

Teens on Vegetables

By Savannah G

I understand that this British chef, Jamie Oliver, has invaded the city of Huntington, West Virginia. It seems he heard that the city was one of the capitals of obesity, heart disease and other health problems associated with poor eating habits. Part of his battle plan is to change the menus at the local schools.

One of his first skirmishes was with a classroom of first graders. He found out very quickly that the average first grader didn't know their fresh fruits and vegetables. Are first graders supposed to know these things? I mean I don't think I knew these things, but my mom still fed them to me. She usually cut them up so I'm not sure if I knew what they looked like before they were cut up, except for the kiwi. I knew that one. It was fuzzy, it was cool, it tasted great. And besides, my mom just cut it in half and gave me a spoon to dig out the insides. I definitely knew about strawberries because one of my favorite books was "The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry and the Big Hungry Bear." Let's face it, even now that I am older, the only way to tell a nectarine from a peach is that one of them grows a beard. Even first graders could know that but nectarine is a big word for a six year old.

Broccoli is the vegetable I love and would recognize instantly. I know, I love broccoli. My friends think I'm crazy. Aside from these, I don't remember breaking green beans until I was about 10. Peas are easy, but I didn't know they didn't come frozen in a bag until I was older. It was just in the last few years that I could tell the difference between iceberg lettuce and cabbage.

I guess this just goes to show that frankly it is up to the parent and the school to feed the kids properly. The kids don't buy the groceries or set the menus or drive through the McDonalds. Yes, it would be good for them to know their fresh fruits and vegetables, but I think it will come later, maybe in the third or fourth grade.