

Providing Nutrition to Grow through the CACFP

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Member Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action in Salem, OR featured by the National CACFP Sponsors Association

ROUND ROCK, TX, USA, November 19, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In 1967 the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action opened their doors as a direct result of President Johnson's War on Poverty. As they saw a need in the community to work with the children, the Community Action Head Start began. Now after 30 years, the Head Start program has 13 sites and serves over 1000 children in Salem and the surrounding communities. Their nutrition director, Natalie Bratton, is proud and excited about the impact the program makes for the children.



Natalie Bratton and the children enjoy a taste test party at Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action.

Natalie emphasizes that nutrition and learning healthy habits will benefit the children for their entire lifetime. The Head Start uses the Harvest for Healthy Kids Curriculum where each month a different vegetable and fruit are focused on with all of the senses. At the biggest site, they have created a community garden where parents and children work together. They have also started a physical activity program, Imagination Yoga, where children not only strengthen and calm their bodies, they learn how to focus the mind to be ready to learn.

Through the CACFP and Head Start, there are requirements to serve healthy food, but Natalie's team goes beyond those. Last summer they started an initiative to incorporate more culturally diverse foods into their cycle menus to appeal to their families. They asked for feedback from parents, teachers, and students and the children love the menus because they were involved in the process and given the title 'Official Head Start Tasters'. Recipes are always available for families to take home and try.

At Head Start they serve meals family style and parents love it! Parents benefit from nutrition



We are able to provide the families in our area with quality child care and provide the children with the nutrition they need in order to grow and develop during this crucial time in their lives.”

*Natalie Bratton, Nutrition
Director*

education available through Family Educators and monthly parent meetings. Community Action Head Start wants the children in their care to succeed not just now, but throughout life, in all areas of life. Involving the parents and asking children to participate in their nutrition choices is part of attaining the overall goal. Natalie and her team know that by providing healthy food and healthy activities, they are giving them a chance to flourish in their own development.

CACFP is an indicator of quality child care. When children are cared for by providers who are part of the CACFP they are receiving the best nutrition available. Learn more

about other CACFP providers featured in the [Member Showcase](#) through the National CACFP Sponsors Association.

Since 1986, the [National CACFP Sponsors Association](#) (NCA) is the leading national organization for sponsors who administer the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). It provides education and support to thousands of members in the CACFP community and in particular to sponsors of all sizes from across the country. CACFP strives to improve communication between families, caregivers, sponsors and their supervising government agencies.

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