

Vanessa:

Vanessa began her journey with the HOST framework after having gained a bit of weight, which she was eager to lose. After some time with the HOST framework and FSNE, Vanessa rid her cabinets of “junk” and has changed her shopping and eating habits. She has begun to lose weight, and her grandchildren have taken notice of the changes within her cabinets. They are now asking for healthier snacks, such as smoothies, and more willing to trying new foods. These changes have also translated into Vanessa’s work at the Y of Central Maryland. While she was initially a bit apprehensive, the kids have reacted positively to some of her changes: including fruits and veggies at celebrations, taste tests to try new foods, and customizing foods to specific likes/dislikes of the children (e.g. including/not including cream cheese on a veggie wrap).

Vernon:

Through the HOST and FSNE process Vernon has surprised himself, as well as the kids at his before and after school enrichment site at the Y of Central Maryland. Vernon mentioned that the kids initially had a “shell shocked face” when he discussed some of the changes in the foods they were going to have on the menu, and was fearful that it would mean sudden death one day when he served carrots and rice cakes. Thankfully, the response has been positive. Vernon has encouraged the children to try the foods first before dismissing them, a mantra which he has also taken on himself. His first adventure into hummus was with the children, and he was pleasantly surprised at the result. They are now trying out different flavors of hummus to see which they prefer.

Ruby:

An initial theme common among many of the site directors at the Y of Central Maryland, Ruby felt that the kids at her site would be unwilling and uninterested in any changes to the snacks served at her site. “They’re never gonna eat these little brown bagels,” she noted. The kids, however, haven’t really noticed a difference, and some even prefer the new healthier snacks. This has, in turn, given Ruby courage to try out new foods with the kids, as well as have the kids involved in measuring proper serving sizes during snack. Their assistance with measuring snack provides a reminder for Ruby and the children as to the proper serving size, a concept Ruby finds reinforced through the use of attractive measuring and serving implements. Ruby personally knows the confusion that can surround nutrition labels and serving size. Since implementing the HOST framework and working with FSNE, Ruby has extended this practice to her life, being certain to turn packages over and check out their nutrition label to determine the serving size.

Monica

Monica began her journey into the HOST framework with some health issues, which in addition to the HOST process and FSNE trainings were a catalyst for her to begin a lifestyle change. Monica noted that this process has caused her to be a more mindful, healthier and adventurous eater. She now drinks more water, controls her portion sizes, and tries out new meals she discovered in a cookbook she purchased. “It totally changed my life,” she notes. Her healthy behaviors have transferred to her work, and have been noticed by the kids at her site. She has altered the portion sizes for the younger kids, and given her newfound pleasure in discovering new foods, piqued the interest of the children to try new foods through taste tests. They also engage daily in 30 minutes of a workout of their choosing, in which Monica is a proud participant.