



Mindful Meals by Kids: Healthy Eating on a Budget!

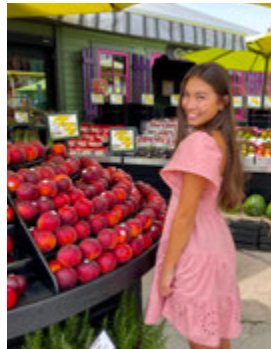
By Jillian Raymer



My name is Jillian Raymer, and I'm a Huntington Harbour resident. This fall, I'm entering my senior year at Sage Hill School and my 13th year as a Girl Scout. I am excited to announce that I am finalizing my project to earn my Gold Award, the highest achievement in Girl Scouts. During the pandemic, I noted that many restaurants were forced to close, prompting the need to find dining alternatives. My family thought it would be fun to hold competitions to see which of us could create the best meal under for \$20. This sparked the idea for my Gold Award project.

AN IDEA WAS BORN

Prior to the pandemic, I was introduced to Dr. Patricia A. Ronald Riba through OC Cares (www.occares.org), a non-profit organization that supports young leaders. Dr. Riba is a certified childhood obesity specialist and author in Orange County. She informed me that there are high rates of nutrition-related health problems in underserved communities due to the myth that fast and packaged foods are "cheaper."



Inspired to spread the message that you *can* make meals that are both delicious and nutritious on a budget, I created a healthy eating blog called "Mindful Meals by Kids." My goal is to teach young people that cooking can be both fun and beneficial. I do this by providing nutritional recipes for meals, as well as snacks and desserts. All recipes cost under \$20 for a family of four or more. The blog has resources that will guide the reader about things like what types of foods to stock in the kitchen and the most effective tips for being a smart grocery shopper. It also includes kitchen vocabulary and some best practices to follow to keep everyone safe and healthy while cooking.

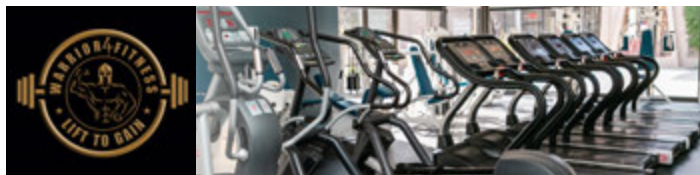
MAKING A LOCAL DIFFERENCE.

Near the end of the 2020/2021 school year, Circle View Elementary provided my videos for students to watch in class. "Mindful Meals by Kids" has even expanded beyond an online platform through in-person demonstration. I was thrilled to also be welcomed by the Oceanview School District's Kids Club to demonstrate fun, healthy meals over the summer. I planned age-appropriate recipes for hands-on participation with elementary students of different grade levels.



TRY IT FOR YOURSELF

Although my target audience is children, my blog is inclusive to all ages. It provides multiple language options and many videos and pictures that allow any viewer to fully engage. I'm happy to invite the whole community to find new recipes and cooking videos by checking out my free blog for yourself at www.mindfulmealsbykids.org. Or submit a healthy recipe or a photo of your child cooking in the kitchen for a chance to be featured on the blog! I believe starting healthy habits at a young age leads one to maintain a sustainable, healthy lifestyle. Won't you join me?

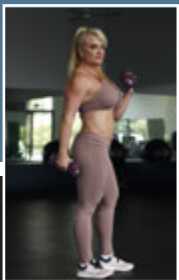


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