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Kids' Day mixes food history, hands-on activities

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By **Helena Rodriguez: Freedom New Mexico**

March 9 2008 12:07 AM

Where's there's food, you will find kids. And



Kayla Quiroz, 4, enjoys a spoonful of a mud cup which she made herself at Kidsâ€™ Day on Saturday at ENMU. Her mother, Krista Quiroz, looks on.

where there's a nationally-recognized Smithsonian food exhibit, kids will get more than a full tummy. They'll get lessons in history, as they did during Saturday's Kids' Day.

"We're celebrating food and we're celebrating the 'Key Ingredients: American by Food' exhibit from the Smithsonian Institute. It's a nationally-recognized exhibit here through April," said Jerry Harmon, dean of the School of Education at Eastern New Mexico University. The Smithsonian exhibit is on display at ENMU's Golden Library.

About 75 area children participated in the Saturday event, which included live music and dance by ENMU's Child Development Center and the Arts Academy at Bella Vista in Clovis. Children also got to rotate to various stations which included food story time with puppets, a digestive system mini clinic, treasure trunks featuring educational programs on the "Hispanic Foodway of New Mexico" and a Spanish Colonial trunk featuring items that would have been found in traditional, historic Hispanic households, showing what foods would have been served on their tables.

Along with the yummy lessons on food, kids also got to mix their own ingredients and sink their teeth into trail mix and mud cups, a dessert made with chocolate pudding, granola or crushed graham crackers, and gummy worms.

Krista Quiroz brought her 4-year-old daughter, Kayla, to Kids' Day. After helping her daughter make a mud cup, she said, "Kayla is not too young to cook. She helps me in the kitchen; she pours ingredients and cleans up."

Kathy Good, chairperson of Education Studies at ENMU and an associate professor of Special Education, said, "We wanted to show parents here today that cooking with kids in the kitchen is not rocket science. When kids help with cooking, it helps them with math skills, because they are mixing ingredients. Cooking with kids also involves science and history, especially if you talk to your children about where peanuts and other food comes from."

In the "Hispanic Foodway of New Mexico" station, children got the opportunity to make butter and spread it on a tortilla. In addition, Jamie Brytowski with the New Mexico Center for Museum Resources, talked to them about traditional food and spices found in the New Mexico Hispanic culture. She explained to them the multiple uses of herbs such as yerba buena, a mint flavored tea used to calm the tummy, and other spice and food items such as anise, manzanilla, posole, cornmeal and chili peppers.

"We will talk about how both imported food and local food is mixed together to make traditional Mexican foods," said Brytowski, who also noted that these trunks, along with audio kits, are available to school teachers from her office in Santa Fe.

In the "Spanish Colonial" trunk area, there was a discovery box where kids could stick their hand in to feel and try and guess what articles inside were. Amanda Lujan, also of The Center for Museum Resources, displayed items found in traditional Hispanic households such as wool, wood carvings of santos or saints, tin work, and replicas of traditional garments, which

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children were allowed to touch.

Today's "Key Ingredients: America by Food" Smithsonian Exhibit activity:

What: Local Flavor Day (Food and crops of eastern New Mexico)

When: Today from 1:30 to 5 p.m.

Where: Campus Union Building at Eastern New Mexico University

What you will find: Beef, dairy and peanut butter food demonstrations, information and demonstrations on cooking organic and meatless, nutritional cooking and "Cultivating and Harvest," featuring Sweet Water Farms, a division of High Mesa. There will also be an array of free food samples given out.

* The first 200 families will receive a cookb

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