St Mary’s Memorial School, Glenelg

Integrating Learning and Healthy Eating through Class Restaurant Project

An eat well be active -Primary Schools project school

Term 4 started off a little differently for the students of 3/4PS at St Mary’s Memorial School, Glenelg as they busily prepared to open their restaurant for one night only. The class and their two teachers, Julie Pike and Bernie Smith worked for weeks on the planning, preparation and cooking of a three course meal for sixty VIP customers, the student’s parents.

This special event was a celebration of the student’s group work and communication skills but also showcased their talents and the learning that had taken place in the lead up to their restaurant.

The project was born when the class teachers wanted to give the students a project that would incorporate all areas of the curriculum and healthy eating whilst maximizing student interest, enthusiasm and engagement.

Students were required to demonstrate their writing skills in an application letter to request a position on one of the restaurant committees. Committees were responsible for entertainment, decoration, menu design, graphic design of invitations and menus, account keeping, table arrangement and administration.

Students visited the local Baker’s Delight to learn about bread making and Regency TAFE to discover about preparing food and running a restaurant.
Each student was involved in the preparation of the food, which included a red capsicum and sweet potato soup, beef rissoni served with roasted tomatoes and garden salad, and a choice of chocolate brownies with raspberry coulis or sticky date pudding.

Several students prepared acts to perform in between meals, enthusiastically introduced by the entertainment committee members. Dancing, singing and the playing of musical instruments kept the parents entertained while they waited for their meals.
Art works created by the students during the term were displayed gallery style in the restaurant and were available for purchase on the night. All profits made on the night through the sale of artwork and the restaurant meals were allocated to a charity chosen by the students.

The learning showcased on the night also included sustainability concept maps for which the students brainstormed ideas on how to make their restaurant a sustainable project. Some of the outcomes of their ideas were using vegetables and herbs grown specifically in the school’s vegetable patch and ‘up cycling’ old books from the library into origami decorations for the restaurant.

The success of the project could have been measured by the looks on the faces of the parents as they proudly watched their children busily serving food, filling water glasses and politely clearing tables. It could have been measured by the empty plates and bowls as they
made their way into the kitchen. It could have been measured by the tears hiding in the corners of their teachers’ eyes as they realised the impact this project had on the relationships and interpersonal skills of their class. The greatest measure of all was the confident smile found on the face of each and every student as they were asked to stand together in front of their parents at the end of the evening to be congratulated on a job well done.

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eat well be active - Primary Schools Project, a joint SA Health and Department for Education and Child Development project from 2008-2013.