

New program aims to teach nutrition and food preparation

*by Jeanine Bishop
Friends of the JDC Library*

FORT DAVIS - Students in the Fort Davis Independent School District are learning about nutrition and food preparation from a new program called Charlie Cart, an initiative of the Jeff Davis County Library, with support from the Food Pantry of Jeff Davis County, Friends of the Jeff Davis County Library, and Mobile Comunidad.

The Charlie Cart Project was founded in 2015 by the former Director of the Edible Schoolyard Project and a team of educators and designers. They set out to create an affordable and comprehensive food education program, giving kids the power to make healthy choices for life. The result is an all-in-one program—a kitchen on wheels and a full curriculum with classroom-tested recipes—connecting the dots between (See page 2)

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PROGRAM

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food, health, and the environment. Charlie Cart is presented at local schools by instructor Brittney Little.

Food education gets to the heart of our most pressing issues. Health, climate, and economy all are intrinsically linked to our food system. If we expect the next generation to make choices that support their health and the health of the planet, we have to provide basic education about food and its connections to the world we live in.

Food education is also critical to improved health outcomes. Today, one in six kids in the U.S. will go hungry.

One in three will develop Type 2 diabetes in their lifetime. Food security and healthy eating require two things: access to fresh, healthy food; and basic skills to prepare that food.

It's simple. Food education is essential for lifelong health.

Charlie Cart is funded by a grant for six months. Additional sustaining

funding is being sought to continue the program.

Simply put, Charlie Cart is a durable rolling kitchen cart that includes:

- Convection oven and induction cooktop
- Stainless steel sink with spray nozzle pump and grey water recovery
- Storage cupboards for all utensils, pots, pans, dishes, and lesson plans
- Power and electrical system optimized for classroom use

Every unit comes fully equipped with 170+ pieces of cooking equipment. Our team has carefully crafted the ideal set of pots, pans, utensils, cutting mats, measuring tools, and much more to execute the recipes and lesson plans included with the program.

The program includes a set of 54 lesson plans aligned to classroom subjects and Next Generation Science Standards.

Charlie Cart is being used in school classrooms and at communi-

ty events.

It will also be available during distributions at the Food Pantry to help clients learn how to prepare a variety of appealing meals from the food items they receive from the Pantry.

This project was supported by the National Library Of Medicine of the National Institutes of Health under Award Number UG4LM012345.

The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

The initial Charlie Cart grant funding ends this Spring. Donations and additional grants will be needed to sustain it.

Donations can be made to Friends of the Jeff Davis County Library, a 501(c)3 organization, which will provide a receipt for a potential tax deduction for the donor. The mailing address is PO Box 425, Fort Davis, TX 79734.

Donations can also be made at mobilecomunidad.org and designated for Charlie Cart.