



MISSION: POSSIBLE

We pay homage to seven community projects based on the principle that a homeless kid can grow up to become a chef and that good food is everyone's right

AS A SINGLE WORKING MOTHER of two, Lynn Fredericks began to feel a disconnect between herself and her children, Stephan, then 19 months old, and Alex, then eight. She saw dinnertime as an opportunity to change that. "I'm giving you a job," said Fredericks to her youngest. "Hold this cup of orzo, and when that pot bubbles, you let me know." And there he sat, eyes fixed on the pot of water, waiting for the slightest hint of boil. Engaging the child in the meal they were about to eat, Fredericks realized, made them a team. Soon, her older son was helping her select produce at the grocery store – food they both wanted to eat. Fredericks's breakthrough evolved into **FamilyCook Productions** (FCP), a program for kindergarteners through teenagers and their parents that fosters family togetherness and nutrition education through a 15-week series of after-school cooking classes. Now in its third year in Rochester, New York, and its second year in New York City, FCP (partnered with the After School Corporation, the YNCA, and the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene) reaches more than 1,500 families annually at 50-plus sites. Cultural-themed evenings find families cooking up miso soup, risotto, or tabbouleh using seasonal ingredients. "One mother of a nine-year-old told me that she doesn't have the energy to fight with her child in the supermarket. So she was thrilled when after only three weeks her comments about not eating sugary snacks no longer fell on deaf ears," says Fredericks. "That's our goal – to stop the food fight and help the family make better food choices." (212/867-3929; www.FamilyCookProductions.com)

- Eric Hastie 6/06