

كلية طب وايل كورنيل في قطر Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar

Member of Qatar Foundation

Press Release

Yalla Natural rolls into QF

Doha – March 14, 2015: Hundreds of schoolchildren had the chance to take some exercise and learn about healthy lifestyles when the Yalla Natural Roadshow came to Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF).

An initiative of the Your Health First campaign, which is organized and run by Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar, the Yalla Natural Roadshow aims to show people the benefits of regular exercise and eating fresh, organic food, and also supports QF's commitment to enable an informed community aware of healthy living.

The Yalla Natural trailer rolled into Education City on Sunday and stayed there until Thursday, attracting hundreds of children from schools across the country to join in the fun and get healthy. The event was so popular that students and teachers from Al Shamal made the 100km-long journey down, along with schools from Al Khor. Students and staff at QF were also invited to go and try some food and learn something new about their health.

Among the attractions were cookery demonstrations of healthy, nutritious dishes, an exercise class and the chance to make your own smoothie on the Your Health First smoothie bicycles.

Dr. Javaid Sheikh, Dean of WCMC-Q, said the Yalla Natural Roadshow's presence at Education City was testament to QF's commitment to unlocking human potential and fulfilling the aims of Qatar National Vision 2030.

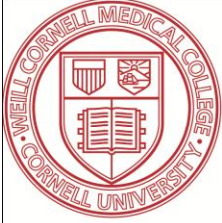
Dr. Sheikh said: "With QF's support and the use of their incredible facilities we have been able to take the message about healthy eating to hundreds of schoolchildren. They are the next generation - the future of Qatar – and QF is helping us to educate them about diet and exercise.

"Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar has a commitment to help improve the health of the community and through initiatives like Yalla Natural we are doing that. Healthcare should not always be reactive, rather it should be proactive, preventing people from getting ill so they

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never need to see a doctor or the inside of a hospital. That is what the Yalla Natural initiative – and the wider Your Health First campaign – is about, improving people’s health today by educating them about nutrition and exercise.

“The Yalla Natural Roadshow reminds us that it does not take a large amount of money or time to be healthy. We just need to avoid processed food, eat plenty of fruit and vegetables, and keep 30 minutes free each day to take a walk, play football in the garden or go for a swim.

“The Yalla Natural Roadshow will continue to travel around Doha helping the population to get fit, stay healthy, and prevent obesity and diabetes.”

Buthaina Al Nuaimi, Associate Vice-President of Education at Qatar Foundation, said “Qatar Foundation is fully committed to promoting nutritional diets which are so important for building a healthy community from the very youngest through all ages. The Yalla Natural Roadshow was very popular amongst the QF community, and we were pleased to host schools and students from across the country at Education City to benefit from this educational initiative.”

Children from Qatar Leadership Academy, based in Al Khor, were among those who visited the roadshow.

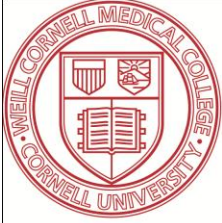
Sunny Joseph, Science Coordinator and Chemistry Teacher at the school, said it was essential to promote healthy lifestyles with interactive activities. “I think it is great that campaigns like Yalla Natural encourage the students to have a go at growing food, cooking with healthy ingredients and taking part in exercise classes,” he said. “Campaigns have to energize the students and grab their attention to convince them to reject fast food and embrace healthy, natural lifestyles in the long-term so that they grow up to be fit and strong to be the leaders of tomorrow.”

Grade 12 QLA student Abdulmalik Aloufi, aged 19, is a student leader responsible for guiding his peers. He said: “As the leaders of tomorrow it is very important for us to know about our environment, about the things we should eat and the exercises we need to do. To be a good leader you need to lead by example, and you must be knowledgeable, fit and healthy. Yalla Natural is showing us these things.”

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Chef Eric Cousin, Corporate Executive Chef at Amlak who has been giving cookery presentations said it had been a huge pleasure to be part of the Yalla Natural Roadshow.

He said: "The children and students have shown great interest in learning about healthy food and how to cook healthy meals. We have been able to show them, and also their teachers, that tasty, healthy meals can be made quickly and indeed more cheaply, than fast food and processed meals. They have all been very enthusiastic and eager to try the recipes for themselves."

