

SATURDAY
April 3
2010

The Pantagraph

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Bloomington-Normal

Fun with food | Show touts benefits of healthy diet



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Johnny Junkfood, played by Carlton Hall, and Coach, played by Tyson Savoretti, show off their diabolical experiment in which they color a tooth with a cola beverage during a performance by FoodPlay at Bent Elementary School in Bloomington on Thursday. Their madcap antics were designed to teach students healthy eating habits. The show was sponsored by the Illinois Soybean Association.

By Phyllis Coulter
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Johnny Junkfood ate an apple as he juggled balls to teach more than 400 Bent Elementary School students about food groups and a balanced diet.

FoodPlay visits schools in a program sponsored by the Illinois Soybean Association. Bent in Bloomington and Ridgeview Elementary in Colfax were two of 40 stops throughout the state.

"I think it was a lot of fun," said Lucas Baldwin, 11, who joined actors

On the Web



Play with your food - To find out more information about the FoodPlay program, visit:

www.foodplay.com



Ty Hoffman, 5, enjoys the quick-paced performance of FoodPlay during a special presentation Thursday at Bent Elementary School.

Thursday as part of a mock game show. He said he usually eats healthy food, but learned some new things in a fun way.

"It's our outreach to schools to let kids know about nutrition," said

Amy Roady, Illinois Soybean Association's communications manager.

The play features a juggling coach, a mad scientist making cola, a game show host and a junk-food-eating

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Johnny Junkfood, played by Carlton Hall, left, and Bent Elementary School students Grace Perry, Susana Rodriguez and Lucas Baldwin listen to a question from Coach, played by Tyson Savoretti, during a performance of FoodPlay at Bent Elementary School on Thursday. The question asked which snack pictured contains whole fruit.

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juggler. The characters provide facts to help combat childhood obesity, a national epidemic.

Characters in the play said the average American child drinks more than 600 cans of soda and consumes more than 150 pounds of sugar a year.

"That's more than most of you weigh," said New York City actor Tyson Savoretti, portraying the coach.

Bent Principal Jeff Geringer was pleased with the students' enthusiastic

response and with the free program.

The school also participates in a state grant-funded program that provides sliced fruits and vegetables as daily snacks.

"Kids are eating that up," Geringer said, with broccoli and oranges among the favorites. Cucumbers seem less popular.

Other offerings include tomatoes, cherries, carrots, strawberries and jicama, a sweet crunchy root.

Students can record their thoughts about different foods on a big bulletin board, said kitchen manager Ethel Hovde.