students increased in nutrition knowledge. Food tasting using snap peas with 385 children shows only 20% of the students had tasted the food before, but 56% were willing to ask for the food at home and would be willing to eat the food at home. One first grade teacher commented “We loved this program – easy to use and kid friendly! My students loved sharing and discovering at home with their families on MyPyramid/MyPlate. We even developed an at home project as well.”