



## Little Chefs Project Re-Cap & Success Summer 2018: Funded by The Education Foundation for Suffolk County Extension, Inc.

Eat Smart New York (ESNY) Senior Nutritionist, Amy Bly, received notification this past spring that the Little Chefs project had been approved and fully funded by the Education Foundation for Suffolk County Extension, Inc. *Immediately* after receiving the notification, ESNY began the process of planning and executing the project. Implementation of the project took place from July 2018 – August 2018.

ESNY partnered with Youth Enrichment Services (YES), a town of Islip program whom we have partnered with in the past. YES offers summer camps to children in many locations every summer and was extremely excited to have the opportunity to work with us again on Little Chefs. We agreed to present our workshops at two of their summer sites; Central Islip camp which was located at the Brentwood Recreation Center and West Islip camp which was located at the West Islip Recreation Center. Both of these locations serve children from ESNY's targeted communities. ESNY also partnered with a local farm located in Brentwood for the Little Chefs project. Thera Farms is a new partner for ESNY and we look forward to continuing our relationship with them.

The key premise of the grant was to connect youth in low income areas to local farm fresh produce. Nutrition education workshops were offered to assist them in increasing their fruit and vegetable consumption while introducing them to local farms and farmers markets. The awareness of delicious and healthy produce would potentially increase the amount of fruits and vegetables purchased from these sites. A win-win scenario for all involved.

In partnering with both YES and Thera Farms this past summer, the Little Chefs Project was a success. ESNY's nutrition educators taught a total of four nutrition education lessons to an average of sixty children each week at the Brentwood Recreation Center and over one



*ESNY educators Melek and Halie helping the children make zucchini chips*

*"I never knew how much I would like zucchini, this is the first time I've ever eaten it I'm going to ask my mom to buy some." – 9 Year Old Camper*



*CI campers preparing our farm fresh vegetables*



ESNY Educator Melek preparing a veggie stir fry with the children

“I learned so much when you all were here. I didn’t realize how much better vegetables tasted when there from a farm.” -12 Year Old Camper



CI camper enjoying our delish zucchini noodles with spinach pesto recipe

hundred and fifty children at the West Islip Recreation Center. Each nutrition education lesson focused on farming, where our food comes from, and how to utilize farm fresh produce. The produce was purchased from Thera Farms each week and prepared with the children at each site. In each lesson the children participated in hands- on activities that increased their skills and knowledge base of fruits and vegetables. The children had the opportunity to plant their own seeds, use new kitchen tools, and prepare all vegetarian meals during the four week series. Some of the recipes we prepared with the children included salad with homemade dressing, vegetable stir-fry, and zucchini noodles. Each week we had children who would ask for seconds of the recipe, as well as tell us that they went home and made the recipe again with their parents. We also had many children tell us that they had asked their parents to visit the farmers market.

As our concluding activity at each site, a junior iron chef competition was held where the children were put into teams to prepare a recipe using the farm fresh produce. This event highlighted the new skills that they had learned over the previous weeks’ lessons. The first and second prize winning teams received gift cards to Thera Farms to purchase fresh produce. ESNY returned to Thera Farms shortly after the project had wrapped up at both sites and the farmer had said that all of the winners who had received the gift cards had already come by to purchase produce! ESNY looks forward to completing another set of series with the Little Chefs Project.

“I just wanted to thank ESNY for coming and teaching our children these important lessons. Since the lessons started, my child has been asking to help cook with me and also eating more vegetables.” – Parent of camper

Visit our website for more information about our free programs: [www.eatsmartnyli.com](http://www.eatsmartnyli.com)



Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Suffolk and Nassau Counties



423 Griffing Ave, Ste 100, Riverhead, NY 11901-3071 • 631-727-7850 • [www.ccesuffolk.org](http://www.ccesuffolk.org)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. This material was funded by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP. SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. To find out more, go to [www.myBenefits.ny.gov](http://www.myBenefits.ny.gov) or contact 1-800-342-3009. Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities. Cornell Cooperative Extension is funded in part by Suffolk County through the office of the County Executive and the County Legislature.