“I would rather eat kale salad than watch Encanto!”

After school students at Morikami Park Elementary received a treat yesterday, as they donned their chef hats and aprons. Assembled in the cafeteria, all eyes were focused ahead, awaiting another fun lesson. These students have opportunities to learn about gardening, as the Joseph P Cory Foundation has donated an organic Garden of Hope to their school, accompanied by a garden nutrition centric curriculum.

Prior, students picked items from their garden that would be added to the pre-assembled Quinoa Kale Salad that was to be prepared. They learned about cooking techniques, ingredients, and spices. It should be noted the aprons they wore sported the digestive system printed on its front. Standing in front of the class, one volunteer served as the living example of where your food starts, and to their amusement, *where it ends!*

During the weeks before we appeared, our afterschool teacher, Ana Fraga, already completed many of the “How to Think Like A Chef” lesson components, including printing and distributing recipe/ingredient cards, writing your own recipe, and “Kitchen Bingo”. It really was interesting, to see the different cultures speak about and identify the items they recognized in their distinct kitchens. Everyone took turns to say ingredient words in their own native language. You would be surprised how many ways you can say pepper!

One outcome from yesterday’s lesson particularly stands out as a true marvel to all the staff. In short, a student, who reportedly dismisses all snacks, vowed not to touch, smell, or try anything we were preparing, but ate his entire portion, and asked for more. Everyone wanted to take an extra cup to share with their family.

All students unanimously agreed that they would choose to have more lessons with Ms. Nada, rather than watch Encanto! Lin Manuel Miranda has nothing to fear and would most likely support this imitative and diverse group of gardeners.

Note: We came to set up while the kids were watching the movie. It was lovely to hear them sing every word of the score in Encanto in unison!