

# impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

## Teamwork makes the dream work: Venture High School and Eat Smart Idaho

### AT A GLANCE

Students still benefit from cooking classes because of the creative minds at Venture High School and University of Idaho Extension's Eat Smart Idaho.

### The Situation

Cooking skills are increasingly recognized as an important strategy for preventing and reducing chronic diet-related diseases and obesity. Adolescents involved in cooking education programs report significantly higher confidence in their cooking abilities, improved food skills and practices, more positive attitudes toward cooking and higher overall diet quality.

Venture Alternative High School in the Coeur d'Alene School District lost its Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) teacher position last year due to a vacancy, which previously provided students with hands-on cooking skills. Given its long-standing relationship with the school, University of Idaho Extension's Eat Smart Idaho program — typically a partner with the FCS teacher on nutrition education — was asked to step in and continue offering this essential life skill to support students' health.

### Our Response

FCS UI Extension educator collaborated with health teacher Tony Hook and nutrition services lead Valerie Martin to ensure nutrition education and life skills remain accessible to students. Together, they designed a three-week program using Eat Smart Idaho approved



Extension Educator Shelly Johnson teams up with senior Shelby Dailey highlighting her new cooking skills at Exhibit Night.

curricula each trimester during the 2023-2024 school year that included both nutrition education and hands-on cooking skills. Each three-week session concluded with a well-organized Exhibit Night, where Venture students showcased their scratch-made recipes, sharing them with parents and peers in three well-attended events.

### Program Outcomes

Principal Teresa Kaiser shared, "Eat Smart Idaho has made such an important difference for Venture students. When we had to close our Family and Consumer Sciences classes because the teacher retired, Shelly and her team partnered with our staff to find ways to teach students skills for a lifetime of healthy eating habits. Working with Tony Hook, our health teacher, and Val

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Martin, from nutritional services, Shelly taught our students how to make healthy and delicious meals using low-cost ingredients. Students were able to showcase their new skills when they created healthy snacks to serve their friends and families during our trimester exhibit night. In addition, Shelly and her team have helped us manage a small food pantry that allows our families to access nutritious food during times of need. All of us at Venture are so appreciative of Eat Smart Idaho for supporting our students and families.”

Venture High School Pre/Post Data: 39 participants

Improved their behaviors in	% change
eating fruit	43%
eating vegetables	45%
drinking soda	28%
eating whole grains	60%
eating out healthier	54%
reading nutrition labels	54%
days per week physically active	49%
muscle toning activities	55%
physical activity frequency	46%
washing hands	41%
washing fruits and vegetable	49%
separate cutting boards from meat and perishable products	23%
foods in refrigerator with in two hours	18%
compare food and drink choices	36%
make own snacks	41%

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Students shared:

- “I learned lifelong skills that I will use forever!”
- “Eat Smart Idaho taught me how to properly take care of myself through healthy food and portions.”
- “When I first started this class, I wasn’t really sure what foods were healthy, now I do.”
- “I make all the recipes we learned in class, if I didn’t learn all this I don’t know what I would be eating at home. Definitely not healthy stuff.”



Health teacher Tony Hook helps sophomore Shianne Zulus make smoothies during Exhibit Night.

### The Future

Eat Smart Idaho (ESI) will continue to collaborate with Venture High School for the 2024-2025 school year. Additionally, Venture High School is also the home for all the online education for the school district. Shelly and her team have been invited to offer nutrition education and hands-on cooking lessons to these students, inviting them into the school to interact with Shelly and her team.

### Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

ESI team: Annie Roe, Joey Peutz, Siew Guan Lee, Kristin Hansen, Cammie Jayo and Becky Woodhouse.