

Nutrition Services in a School-Based Pediatric Clinic



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Purpose

- The Heart and Hands Clinic, founded in 2019, is Canada's first and only medical resident-led, school-based pediatric clinic.
- Its location inside an elementary school enables health professionals to regularly interact and meet with parents and school staff to better understand all aspects of a child's life.
- The Clinic cares for an underserved population, improving their access to health care.
- Nutrition-related gaps at the Clinic :
 - Individual dietary support for families.
 - Nutrition health promotion activities.
 - Resident knowledge and comfort around nutrition topics.

Process

- McGill School of Human Nutrition joined the clinic in Fall of 2021 to close the gap in nutrition services.
- Needs include:
 - Individual child and family counseling.
 - Nutrition education in the classroom and daycare.
 - A plan to address the gap in the medical residents' nutrition-related skills.

Approach

- In Fall 2021, a McGill Dietetics Graduate student was placed at the clinic for an 8-week project to connect with stakeholders, assess needs, and establish nutrition services.
- In Winter 2022, a Dietitian was hired to provide individual counselling to families, and to supervise McGill Dietetics students' rotations at the Clinic.



Individual counselling

- The residents or school staff refer patients to the dietitian for individual family counseling.
- Most common issues seen include body weight and associated complications, picky eating, constipation, disordered eating patterns, and food insecurity.



School program assistance

- McGill interns help support pre-existing programs at the school
 - The breakfast program, which serves ~235 students
 - The Cooking Club/Cookbook Club



Medical resident education

- A survey of medical residents identified their nutrition education needs.
- Nutrition videos were developed and shared with the residents via a shared drive, along with other resources.
 - Video 1: Nutrition and Stimulant Medications
 - Video 2: Nutrition and Body Weight



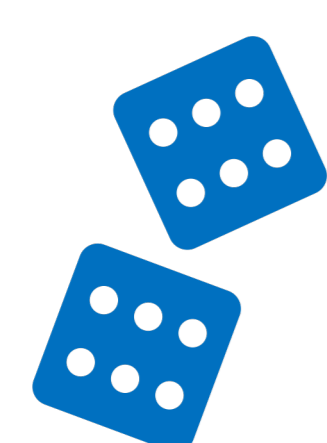
Health promotion activities

- The school principal and educators were consulted to assess needs. Commonly mentioned were the themes of healthy eating, hydration, and body image with the aims of fostering food and nutrition literacy and a healthy relationship with food.
- The nutrition team collaborates with dietitians from the Food Service and Nutrition Division of Lester B. Pearson School Board to optimize nutrition education initiatives that align with the Quebec Education Plan.
- To date, more than 250 children over 12 months have participated in classroom workshops.



