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## Upper West Side & Morningside Heights

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# Cooking Classes Teach Kids to Love Veggies on the Upper West Side Updated 2 hrs ago

April 18, 2013 4:48pm | By Emily Frost, DNAinfo Reporter/Producer

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UPPER WEST SIDE — A handful of students at PS 75 on West 95th Street eagerly tore at stems of leafy, green kale, moving their way through "Veggiecation," an afterschool cooking class sponsored by the PTA.

"Kale is a type of leaf," one student in the group of 5 to 7-years-olds shouted triumphantly.

"Some people even consider kale to be a superfood," their teacher adds.

An educational cooking class that started on the Upper West Side and is rapidly expanding nationally is setting out to prove that kids can learn how to cook — and even learn to love vegetables in the process.

Lisa Suriano, 30, developed her company, Veggiecation, in 2009 and 2010, starting by creating educational materials on healthy eating for New York City classrooms.

A common misperception of kids cooking classes is "that you need to [cook] something sweet with kids, that it needs to be cupcakes or sweets," said Suriano.

But kale and chickpeas is just as popular a dish, insists Suriano.

In January of 2011, she was offered the opportunity to offer healthy eating classes at the Upper West Side [Whole Foods](#).

"It was very successful. The parents really responded; the kids responded," she recalled.

By June of that year, her class had expanded to twenty-three Whole Foods stores in New York, Connecticut and New Jersey.

Parents started to ask Suriano if she could bring her classes to their child's Girl Scout troop, birthday party and classroom.

From there, Suriano introduced her company, which is for-profit, into New York City classrooms, with a pilot program at the [Cathedral School](#) on 110th Street and Amsterdam.

Veggiecation is now in 30 programs in the city, from YMCAs to schools, including on the Upper West Side, PS 75, PS 146 and the Manhattan Children's School.

"I saw how effective it was to have the kids give us their opinions and taste things," Suriano said, explaining a key component of the class.

Though Suriano wouldn't say how much her typical 8-week sessions cost because she said they're priced on an individual basis, she said they're affordable — in part because of their simplicity.

"The majority [of recipes] can be done in a classroom with a cutting board, a mixing bowl and a blender — that makes it very easy for moms and dads to replicate them," she said.




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There's an inventory of some **163 recipes**, most of them vegan, that parents can look up at home online.

"The school food movement here is pretty powerful," said Veggiecation teacher Maurie Raphaely, 31, as she buzzed around the room at PS 75, asking for help from students pouring oil and measuring spices into their dish.

As students dove into the mixture of kale and cannelloni beans, freshly whipped up using an electric wok, they obeyed one of the main ground rules: no one can shout out "disgusting" or "yuck," as they're trying the new food.


Parents are encouraged to try recipes at home with their kids.

One student, a second grader named Marcello, said he'd tried every recipe at home.

"It's healthy and it tastes so good," he said of the day's cooking.

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APRIL 2013

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4

*Upcoming Events*

Thursday, April 18, 2013

M. Clarice Sarraf Solo Exhibition at Gelabert Studios Gallery

Brazilian artist M. Clarice Sarraf will have her first solo exhibition in New York City at the Gelabert Studios Galllery on West 86th Street.

**Time: 2:00 PM - 7:00 PM**  
**Location: 255 West 86th Street**

**Understanding the Middle School Choice Process**  
Date: May 7, 2013 - May 7, 2013  
Location: 154 West 93 Street  
Time: 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM



**3rd Annual Shakespeare's Birthday Sonnet Slam**  
Date: Apr 23, 2013 - Apr 23, 2013  
Location: Central Park Naumburg Bandshell  
Time: 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM



**Bilingual Fest Celebrates Chinese and Latino Culture**  
Date: Apr 20, 2013 - Apr 20, 2013  
Location: 150 West 83rd Street  
Time: 3:00 PM



**Riverside Park's 30th Annual Spring Fair**  
Date: May 5, 2013 - May 5, 2013  
Location: Riverside Drive & West 91st

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