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CENTERPIECE

Hermiston teacher cooks up new ideas amid virtual learning

By JADE MCDOWELL East Oregonian

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Treadwell



HERMISTON — As most Oregon students learn from home this year, some classes are spilling over into family life.

Angela Treadwell, who teaches family and consumer sciences at Hermiston High School, said distance learning for her classes is allowing her students to cook for or with their family members as a homework assignment. They complete “food labs” using kits of fresh ingredients they pick up from the high school.

“One of the values of this is it’s exposing them to new foods, to local foods and to a variety of foods,” she said.

Once they made pancakes, another time they made granola. Their first lab was a simple vegetable omelet in a cup.

Most recently, Treadwell provided fresh winter squash from Hermiston-based Third Gen Farms, and let students choose what they made with it. They could choose one of the recipes provided through the free Food Hero website run by Oregon State University, or make a family

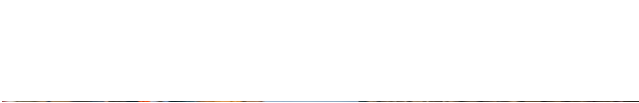
favorite. Afterward, students sent photos and a report of how it went, with most sharing their family's reviews of the recipe.

"I seasoned, baked, and pulled apart the squash so nicely that I was actually impressed," wrote a student who made spaghetti squash. "I've never done something like that before and it turned out better than I expected. I had my mom, little brother and little sister taste it, and they all thought it was delicious. My mom didn't know it was squash until I told her."

The squash was paid for by an OSU Moore Family Center Healthy Community Outreach grant.

Treadwell just started as a teacher at Hermiston High School, but she is extremely familiar with teaching cooking, particularly using Food Hero recipes, after years of teaching SNAP education classes to families receiving food stamps, visiting schools and carrying out other educational activities as the Oregon State University Extension Service's SNAP Education coordinator for Umatilla and Morrow counties.

Under the comprehensive distance learning model that Hermiston School District is using during the pandemic, students have "synchronous" learning in the mornings when they watch instructional videos or gather with their whole class over video chat for live classes with their teachers. In the afternoons, they can work on homework like Treadwell's food labs or learn in small groups or one-on-one time with teachers.



It hasn't been an easy adjustment, said Treadwell, who both teaches classes for the high school and has her own daughter learning online at home. But students are adapting.

"I know it's different, but students here are getting into a routine," she said. "They're showing up for their synchronous learning, and I'm really proud of what they're doing."

In addition to cooking labs, Treadwell also teaches them about safe food preparation, knife safety, nutrition, seasonal produce and other topics. Preparing meal kits for about 100 students to pick up can be labor intensive, but Treadwell said she tries to use locally produced

ingredients, such as the Third Gen Farms squash, as much as possible.

Jade McDowell

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