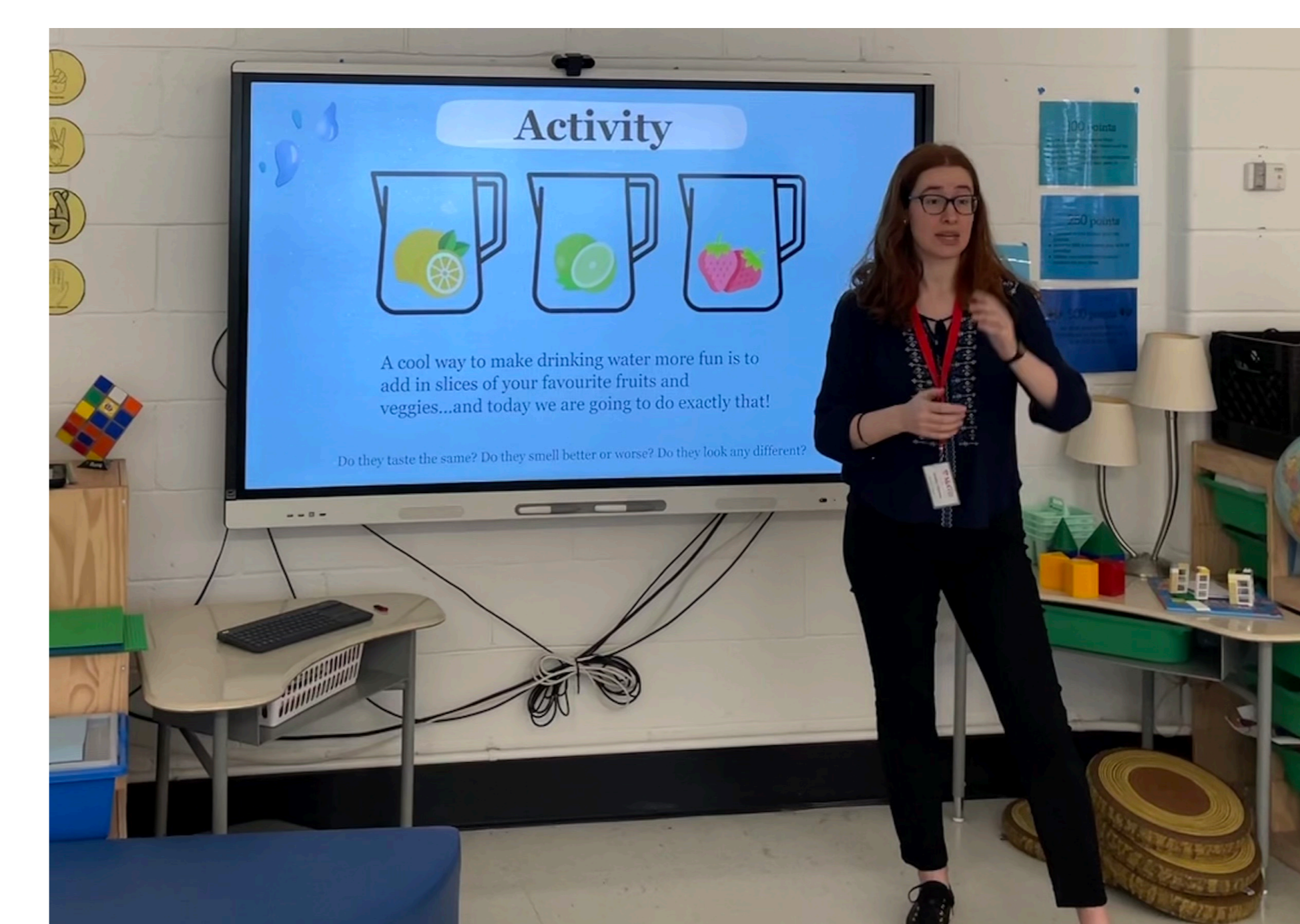
Training

- Dietetics interns learn how to care for this population and work in an interdisciplinary team while providing nutrition services.
- So far, 5 future dietitians have expanded their skills at this rotation while making an impact in the community.



Workshop topics delivered

- "Roll and Tell" food guide game to get participants talking about their plate.
- Balanced plates with an introduction to a variety of foods.
- Cooking workshops (smoothies, overnight oats).
- "Fostering Healthy Eating Habits" recorded session for daycare parents, followed by a drop-in session at the daycare to meet the dietitian and ask questions.
- Hydration workshop → 100% of surveyed teachers believe the taste test enhanced experiential learning, and most noted an immediate impact.



McGill Graduate intern Jennifer Titleman delivering a hydration workshop to grades 1&2 at Riverview Elementary School

Conclusion

Dietitians and dietetics interns offering care via school-based clinics is a novel educational and care delivery model to:

- improve training for future dietitians.
- improve access to nutrition services among underserved populations.

Significance

- The Heart and Hands Clinic serves as a leading example of how this type of teaching and health care service model can be implemented.
- Collaboration between nutrition professionals and the education sector should be encouraged in order to bring services closer to underserved populations.

Acknowledgements

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