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Storyteller to share healthy adventures

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Ariane Smith of Califon is an interactive storyteller who enjoys seeing kids act with her as she creates stories and characters at parties throughout the tri-state area. She's been at this craft for many years and mainly works in New York City, though she calls a stone cottage in Califon her dream come true. She was raised in Kingwood Township, the daughter of two ballet stars. She says her roots have always been here in Hunterdon, and she finds a well of creative inspiration here.

Ms. Smith's storytelling has now gone to print and she will soon release *Enchanted Thyme*, Book One in a *Delicious Adventure Series*. It's the first of six books themed on healthy food and cooking for kids.

The idea of teaching kids to eat well through a fairy tale filled with recipes caught the attention of Colalillo's ShopRites and the stores will be sponsoring three events blending Ms. Smith's storytelling with actual cooking demonstrations involving the kids who attend. Chefs Margaret Dobbs, Sheila Suerig and Susan Lang-Saponara, R.D., will feature a recipe from the book.

Storytelling demos will be held at the three area ShopRites: Saturday from 10 to 11:15 a.m. in Franklin Township (730-6800); Wednesday, from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m. at the store in Greenwich (454-8086); and Saturday, July 26, 10-11:15 a.m. at the Raritan Township store (782-2553). A book signing will immediately follow each event. Suitable for children ages 5-12, the cost is \$10 per child and ShopRite will give each enrolled child an advance copy of the book, a \$17.95 value.

Enchanted Thyme is a fairytale adventure about two children of a celebrity chef who are transported to a land where the Queen is under a very bad spell: the more she eats, the hungrier she gets. Their mission is to find the secret ingredient to a dish that will satisfy the Queen. To complement the journey, a recipe is "sandwiched" between each chapter, 15 of them in this first book.

As a child, Ms. Smith travelled with her parents on tour, enjoying a close relationship with them that she would like to see in families now. So, her cookbook-fairy tale series aims to bring parents and children together in the meal preparation process.

She enlisted the help of New York City Chef Michael Wilson, alumnus of the New York Restaurant School and uncle to three children who particularly love his famous Macaroni and Three Goopy Cheeses dish, one of the recipes included in the book. Chef Wilson also dishes up such delectables as Orgolio's Dancing Salsa, Magic Mushroom's Las Vegas Lunch and Fricassee Fairy's Siberian Ice Pops.

"The recipes are health-based, and we didn't dumb them down for the kids, though parent supervision is recommended. They're real recipes that will encourage kids to eat better," said Ms. Smith. "ShopRite has done wonders with the 'Live Right' programs, and this fits well in that. I want to inspire and empower kids, so the books aren't preachy about how to eat. They teach by example."

Nor do the books shy away from using "big words" like "aplomb," "demeanor" and "farklept," and you'll have to buy the book to learn what that last one means. The text teaches kids their meaning, backed up by a well-exemplified glossary at the back. Ms. Smith goes beyond the age level of her readers to challenge them with new words and ideas. A quarterly magazine and online presence, www.EnchantedThyme.com, follows through with more for kids to do, like challenging word games and an ever-growing, interactive, kid-friendly dictionary.

"I believe that kids learn more when they laugh. They eat healthier when it's fun. And they treat each other and the world around them better when they understand how exciting that can be," said Ms. Smith.

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