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KIDS IN THE KITCHEN | LEARNING TO EAT HEALTHY



PHOTO BY AMY J. VAN HORN | ROCKFORD REGISTER STAR
Henry Thomas (left) and Peter Settini play Twister during the Kids in the Kitchen program hosted Saturday by the Junior League of Rockford at the Log Lodge.

Fruits, vegetables aren't all that bad

By Sarah Roberts

ROCKFORD REGISTER STAR

ROCKFORD — Organizers of Rockford's first Kids in the Kitchen declared the event a success Saturday as dozens of parents and children braved the snow to learn tips for staying healthy together.

Members of Rockford's Junior League named the YMCA's Log Lodge, where kids sampled a variety of fruits and veggies, learned how to make their own healthy snacks and participated in games.

With 30 percent of children and adolescents considered overweight, according to the American Obesity Association, the Kids in the Kitchen program was implemented last year by Junior Leagues across the country.

"We're trying to increase awareness about proper nutrition and fight childhood obesity," said Colleen O'Brien, a member of the Junior League's provisional class, which oversaw Saturday's activities. "A lot of kids are often home alone. They need to learn about portion size and how to make healthy snacks."

Yolanda Dowthard of Rockford and her daughter, Lonzha, 9, make weekly trips to the Y for exercise. On Saturday, Lonzha learned how to jump rope, and Yolanda picked up some new culinary ideas.

"We wanted some mother-daughter time, something we could do together," Dowthard said.

"We saw some healthy snacks that were easy to make and things I'd never thought of before, like putting fruit and vegetables in cups and making it look



Maurice Redd guides his daughter, Eloise Lakey, through a spoon race during Kids in the Kitchen.

On the Web

Go to rrstar.com and click on the link with this story for a gallery of photos from Kids in the Kitchen.

"They tried red and yellow peppers for the first time today and like them, which I didn't know," said Latino, who said she tries to incorporate lots of fruits and vegetables into her sons' diets.

Exercise, she said, is not a problem. "They're active enough. Too much, sometimes."

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pretty so kids will eat it."

Natalie Latino of Rockford watched her 4- and 5-year-old sons as they enthusiastically played round after round of Twister.



Alison Laiky pours ranch dressing for Desiree McKinney while Jennifer Kuss watches her son, Dain, taste a red pepper Saturday during Kids in the Kitchen. Children learned how to make healthy snacks during the event.