

“Let’s Get Cooking” is Helping San Diego Families

Background

At Rady Children’s Hospital last year, nearly 2,000 children were seen by specialists for obesity related medical concerns. Obesity is a contributing cause of many other health problems including high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and high blood cholesterol. The USHHS Healthy People 2020 objectives reflect strong science supporting the health benefits of eating a healthful diet and maintaining a healthy body weight, which begins in the family and in the community. For this reason, the Center for Healthier Communities has launched a new referral resource for physicians.

Let’s Get Cooking

In January 2014 RCH and Scripps launched “Let’s Get Cooking”, an interactive, hands on cooking classes for moms, dads, caregivers and their kids (age eight and older) who want to learn simple, healthy recipes for the whole family. *Let’s Get Cooking* aims to inspire families to eat fresh, nutritious, whole foods and to make healthy lifestyle choices through cooking, education and discussions.

The cooking classes are offered every Tuesday 4:30-6:00pm at the City Heights Wellness Center’s teaching kitchen. Each five-week session covers practical topics (see box) and easy to make recipes. Participants can attend one class, the whole series, or multiple series – as the recipes will change. *Let’s Get Cooking* is taught by bilingual instructor Adriana Arredondo, a registered dietician at Rady Children’s Hospital. All classes are taught in Spanish and English.

Space is limited: Call now to register 619 321-2920

Let’s Get Cooking Topics

- ◆ Grab & Go Snacks
- ◆ Breakfast of Champions
- ◆ Tasty Treats
- ◆ Packing a Healthy Lunch
- ◆ 1,2,3 Dinner Please
- ◆ People’s Choice

The Montes Family & Let’s Get Cooking

Meet Raul Montes and his daughter Ashley (age 16) and son RJ (age 13), recent graduates of the first series of *Let’s Get Cooking* – pictured below with instructor Adriana Arredondo.

More than two years ago, RJ began seeing Dr. Ron Newfield; Endocrinologist at RCH for help to lose weight as he was showing early signs of diabetes. With coaching from Dr. Newfield, the whole family began making small changes at home; switching to non-fat milk, cutting out sweetened sodas and reducing fast food. Initially, RJ lost weight- as did other family members. At about the same time, however, RJ’s mother became very ill and sadly, she passed away about a year ago.

The family started eating more fast food meals, and - over time - Ashley recognized the need for home-cooked nutritious meals, and decided

to take on cooking for her family. *Let’s Get Cooking* launched at just the right time and Ashley joined the first series. Encouraged by the instructor to include the whole family, Ashley’s father and brother joined some of the classes.

When asked what she liked best about *Let’s Get Cooking*, Ashley says it was the hands-on cooking, actually putting the meals together and being able to ask questions. Raul Montes says the classes have been a great support to his

family and he appreciates that they could all attend together. He says “with the increased awareness of how to make healthy cooking choices, and lots of great tips from the instructor, we all have a renewed desire to eat healthier.” Since joining the classes, RJ has learned to reduce his portion sizes and as a result has lost 7



From left: RJ Montes, Raul Montes, Ashley Montes & Adriana Arredondo