What Skills are Necessary to be a Kitchen Mentor?

A Kitchen Mentor plays a critical role in the Food for Health teen program. While the Mentor is often doing a task along side the teens, their main job is to teach the teens how to do the task well and engage the teens so they understand more fully the what, why and how of what they are doing.

The following skills/abilities are needed to be a successful Kitchen Mentor

- Comprehensive background in culinary arts, whole foods preparation, and teaching/mentoring
- Ability to take a large scale recipe (up to 100 servings) and execute/teach all tasks to a small group of teens
- Knowledge of basic kitchen measurements and how to calculate/convert them (example – how many cups are in one quart)
- Knowledge of basic cooking skills (such as sautéing, roasting, blanching) AND can teach/explain the difference to teens
- Proficient in preparation of basic raw ingredients (such as how to cook different grains, proteins, etc)
- Proficient in knife skills and be able to do/explain the different knife cuts (such as large dice, medium dice, minced etc)
- Knowledge of food service safety and sanitation, preferably holds a food service sanitation certificate
- Ability to lift heavy pots/pans and work in a sometimes warm & crowded kitchen
- Willingness to work with all types of ingredients and taste all components of the dish you are preparing

Checklist to become a Kitchen Mentor

1. Submit a Food for Health Volunteer Application
2. Review the Necessary Skills to be a Kitchen Mentor
3. Provide documentation of food safety certificate, do the online ServSafe Course, or attend a Food for Health Sanitation Class
4. Complete a background check
5. Shadow an existing Kitchen Mentor for 2-4 weeks and evaluate with Executive Chef and Volunteer Coordinator on if you are ready/willing to work as a Mentor independently