

January 8, 2021

Michael S. DeLarco Foundation
405 Langley Ct.
Schaumburg, IL 60193

Dear Mike, Linda, Andrey, Faith and Supporters of Michael S. DeLarco Foundation,

The beginning of 2020 was revving up to be an excellent year and the Child Life team was excited to introduce an innovative program that had been an idea for a couple of years. A Culinary Medicine program was a vision between Child Life and our Pediatric Dietician that came to fruition with the most generous donation from the Michael S. DeLarco Foundation. The funds facilitated the purchase of a butcher block mobile culinary cart, measuring supplies, utensils, Vita-Blender and ingredients.

Culinary Medicine blends the art of food and cooking with the science of medicine. The goal of "Kitchen on Wheels" (the program name given by our patients), is to introduce children and their families while in the hospital setting to recipes that are healthy, nutritious and easy to prepare. Our dietician selects seasonal recipes that are filled with lots of minerals and vitamins that help to fight infections, keep bodies healthy and build the immune system. Each recipe contains a healthy message for the patient and caregivers along with nutritional facts.

Prior to the COVID outbreak, we were able to host our first Kitchen on Wheels in a group setting in our teen lounge. The patients and family members made a healthy chocolate yogurt fruit dip! Two of the patients that participated were interested in cooking and one of them was taking a cooking class in high school! Since the COVID outbreak, we have had to alter the way we present the program to ensure we maintain infection protocols while ensuring we continue to embody the purpose and importance of involving children in measuring, mixing and making healthy recipes!

As we come to the end of a year of offering this incredible program, I can truly say that each and every patient that participated, thoroughly engaged in the opportunity to gain insightful information about foods; how to prepare them, why they are important, ways to substitute "this for that" and feeling confident and comfortable in kitchen skills!

We are looking forward to another year of sharing fun and exciting recipes, along with introducing some new kitchen skills that kids will be able to take home with them as they continue to be empowered with food knowledge!