



## RATATOUILLE: REALIZE YOUR DREAMS

A facilitator's discussion guide for youth leaders,  
educators and families to accompany the movie *Ratatouille*

Ages 6-12

<http://disney.go.com/disneypictures/ratatouille>

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# RATATOUILLE: REALIZE YOUR DREAMS



Dear Group Facilitator:

In an animated feature film from Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios, *Ratatouille* tells the comic tale of a determined rat named Remy who dreams of becoming a famous chef. However, standing in his path are his disapproving rat family and the unfortunate problem of being a rat in an unquestionably rodent-phobic job. When a twist of events lands Remy in Paris, he finds himself in a restaurant made famous by his culinary hero, Auguste Gusteau. There, Remy forges an unlikely friendship with Linguini, the garbage boy, who takes notice of Remy's unique cooking talents. Lacking true talent, Linguini fails to make it as a chef. Limited by being a hated rat in a kitchen setting, Remy can only dream of being noticed. But, as a team they work out a deal in which both can achieve their goals.

As the movie progresses, Remy finds himself torn between following his dreams or returning forever to his previous existence as a mere rat. Along the way he learns about the value of friendship and family and having no choice but to be whom he really is, a rat who wants to be a chef.

*Ratatouille* touches on valuable themes such as striving for goals, healthy eating, friendship, and coping with hardships.

This discussion guide, *Ratatouille: Realize Your Dreams*, is structured for use after viewing the movie on DVD. The guide offers discussion topics for youth ages 6–12. It is provided by Heartland Truly Moving Pictures, a non-profit organization that seeks to recognize and honor filmmakers whose work explores the human journey. In the development of this guide and other F.I.L.M. projects, Heartland Truly Moving Pictures has partnered with the National Collaboration for Youth, an organization which provides a unified voice for its coalition of more than 50 national, nonprofit, youth development organizations. The 30-year-old organization concentrates on improving the conditions of youth in the United States and enabling youth to realize their full capabilities. As a result, youth empowerment and development play a central role in the discussion guide for *Ratatouille*.



**RATATOUILLE IS A  
HEARTLAND TRULY MOVING PICTURE  
AWARD WINNER**

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## OBJECTIVES

- Youth will engage in thought-provoking group discussions that allow them to think and learn about healthy eating choices, cultural awareness, goal setting, friendship, and perseverance.
- Youth will have the opportunity to extend their learning through several activities that address the discussion themes.
- Youth will design and implement a service project that promotes healthy eating.
- Youth will use provided tools to advocate for proper nutrition.

## STEPS FOR YOUTH TO TAKE WITH THE RATATOUILLE: REALIZE YOUR DREAMS PROGRAM

### Step 1) See the Film

**The Movie:** *Ratatouille*, a Disney Pixar movie, opened in theaters in June of 2007. It will be available on DVD, starting November 6, 2007.

### Step 2) Participate

Take part in meaningful discussions and activities that address themes such as:

- Setting and achieving goals
- Healthy eating
- Learning about cultural diversity
- Friendship
- Overcoming difficulties

### Step 3) Take the Lead to Help Others

With Remy's determination and culinary expertise as inspiration, young people are urged to learn to take on responsibility by designing and conducting a service project that addresses a food or health related need in their community. Just as Remy urges his fellow rats to avoid eating trash, young people can influence their policymakers to address healthy eating concerns in their schools and beyond.

Use the free, downloadable service-learning supplement to assist in the planning and managing of *Ratatouille* service projects. Please visit [www.youthFILMproject.org](http://www.youthFILMproject.org) to download the supplement and to gain more information on the film and program.

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## NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR:

The discussion questions in this guide are designed to encourage youth to think deeply about the themes and messages that are a part of *Ratatouille*. The discussion questions and activity ideas are arranged according to theme and provide children with an open forum to express their thoughts and engage in constructive dialogue with their peers.

Please tailor the discussion questions to the life circumstances of the youth in your group. Many of us have experienced the loneliness and isolation that Remy experiences in a fancy restaurant away from his family and friends. Yet, many youth, like Remy the rat, will reach into their own hearts and into a close circle of support (parents, grandparents, family members, peers, teachers and others) to overcome the hardships and strive for their goals.



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## SETTING AND ACHIEVING GOALS

- How do your goals compare with Remy's? What are the greatest obstacles in your path?
- What personality traits do you admire in Remy as he attempts to become a great chef?
- What would you have done differently from Remy on his quest to fulfill a dream?
- How do Remy and Linguini help each other achieve their goals?
- Despite no longer being alive, how does Auguste Gusteau inspire Remy?
- Describe a short-term goal for the year. What steps will you need to take in order to meet it?
- Describe a long-term goal for your future. What steps will you need to take in order to meet it?
- How will you overcome the obstacles that may stand in the way of your goals?
- Describe someone in your life who has pushed you to succeed. If this person does not yet exist, how do you envision this mentor?
- Is it possible to fulfill a goal alone, without the guidance or support of another? Who helps Remy along the way? Could he have accomplished great things without assistance?

