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Kids Fear Factor Food Challenge participant Asia reluctantly tries "human dog food."

Youngsters brave food challenge

In the latest summer activity offered by the Richmond County Public Library, participants digested cringe-worthy dishes

BY AMANDA CHISHOLM

Eight brave young souls competed to see who could tackle eating the most cringe worthy dishes at the Richmond County Public Library's Kids Fear Factor Food Challenge on July 6.

The competition consisted of seven challenges. Five of the seven were food related; the remaining two were skill based.

The event was coordinated by Rappahannock Community College's Library Assistant and programming specialist Ruth Lynn and Library Public

Services Manager Linda Taylor.

Lynn, who designed the challenges, said that she's, "Been thinking about this for months."

Lynn said that this was the first time that the library's done this challenge with younger kids. Prior to this, the challenge was only done for the teens. Lynn added that she modified her challenges to be easier than the ones the teens had to endure. She said, "The teens loved it" so they decided to make a separate challenge for the younger kids to enjoy.

Before starting the festivities, Lynn made certain to ask whether the children had any specific food allergies to ensure the competition remained safe and fun.

At the end of each challenge, those who chose to participate got to choose a prize, no matter how successful they were. Prizes in most challenges were won by effort. Lynn told the children,

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"As long as you tried, you get something." The exception was the two head to head skill based challenges in which there was one winner from each competing pair.

Prizes included temporary tattoos, notepads, pencils, pencil sharpeners, erasers, candy, plastic cups, and various party favors.

The first challenge was by far the most grueling for most of the participants. Ruth Lynn mixed up a dish for the children that she referred to as "human dog food." This concoction consisted of raisins, canned chicken, bologna, canned chili, mini marshmallows, and her "secret ingredient" jarred olive juice.

The second challenge involved the children pairing up against one another. A small plastic swimming pool was filled with

marbles. Children had to pull the marbles out with their feet until the music playing stopped. Once the music stopped, the marbles were counted and the child with the most marbles won a piece of candy of their choosing. The most marbles pulled out in a single round was well over 65. Lynn said that originally the challenge had involved ice water, but she ultimately decided against it.

The third round of the competition involved children eating plates of m&ms covered in ketchup.

The fourth challenge Lynn called "full of hot air." It consisted of the participants competing head to head to see who could blow a marshmallow across a table first using a plastic straw to blow through. The children were given multiple chances to try to succeed to win more candy.

The fifth challenge had the children sitting on the floor in a circle, passing around several jars of baby food until the music stopped. Each time the music stopped, each child left holding a jar would have to take a bite of the baby food. The food included jars of pureed chicken, butternut squash, pureed chicken noodle, strawberry banana and beet baby food. The chicken flavors were the most unfavorable amongst the children, while one child asked to eat the rest of the strawberry banana flavored baby food at the conclusion of the challenge.

The sixth challenge was by far the children's favorite. In this challenge, the kids were asked to eat plates full of gummy worms covered with whipping cream. Many of the children asked if they could be topped off with even more whipped

cream than they were originally given.

The final challenge involved the children eating large scoops of peanut butter covered in chocolate syrup out of clean diapers. A couple of the children opted out of this challenge when they saw the diapers. Those who completed the final challenge were awarded with a brand new Scholastic book of their choosing.

Ruth Lynn said "Next year, I will expand the competition. I will come up with some more evil thoughts."

The Richmond County Public Library will be holding a variety of kid-gear activities throughout summer at their temporary location at the former Richmond County Intermediate school building. For a list of these activities, visit their temporary location open now through the end of August.