

GRIMM FAMILY EDUCATION FOUNDATION

November Newsletter

“Employee Spotlight”

I have been asked countless times, “Why are you going to the United Kingdom? The British aren’t known for their food. Isn’t their culinary reputation quite the opposite?” After living in London for three months, my answer is two folded: yes and no.

Jamie Oliver is a celebrity chef over in the UK and a massive household name—comparable to our Martha Stewart or Rachel Ray. Recently, Jamie has leveraged his position of popularity to change his country’s relationship with food, beginning with children in schools. This summer I interned at the Jamie Oliver Food Foundation with a similar program to our Edible Schoolyards, called Jamie’s Kitchen Garden Project. My internship consisted of valuable experiences that allowed me to utilize and refine skills I gained whilst working for GFEF such as: leading classroom cooking sessions at primary schools in London to assisting with the design of curriculum resources. As a previous kitchen teacher at both Edible Schoolyards, it was exciting to see these British students expressing the same level of enthusiasm towards growing and cooking food as our Buena Vista and Grimmway Academy students thousands of miles away in Kern County.

London, as the capital of the UK, is a vibrant international metropolis of 8.6 million people, who bring flavors, ingredients, and techniques from all crevices of the world. This is why I answered “yes”—tasting the food in this city was an incredible edible experience. However, my “no” is a response to the unfortunate prevalence of processed food in schools, grocery stores, and restaurants throughout the rest of the country and also in pockets of London. I concluded my time working and living abroad with the recognition that the fight for “good food” is a long, complex battle, but with organizations such as the Jamie Oliver Food Foundation and GFEF’s Edible Schoolyard Programs, we can be proud to be leading the momentum towards a more food literate future.