

Oregon State University Extension Service

METRO CONNECTION

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You scream, they scream, we all scream for Mrs. Breakfast



Rena Titus, also known as Mrs. Breakfast to her younger audiences, is one of four Extension nutrition educators in Washington County associated with Oregon State University College of Public Health and Human Sciences. Did you know that Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) contracts with OSU Extension Service SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) to bring nutrition education to limited income youth and adults living in Oregon?



For seven to nine weeks during the school year, Mrs. Breakfast visits Cornelius Elementary School and spends an hour once a week in three different classrooms. Weekly sessions includes a lesson, an activity component, a story or song, and a taste experience. The Cornelius school has been a long-time partner of the SNAP-Ed program.

"It is wonderful when the children run up to me for a hug and are excited to see me," Rena said. "Once the kids experience a few of my classes, they get excited to have 'Mrs. Breakfast' come again. My favorite part of the hour is the kids' tasting experience. This is one time that students try something that they might not typically eat at home.



"I love getting parental feedback telling me their child once was a picky eater and now they are willing to try a few new things! My hope is that they learn something that stays with them and ends up benefiting the entire family."

Students take easy, nutritious recipes home and enjoy finding other recipes at www.foodhero.org. A favorite recipe is the **Popeye Power Smoothie**. Spinach turns the drink green — not a popular beverage color with kids — but after tasting the smoothie, about 90 percent of the students love it and it becomes a household favorite.

Photo credits: Cheryl Hall

"SNAP-Ed programs are great for getting families to think and talk about nutrition," stated Rena. Often parents and older siblings jump on board after hearing the excitement in the child's voice talking about the new food they tried at school and how good it is for them. Sometimes they even share the nutritious benefits.

Rena has been teaching nutrition and serving metro communities for more than 10 years with OSU Extension in Washington County. Visiting preschools to teens, "Mrs. Breakfast" is one of several nutrition educators bringing fun and healthy living to over 30 sites throughout Washington County this year and in multiple languages. SNAP programs offered by OSU Extension educators exist in all 36 Oregon counties.

Click [here](#) for more information about other programs that encourage lifelong health and well-being—from pre-school to seniors, at schools to low income apartment activities events with partners like DHS county fairs, and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children).