



The Super Food Is 'Super Good!'

Kale-a-palooza a Hit With Enthusiastic Students At Ethel A. Jacobsen School

"It's super good!" a student in Lisa Boyd's Ethel A. Jacobsen Elementary School full-day pre-kindergarten class exclaimed after sipping a tropical kale smoothie in physics ed on Monday. Kale — which is often tagged, in fact, as a "super food" — is grown in the gardens on the E.J. grounds in Surf City, and is the school's "vegetable of the year."

E.J.'s second-graders planted the kale in January, after the custodial staff built a low hoop house in the garden to protect the plants from cold and frost.

The leafy green vegetable is now thriving behind the school, and was highlighted earlier this month through an introduction to two books — "A Tale of Kale" and "Kale Huddle" — and Skype interviews with the authors.

"The author Skype with Lisa Borden, who penned 'The Tale of Kale,' went very well," said E.J. School nurse and gardens coordinator Bianca Aniski. "Students and teachers both learned about writing a children's book, how fascinating kale can be, and Skype."

Students asked questions such as: "Did you like kale when you were younger?" "Do you like trying new foods?" "What is your favorite way to eat kale?" and "Do you plant kale at your house?" as well as questions

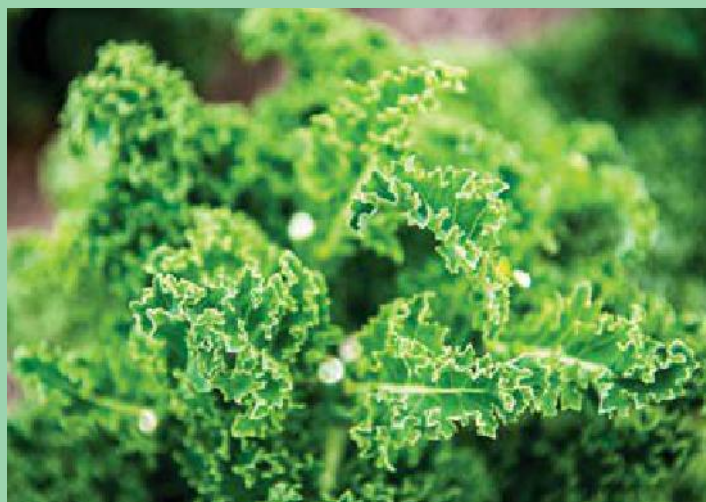
about the protagonist, Andy, and about writing a book.

Meanwhile, said Aniski, "the interactive 'Kale Huddle' included students and teachers taking the 'Picky Eater Pledge' that encourages the exploration of new foods."

"I am going to keep trying new vegetables, fruits and healthy foods — over and over again," the pledge reads. "It might take me tens, or even thousands of times of trying something new before I like it. But when I do finally enjoy it, I will smile, knowing that I am healthier for eating more of the good food. And, the more I try new things, the more variety I'll end up eating, and that will make me an even more fun person to eat with, and cook with, too!"

This past week, students were tasked with "fender blenders" in phys ed: Farias donated two bicycles, which the school equipped with AtlantiCare grant-funded blenders, and associated parts, that enabled the youngsters to pedal the bikes to blend a kale smoothie. As Sodexo food service manager Stacy Oates explained, the smoothies were a mixture of kale, bananas, pineapple, coconut milk and ice.

"It's fun! You're blending!" E.J. phys ed teacher James LaMarco encouraged as 4-year-olds took turns on the bikes. Aniski, Boyd, So-



Photographs by Ryan Morrill

EAT UP: (Clockwise from above) Kale flourishes in the E.J. School gardens. (From left) Jafet Mendez-Quezadas and William Vaughan advocate for the leafy green vegetable. Grady Keller pedal-powers a blender for kale smoothies as (from left) classroom assistant Maggie Schulze, phys ed teacher James LaMarco and Sodexo food service manager Stacy Oates cheer him on.

dexo general manger Mary Bueti, a few parents and staff, and even B98.5 on air personality and producer Sara Cucci cheered them on.

Then came the taste test. "Remember our book?" Boyd asked. "He didn't like it the first time, he didn't like it the second time ... But what happened?"

"He liked it later!" one student shouted.

LaMarco asked for thumbs up or thumbs down after the students tried the smoothies, and

the majority of little thumbs pointed upward.

The kids were then directed to other activities, including coconut bowling, a stuffed pineapple toss and a kale-themed photo booth.

Last year, students taste tested Brussels sprouts prepared by three different local chefs, and voted for their favorite. This year's kale smoothies and activities were a hit. Any guesses for the next featured vegetable?

— **Juliet Kaszas-Hoch**

Earth Day Spirit Not Dampened at Rainy Spring Beach Sweeps

More than 75 volunteers took to the shore of Long Beach Island last Saturday, Earth Day, to pitch in for Clean Ocean Action's Spring Beach Sweeps, an annual cleanup effort. The participants on LBI, coordinated by Alliance for a Living Ocean, and thousands of others braved the cool, rainy weather "to help improve and protect that which brings so much joy year 'round," COA Development Director Tory Woods stated.

"Seeing the community come together in order to better the environment is truly a beautiful thing," said Amy Arietta, COA program and administrative coordinator. "This

event is a chance for the general public to become a part of something much larger than themselves. Individuals are scientists for the day as they assist COA in collecting data that will eventually be utilized for scientific purposes. Beach Sweeps is a volunteer-driven event — they are the beating heart of our program."

The data from the spring and fall sweeps is publicized in an annual report that provides evidence about the type and quantity of debris found along beaches, all of which is used to educate and motivate for solutions to marine pollution.

On Saturday, Congressman Frank

Pallone Jr. greeted the crowd at Sandy Hook, noting, "What you are doing is so important. The work you do here today has a real impact and has led to the passage of laws such as the Microbead Ban Act, which goes into effect this year."

Valerie Montecalvo, president of Bayshore Recycling Corp., meanwhile, reminded volunteers that it was 30 years ago that Gov. Tom Kean signed the mandatory recycling law in New Jersey. (See related story.)

"New Jersey is the nation's No. 1 recycler, but we need to do more," said Montecalvo, whose company sorted debris found during the sweeps at

Sandy Hook to maximize recycling opportunities.

Beach Sweeps volunteers are encouraged to note any out-of-the-ordinary finds during their cleanup. This year's "Roster of the Ridiculous" included a scarecrow, a license plate, a baby car seat, a stuffed toy bunny, a bird cage, a charred bar stool and a bag of drugs.

ALO Executive Director Kyle Gronostajski wasn't aware of any too-ridiculous finds on LBI, but, he remarked, there was "lots of plastic, as usual."

"The Beach Sweeps never cease to amaze me," said Cindy Zipf, COA ex-

ecutive director. "Volunteers from the tall and the small to the young and the old are an inspiration for us to continue to do what we do. COA's daily work is to provide and protect our oceans, bays, waterways and beaches. Volunteers from schools, churches, businesses, organizations, corporations and teams continue to get 'down and dirty' to rid our beaches of the litter that has accumulated all winter.

"In a perfect world we wouldn't need to come back for Beach Sweeps in the fall," she added, "but until that happens, we will see you in October, and remember to pick up debris on every trip to the beach." —*J.K.-H.*