

## Food literacy education as a preventive health strategy

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The major causes of death in industrialized countries are the chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancers, diabetes which all have to do with lifestyle choices. The majority of these chronic diseases could be prevented if wise choices were made beginning at an early age. Education is critical in terms of providing people access to this information so that they will be able to make informed choices to promote wellness and prevent chronic diseases from developing. In order for education to be successful it has to be multi-faceted and have a positive, engaging and fun angle. Schools are therefore an ideal place in which to launch a comprehensive program that will motivate people to make positive lifestyle choices for wellness. Dr. Demas will discuss her work in the public schools and some of her research results that clearly demonstrate that the most effective way to promote positive behavior change regarding nutrition is to educate students who will bring the message home and will educate their families.

### Biography

Antonia Demas has a Ph.D. in education, nutrition, and anthropology from Cornell University. Dr. Demas has worked in various capacities for over 40 years developing food-based curriculums and teaching food-studies in a variety of educational settings with people of diverse ages, as well as ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Her curriculum, Food Is Elementary, has been used successfully in more than 3,000 schools in 35 states. She consults throughout the U.S. and abroad and trains and certifies teachers as food educators. Dr. Demas is a Visiting Scholar at Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health and at the University of Illinois Medical School.