



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Novato Unified School District Pilots Farm-to-School Cooking Labs

Novato, CA...***Novato Unified School District (NUSD) launches innovative approach to food education to help children eat more vegetables and fruits at school. Over 350 children of Lu Sutton Elementary School will go through a fall Kale Cooking Lab, focused on teaching children the importance of eating locally and sustainably while weaving in the fundamentals of cooking and nutrition. This first ever West Coast pilot of the national program [Wellness in the Schools](#) (WITS) is being brought to NUSD by Chef Hollie Greene, founder of [JoyFoodly](#)®, as a part of her [Joyful 12 School Project](#) in partnership with the District's FANS (Food and Nutritional Services) Department, led by Miguel Villarreal.***

San Francisco based JoyFoodly, launched their fiscally sponsored Joyful 12 School project with NUSD in March 2015, with an Eat Green Cooking Challenge, during which all teachers, parents, and children of the school learned how to eat four new spring vegetables within the month through Meatless Monday samples in the cafeteria, after school cooking lessons, and free access to online cooking education back at home. The key to the program was Chef Hollie's online kitchen learning lab, [the Joyful 12](#), built on the method she used to teach thousands of parents, from inner city New York to coastal California, to engage kids with all of their senses to try new vegetables and fruits.

Why is food education so important? "You can improve the food served in schools, but if you don't teach children how to engage with these new foods with all of their senses and reduce the fear of trying new foods, there is a huge disconnect between what's served and what's eaten," says Chef Hollie. She knows the challenge first hand from her years volunteering and cooking in New York schools, while working for Wellness in the Schools, a non-profit that brings healthy food and fitness to 40,000 students across 75 public schools, cafeterias, classrooms, and recess yards.

"This transformative program could change my entire community's health. I've reduced sugar, banned processed meats and junk food. But my work stops at the schoolyard fence; I can't reach into families' home kitchens." said Miguel Villarreal, School Food and Wellness Director for

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Novato Unified School District.

With the support of presenting sponsor, Whole Foods Market, community sponsor Kaiser Permanente, and valued partnerships with Wellness in the Schools, Indian Valley Campus Organic Farm and Garden, The SF-Marin Food Bank, Bay Leaf Kitchen, and the Humane Society of the United States (advocates for Meatless Monday), the Joyful 12 School Project expands their initial pilot by offering edible education during the school day, launching on September 28th.

Chef Hollie Greene will be teaching a fall WITS Lab, during which children will prepare and taste a seasonal farm-fresh Ginger Kale Salad recipe that focuses on the importance of eating locally and sustainably, with all of the kale being supplied by the Indian Valley Campus Organic Farm and Garden. All 350 children of Lu Sutton Elementary will go through the 50-minute cooking labs, take home recipes to cook with their families (in English and Spanish), and the kale salad they learned will be featured on the school food salad bar the following week on National Kale Day, 10/7.

“What if I told you that I could get families to fall in love with cooking and eating vegetables and fruits?” said Chef Hollie Greene, founder of JoyFoodly. “Parents have told me that their kids joyfully try zucchini and eggplant, cabbage and kohlrabi – because they know how to cook them simply at home, and make them delicious.’

The program is fiscally sponsored by the Social Good Fund, a 501c3 non-profit organization, and has recently piloted in neighboring San Rafael with the Youth on the Move Program at the Short School, offering a Joyful 12 afterschool curriculum to elementary students participating in LEAP programming.

About JoyFoodly: JoyFoodly is a San Francisco-based company seeking to create a new food culture where kids and families celebrate the joy of good food together. Founded in 2013, JoyFoodly unveiled its first product, the [Joyful 12](#), a web-based cooking crash course for families, in 2014. The Joyful 12 is a beautiful, engaging and affordable site that offers members video tutorial “bites”, allergen-and-gluten-free recipes ideal for kids’ palates, a shopping list generator, and a community space to share successes and challenges. Through the Joyful12, food education expert Chef Hollie Greene teaches parents simple cooking techniques and engagement strategies that motivate families to joyfully eat seasonal vegetables and fruits throughout the year. With 16 years in the classroom, including teaching over 2,000 kids from the East Coast to California, Chef Hollie has been featured in Whole Foods Market Northern California’s “Now In Season” program, which highlights the best seasonal produce available to shoppers. Chef Hollie is passionate about helping parents feel good about the food they feed their kids, and helping families celebrate the JOY of mealtime together. Engage with us: Facebook: www.facebook.com/JoyFoodly Twitter: [@JoyFoodly](https://twitter.com/JoyFoodly)

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