

Supporting Food Literacy When You Can't Gather: *Read Eat Grow Gets Creative*

By Rebecca Antill, Youth Services Consultant, South Carolina State Library

For several years, the South Carolina State Library has been supporting a statewide Food Literacy initiative that we titled "Read Eat Grow." This initiative supports libraries in offering a variety of programs that help patrons learn the story of their food. We have assisted our public libraries with programs about gardening, composting, cookbook clubs, cooking demonstrations, healthy living, health literacy, nutrition, and so much more! Of course, most of these all happen in person, so when the COVID-19 pandemic closed both the State Library and our public libraries, we knew we had to think outside the box.



Lyndsey Maloney, Horry County Memorial Library, with a beautiful pan of Peach Cobbler

The Charleston County Public Library, which has a strong ongoing partnership with the Lowcountry Food Bank to promote healthy cooking in low-income communities throughout the county, began filming short, kid-friendly cooking demonstrations to share on their Facebook page. These videos feature Devon Andrews and her family mixing up easy recipes together at home. Devon also shares science demonstrations and shows that families can replicate the learning opportunities at low cost, though not necessarily low mess!



Lyndsey Maloney from the Horry County Memorial Library system created recipe demonstrations featuring recipes from the digital collection found at the State Library's website: <https://dc.statelibrary.sc.gov/> These recipes are copyright-free and, as Lyndsey's reveals, oh so tasty. Rebecca Antill, the Youth Services Consultant at the State Library, and Ellen Dunn, Public Information Coordinator, also filmed themselves at home cooking quick healthy recipes for library staff to prepare. At the Lexington County Public Library, staff have been assisting at school lunch sites, passing out free books while observing the proper safety protocols and social distancing. Another public library will be offering take home recipe ideas paired with a Facebook live demonstration from library staff throughout the summer. We are excited to see what other creative ways our libraries will find to encourage healthy living and promote food security to their communities in the upcoming months!