

BRONX NEWS



HEALTH ON MENU

Teens helping Bronxites produce better meals

BY MAGGIE HAYES
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TEENS ARE growing and selling healthy lifestyles at the Learn It Grow It Eat It Youthmarket, and showing the Bronx that living well really is an easy way to live.

Learn It Grow It Eat It, part of the nonprofit organization GrowNYC, has teens from Bronx high schools taking what they've learned about health, nutrition and the environment and putting it into action at the Youthmarket. The teens demonstrate cooking, sell local produce and lead educational workshops.

"I get to try things that I've never tried before," said Raymond Victorio, 16, a rising senior at Bronx International High School.

"Months ago, I would have never seen myself cooking, and now here I am with a knife, cutting tomatoes and cilantro," he said as he prepared his fresh red salsa during a demonstration.

In its fifth summer, the Youthmarket puts 15 kids to work for six

weeks, earning \$10 an hour. For many teens, it's their first job, and LGE officials hope to give the hard workers real-life experience.

"They feel great about giving back to their community. This program really helps their confidence," said project coordinator David Saphire. "We like to say we're 'growing teenagers.'"

Cristal Morales, a Honduras native now living in Baychester, enjoys cooking and fondly recalls evenings spent cooking with her grandmother.

"It takes personality to cook," she said. "But we want to make it easy so people can do it at home."

As soon as the market opened on Wednesday, dozens of people lined up, collecting a variety of produce. Some went straight to nearby sitting areas to enjoy their purchases.

The LGE Youthmarket is open every Wednesday through November, from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Boston Road and 169th St.

"I can take what I've learned, and I should cook for my mom once in a while. That's one of my goals," said Victorio.



Teen bags fresh corn (top photo) and others do cooking demonstration (above) as part of the Learn It Grow It Eat It program. Cristal Morales (l. in photo r.) shows off fresh carrots.
Photos by Richard Harbus

