



Sustainable Santa Real Santa's United Make Their Mark

The Real Santa's United to end childhood obesity have been in town all summer soliciting signatures for their SPARK initiative: "Santa's Promote American's Right to Know" is aimed at putting the now missing facts about the percentage of sugar in sodas and juice drinks, and whether the food products contain genetically engineered (GE/GMO) ingredients on the food nutrition labels.

It's all part of a multi-year campaign initiated in North County by Sustainable Santa, a north county resident, which Santa's are spreading nationwide to help parents make good food choices leading to a generation of children who are "healthy, happy, and fit for life"—the mantra of the group.

The group has created three "food rules" designed to get the kids off fast, processed and junk foods by switching them to whole foods. It's mostly plants, which Sustainable Santa points out are not only nutritious for them, but good for the planet—allowing for sustainability in their production and using far less water.

The Santa's locate themselves in Farmers Markets during the holiday season where, in addition to providing the opportunity for that Holiday pictures with Santa, they can both review the food rules and encourage the kids to explore the market seeking out healthy "Santa's Garden Bites"—tastes of fresh, raw or fermented foods provided by the farmers and vendors. The parents are amazed when the children say they love the fermented cabbage or the Kombucha at the Sunday Market at Ecke Elementary in Leucadia, where Sustainable Santa® is the on-site Santa.

"It's more than just changing the image and message of the American Santa that was created in the 1930s with the Coca-Cola ads of the chubby guy pushing sodas and candy canes," said Santa. "It's about creating a generation of children who are not only healthy in body by eating a quality diet ... we want them to be healthy in mind and spirit as well, and to tap into their creativity."

"It's gratifying to see the efforts of groups like Real Santa's United to promote greater

awareness of healthy eating habits," said Bro. Bhumananda, minister of the Self Realization Fellowship Temple in Encinitas. And when groups like this focus on more than just material things they encourage balanced living, which incorporates the well being of the body, mind and the soul. As part of his "how-to-live" teachings, SRF Founder Yogananda emphasized the importance of a healthy diet advocating eating plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, avoiding white sugar and white flour, eating in moderation, and occasional fasting. "You should always leave the table slightly hungry," noted Bro. Bhumananda.

Both Bro. Bhumananda and Santa agree; Yogananda's encouragement of the right diet for the mind and soul, stressing positive thinking and cheerfulness, concentration and meditation are key to a healthful body and a full life.

Sustainable Santa will be the Santa in this year's Holiday parade, Dec. 5, and in keeping with the Encinitas tradition of environmental awareness, he will do so riding a bicycle.