Yalla Natural also played host to a visit from the Shafallah Center, which teaches children with special needs.

Laila Shaheen, Social Worker at The Shafallah Center, said that her students had enjoyed visiting the Yalla Natural trailer: "I feel this is a unique idea and it has been a lot of fun for our students, as well as teaching them about the importance of eating healthy, natural food and taking exercise," she said.

"For children with special needs it is very important to eat well because often they have increased vulnerability to conditions like heart disease and obesity. It is fantastic for them to learn how to be healthy in a fun environment with lots of diverse and fun activities to try."

PE Teacher Majeda Al-Sawalhi of Al Shamal Model Boys School accompanied her students to Education City from their school on the long journey down to Doha.

She said: "It is very important for the children to know what they should eat to live a long and healthy life free of disease, so we are very happy to be invited here. The idea of the campaign is good because it teaches the children through activities, which uses their natural energy and helps them to remember what they have learned.

"We know that they have to exercise every day and we are fortunate at Al Shamal because our students love to play sport. They loved taking part in the exercise session here and going on the smoothie bikes."

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Grade two student Rashed Alkobesi, aged seven, said he likes eating fruit. “My favorite is bananas,” he said. “It gives me energy for playing football. I don’t score that many goals but I’m going to eat healthy food and I will get stronger and score more.”

Tessy Johnson, a science teacher at English Modern School (EMS) Al Khor said that she liked the Your Health First campaign because there are a lot of different activities that encourage the students to engage and think critically about their health. She said that with Yalla Natural they can try growing their own vegetables and they have learned some healthy recipes and also a workout routine that they can easily do a couple of times a day to stay fit.

EMS Al Khor year eight student Juan Esteban Guarin, aged 14, said: “We are learning a lot. The people here are experts and we get to ask them questions about what we should eat to be fit and healthy. I like to stay in shape and I don’t want to become overweight, so I have found it really useful to hear about cooking with organic ingredients and how to improve our lifestyles in general so that we stay healthy.

“It’s important to find a sport or exercise that you enjoy; my favorites are tennis and yoga.”

Al Hammad International School also visited Yalla Natural at QF. Azza Ezzat Agha, is Head of the Science Department at the school and said the visit had been very valuable.

He said: “The students need to know which foods they need to eat to keep themselves healthy and that they need to avoid unhealthy fast food, especially nowadays when it is so easy to find fast food.

“Yalla Natural is a great way to make the students enthusiastic about eating and exercising in healthy and natural ways.”

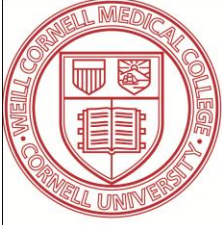
Student Mubarak Abdulla Al Khelaifi, aged 15, said the roadshow had helped teach him about sports nutrition.

He said: “I like to play sport, especially football, and I am learning about the natural foods I

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need to eat to keep me fit and healthy so that I can play for longer without getting tired. I play at school and also for a club, and I have enjoyed finding out about exercises like cycling and running because these can also improve my fitness for football and for life.”

The Yalla Natural Roadshow will next be at the MIA Park from March 24 to 28 when it takes part in Qatar International Food Festival. Along with cookery demonstrations and exercise classes, the public will be offered free recipe cards, nutritional information packs and exercise cards, and people will be able to weigh themselves and find out vital health statistics like their BMI using equipment carried by the trailer. Everyone who takes part in Yalla Natural can tweet about their experiences and share their healthy pictures with the community by using the hashtags: #YallaNatural #YHF and #SahtakAwalan. People can also visit Your Health First on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram and share information on the produce they have grown, healthy meals they have created and exercise sessions they have taken part in.

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About Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar

Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar is a partnership between Cornell University and Qatar Foundation. It offers pre-medical and medical courses leading to the Cornell University M.D. degree with teaching by Cornell and Weill Cornell faculty and by physicians at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) and Aspetar Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Hospital who hold Weill Cornell appointments. Through its biomedical research program, WCMC-Q is building a sustainable research community in Qatar while advancing basic science and clinical research. Through its medical college, WCMC-Q seeks to provide the finest education possible for medical students, to improve health care both now and for future generations, and to provide high quality health care to the Qatari population.

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