



Your Grocery Store's Next SuperStars

—Jay Holt



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Tommy the Tomato

Every kid relates to having super powers—and wants them. And that's what makes Jay Holt's work teaching young students about getting their vegetables and fruits so easy. His book, *Tommy the Tomato*, describes the super power of fruits and vegetables, explaining how they fuel your body, keep you focused at school, even make cramps go away.

"Tommy the Tomato offers a backdoor way of teaching kids what the nutrients are good for and how they help their bodies," Jay says. "Kids are laughing, enjoying the pictures. The stories explain: this is what happens when you don't eat this. This is what happens when you do; you concentrate more, your body has more energy."

Tommy the Tomato is not a perfect guy. He has a lot of things wrong with him, things that get better when he makes a healthy food choice. Tommy's happy to help his friends, too. When Barry the Banana gets leg cramps, Tommy the Tomato thinks he might need some potassium and tells him to eat a banana. The cramps go away. A box at the bottom of the page tells us that cramps can be caused by dehydration or a lack of potassium.

"Kids are getting a lot of underlying facts without realizing it," he says, and most likely parents reading the books are too. Holt has a degree in nutrition, and he never intended to become a writer, but everywhere he looked, he saw seriously overweight children—and he found the epidemic heartbreaking. A lot of people with a full-time job might have felt they had made their contribution after writing a book and creating a website for it, but Jay's commitment got deeper.

"I had playing cards made up. They have the cartoon characters from the book and each card teaches a fact – like beta-carotene is good for the eyes. There's suggestions for games, so kids can be playing concentration and learning something that will help them reach for the food that helps their bodies, instead of the one that doesn't."

Jay talks about teaching a lot. He knows educating kids and parents is an important part of beating this epidemic and juggles his work schedule to bring Tommy the Tomato to schools. "I have a forty-five minute a slide show I do for the kids. It's fun and they really enjoy it. I answer their questions, and at the end they can have their picture taken with Tommy."

Jay's second book, about exercise, will be available in fall '10. If you'd like to learn more about Jay, read his blog, order a book or playing cards, or arrange for Jay for to visit your school, visit the website at www.tommy-thetomato.com

For more information go to www.healthyweightcommit.org

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