

No Junk Food? No problem.

March 26, 2008

Wearing a tall, white chef's hat, 10-year-old Du'an Robinson today proudly displayed his culinary creation: cut celery stalks filled with cream cheese and topped with raisins.

"I call it 'ants on a log,'" Robinson told Westchester County Executive Andy Spano as a few of his classmates looked on. "I made it myself."

Robinson was among the 12 finalists in a healthy eating recipe contest at Richard J. Bailey School in Greenburgh. Spano was at the school to kick-off "No Junk Food Week," part of a program that works with schools and parents to help kids eat healthier and exercise more.



Started in 2004, No Junk Food week now incorporates 51 schools in Westchester and nearly 30,000 students who pledged to give up chips, candy or french fries.

At the Bailey school, many students said it wasn't too hard because teachers had them create healthy alternatives. The students there were junk-food-free all month. A school task force worked with the Westchester County Health Department in the last year after a study showed that 45.5 percent of the school's fourth graders were at risk for serious health problems because they were overweight.

The school also improved the nutritional content of its lunches, added more organized play into recess and cut the lunch line in half to give children more time to play outside. Kids also now get each Wednesday off to a moving start by walking a half-mile loop through the halls.

For all their hard work, the county treated the students to Edy's Slow-Churned Ice Cream — lower in sugar, fat and cholesterol than regular ice cream.

Victoria Jones, 9, didn't need the ice cream. She showed off her Yum Yogurt dessert and said the best part of it was "making it."

Her classmate, Janet Cuevas, 9, disagreed. She quickly said the best part was "tasting it!"