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## **Tutorial doll helps kids eat healthy**

**Author(s):** Lea Blevins, STAFF WRITER **Date:** January 30, 2007 **Section:** News  
LIVERMORE — Mom and health educator **Siah Fried** is determined to stop bad habits before they start.

Creator of "Healthy Starts Make Healthy Hearts," Fried first implemented her program four years ago at Pleasanton's Walnut Grove Elementary School, where she has daughters now in kindergarten and second grade.

While earning her master's degree in public health

10 years ago, Fried centered her thesis around a 7-foot-tall, blue-haired doll that unzips down the front to reveal pillow-stuffed organs.

As a health instructor at Las Positas College in Livermore, Fried sees firsthand bad habits young adults pick up over the years. They often bring unhealthy snacks to class or stand outside the door to smoke.

To keep kids from developing these unhealthy tendencies, Fried teaches them how nutrients are absorbed by the body and that some foods offer more benefits than others.

Foods go into two categories: "growing" foods, like fruits and vegetables, and "sometimes" foods, like cakes and pies.

"It's OK to have cake sometimes," Fried told Pat Gephart's kindergarten class Friday at Croce Elementary School in Livermore. But she added the reality, "Vitamins and minerals don't get squeezed out of candy."

During her hour-long session, kids play a fishing game, pulling out pictures of different foods and determine whether they are growing foods or sometimes foods.

Fried then has students draw a picture of what they learned. Some draw Stuffee, others draw healthy foods and some write the No. 5 to symbolize how many servings of fruits and vegetables to eat.

For each class, Fried does a three-part, monthly series to follow up on children's progress.

Many report eating more fruits and vegetables at home or bringing them in for snacks at school.

Students also learn about exercise in follow-up sessions.

"It's really making an impact," said Fried, who currently has 12 participating schools in the Tri-Valley with students in kindergarten through second grade. "I really have big vision for this long-term because it's a really good way to get them excited. It's very rewarding."

Schools or organizations interested in holding or sponsoring a Healthy Starts Make Healthy Hearts presentation can e-mail siah at fried@yahoo.com, or call (925) 485-3248.

Staff Writer Lea Blevins can be reached at lblevins@angnewspapers.com or (925) 416-4819

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