

NutriBullet University participants at El Verano Elementary School in Sonoma, California, say they have more energy and focus.

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Smoothie U.

NutriBullet University aims for better nutrition

By Steve Fisher

NUTRIBULLET, MAKER OF NutriBullet nutrition extractors (which break down fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and other plant foods to their most absorbable state) wants to promote healthier eating. And they're putting their money where children's mouths are with NutriBullet University.

NutriBullet University is a healthy eating program designed to help school-age children improve their diets. For a 90-day period, program participants start each day with a blended beverage made up of fruits, vegetables, seeds and other organic ingredients.

"Our whole goal is to increase fruit and vegetable intake in kids, to actually measure healthier changes and then to allow them to become ambassadors for health," says Sarah Lefkowitz, NutriBullet's dietitian.

The program was the idea of Colin Sapire, CEO of NutriBullet, who wanted to give back to the community. "Students can have a much bigger opportunity in life when nutrition forms a major part of the education process," he comments.

The program was initiated in August 2013 at University High School in Los Angeles, with 40 students participating. This year, 210 students in four schools are in the program. "Our goal is to have 2,500 students enrolled in NutriBullet University by 2018," says Lefkowitz.

Program details

Teachers and classes chosen for the program receive \$6,000 for produce for 90 days,

up to five NutriBullet units for classroom use and additional units for students to take home. The class also receives six recipes designed by NutriBullet dietitians, a nutrition curriculum and support from the NutriBullet University team.

Nurses assess students at the beginning and end of the program, measuring cholesterol levels, high-density lipoprotein, height, weight and body mass index. Teachers are allowed to tweak the recipes to accommodate students with certain food allergies.

"There's a lot of work that goes into [the program], so we need people that are passionate and understand the message of health and the importance of feeding kids the right foods," Lefkowitz says.

Application process

The application process begins online at nutribulletuniversity.com. The next application period will launch on February 1, 2016, and will run until April 1. As part of the process, the school is required to submit a video, no longer than five minutes, that shows the school, why it wants to participate in the program, where the Blast Bar (the smoothie setup area) would take place and who would be involved (students, teachers, etc).

The Costco Connection

NutriBullet systems are available in most Costco warehouses and on Costco.com.



In our digital editions
Click here for a video about NutriBullet University. (See page 12 for details.)



"Are you going to take the steps you need to integrate the people that are important, like the students, the principal? Can you put together this team and show us that your school would be a great place?" Lefkowitz says, explaining what the video should show.

Lefkowitz says schools should be creative and have fun with it, and emphasizes that the video is not used publicly without consent. And while the video is a key component of the application, Lefkowitz explains the element of need is perhaps more so.

"Is this a community that's underserved? Is this a school that's in a food desert? Is this an area where the students are particularly unhealthy? The primary mission of the program is to increase fruit and vegetable intake."

Positive results

Is the program working? Lefkowitz notes, "[Students] would go home and they would start to influence their families and the way their families were eating." One student, Sierra, says, "I don't get headaches anymore or get hungry throughout the day. I feel like I focus better in class." 