



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

## Senator Rivera Celebrates Puerto Rican Heritage Week With Healthy Foods

GUSTAVO RIVERA November 18, 2011



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Hosts Class Called: Can I be Puerto Rican and Still Eat Healthy?

Bronx, NY – State Senator Gustavo Rivera (D,WF-Bronx) celebrated Puerto Rican Heritage Week on Thursday, November 17 at MARC Academy with parents in the Northwest Bronx, by participating in a food demonstration and class on how to make healthier versions of Puerto Rican dishes. MARC Academy & Family Center Inc., South Bronx Job Corps Culinary

Program and Senator Rivera spoke about the importance of making healthier choices, without losing the flavors of Puerto Rican and Latino food.

“During the last few months, as I have been losing weight and speaking to Bronxites about the Bronx CAN Health Initiative, I have gotten the same question over and over again: How can I eat healthier if I’m Puerto Rican/Dominican/Latino and love pernil, arroz con gandules, etc.?” said Senator Rivera. “That’s why today’s lunch and program was so important. Thanks to the chefs at the Bronx Job Corps Culinary Program and MARC Academy for being wonderful hosts and for being leaders in the Bronx on issues of nutrition and health. With their help, we were able to demonstrate to Bronx families that we make healthier choices but still keep the flavor of our foods and our cultural traditions alive.”

“The South Bronx Job Corps Academy trainees were privileged and loved preparing and serving healthy alternatives to traditional Latino cuisine,” said Shakeba Williams, Business Community Liaison for the South Bronx Job Corps Academy. “Our young adults jump at the opportunity to share their talent and education to the community to which they belong! Education, training, community service and citizenship are the cornerstones of Job Corps!”

"Today's event with Senator Rivera allowed us to educate our parents on taking a traditional Puerto Rican meal and making it healthier," said Anna York, Executive Director of MARC Academy. "If anyone asks can we be Puerto Rican and still eat healthy, the answer would be resounding Yes! Senator Rivera was here as a proud Puerto Rican, letting others know that they can keep their cultural traditions, but that small changes will help them lead a healthier life, while still keeping the flavor in their everyday meals."

This celebration is part of Senator Rivera’s Bronx CAN Health Initiative, during which Senator Rivera lost twenty pounds and has been promoting small changes to diet as an important way to lead a healthier life. Senator Rivera is Puerto Rican and has spoken about the importance of keeping cultural traditions alive, while also learning how to make them

work for a healthy lifestyle through cutting fat, sugar, salt and through smaller portions.