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## HEALTHY EATING

- Remy's love of food stems from his innate ability to smell ingredients in food. How are the five senses (sight, smell, taste, touch, sound) used in cooking? In your opinion, which is the most important?
- What are your favorite flavors or spices? Why?
- What are your favorite cooking-related smells? What memories or emotions do these smells conjure?
- How does Remy's love of food set him apart from his fellow rats?
- Have you ever tried cooking something? If so, explain the process and the end result. Was it a success? If not, what would you do next time to improve?
- Do you have a favorite homemade dish? Describe the ingredients that go into the dish.
- Do you have a favorite dish that represents your culture or heritage? Describe it and why it's important to your family background.
- Think about your daily eating habits. What can you do to add more wholesome grains, fruits, vegetables and proteins to your diet?
- Cleanliness is an important aspect of the culinary world and one of the reasons that disease-ridden rats incite health-code violations in restaurants. Do you think it was fair for Auguste Gusteau's restaurant to be shut down? Do you pay attention to your own cleanliness when you eat?
- In the movie, Remy is portrayed in a positive light. He is a hero in the story. In real life, rats are viewed as disease-carrying rodents that should be kept out of kitchens. Did the movie change your perception of rats?

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## LEARNING ABOUT DIFFERENT CULTURES

- *Ratatouille* takes place in Paris, France, a location quite different from the United States. What did you learn about the country after watching the movie?
- Remy goes from living in a small country home in France to the big city of Paris. Even within countries, the landscape and way of life can vary tremendously. How do regions within the U.S. differ?
- French food differs greatly from typical American foods. What are some frequent ingredients found in French food? What are some ingredients characteristic of American cuisine?
- Various gourmet dishes are prepared by Remy and Linguini in the movie. Which did you find the most and least appealing? Why?
- What do you know about French history or culture? Share your knowledge with the group. What would you still like to find out?
- Think about your own family background. What cultures are represented by your family? Share information about food, language, clothing, daily activities and other key elements of your ethnicity.
- If you could travel to one other country, which would it be? What appeals to you about this place? What foods are eaten there?



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## FRIENDSHIP

- In spite of their lifestyle differences, Remy is very close with his brother, Emile, and father. Do you have a close relationship with a family member? Describe this relationship and its value to you.
- When Remy gets separated from his family in the sewer, he experiences loneliness and fear. Have you ever experienced these emotions? How did you adjust to being away from familiar things and people?
- Remy discovers an unlikely friend when he assists Linguini in the kitchen and saves his job. Have you ever made an unlikely friend (someone who is very different from you)? Describe your friendship and how it functions.
- Remy and Linguini develop a secret method for helping each other out in the kitchen. The two perfect a marionette-like arrangement by which Remy tugs at Linguini's hair to control his movements. How do you feel about this alliance? Do you think it is honest?
- Have you ever forged an alliance with a friend to help each other out? If so, describe the circumstances.
- What are the qualities of a true friend? Do you convey these attributes in your friendships?
- Linguini and Remy have a temporary falling-out due to Linguini's inability to credit Remy for his rising success and the surprise that Remy has been stealing food. Have you ever had a falling-out with a close friend? What contributed to this break in your friendship? Were you able to resolve the dispute as Remy and Linguini do in the movie?
- It is likely that Linguini envies Remy for his tremendous cooking talent. Remy probably envies Linguini for being human and gaining respect in the kitchen, instead of having to hide in the corners. Do you ever envy your friends or peers? How do you overcome these jealousies?

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## OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES

- Just by being a rat, instead of a human, Remy is faced with daily obstacles on his journey to becoming a chef. What is one obstacle that you have faced so far in your life?
- What feelings do you experience when you have trouble accomplishing something? How can you turn those emotions into a positive plan of action?
- Remy is initially discouraged by his father and brother from pursuing his cooking dream. Does your family provide support in your decisions and aspirations? How does Remy eventually win the support of his family and friends? How can you?
- Linguini is the rightful inheritor of Auguste Gusteau's restaurant, yet Skinny does everything in his power to prevent this from occurring. How does Linguini persevere? How does Remy help?
- In overcoming difficulties, why is it important to have the support of others? Who helps you through tough times? Write a letter to this person/these people to express your gratitude!
- Have you ever helped another through a frustrating situation? If so, explain the situation.
- Towards the end of *Ratatouille*, the health inspector closes Gusteau's because of the rat presence. However, this huge obstacle turns into something even better. With the help of Ego, the restaurant critic, Linguini, Colette and Remy open their own restaurant entitled "La Ratatouille." Why do negative experiences often result in more positive outcomes? Give a few examples.

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## ACTIVITY IDEAS

### What do you eat?

Remy discourages his family of rats from eating trash—stale and moldy leftovers from the dumpsters outside the restaurant. You may have heard the expression, “don’t eat trash.” Getting proper nutrition by eating a balanced diet is essential. A balanced diet is one that includes all the food groups. In other words, have foods from every color, every day.

Remy encourages his family and friends to eat healthy, nutritious delicacies instead of garbage. What do you eat each day? What changes can you make to your diet?

View the food pyramid below, which offers guidance on how to eat a balanced diet each day.

Visit Kids Health for more details about how to be healthy.

<http://www.kidshealth.org>



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Now, try to keep track of what you consume each day during a typical week using the chart below. List what you eat for each day in the following categories.

|           | Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner | Snacks |
|-----------|-----------|-------|--------|--------|
| Monday    |           |       |        |        |
| Tuesday   |           |       |        |        |
| Wednesday |           |       |        |        |
| Thursday  |           |       |        |        |
| Friday    |           |       |        |        |
| Saturday  |           |       |        |        |
| Sunday    |           |       |        |        |

After tracking your eating habits for the week, compare your results with the food pyramid from the USDA. How can you add more healthy elements to your diet? What are you doing well?

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## MAKE YOUR OWN RATATOUILLE!

Remy and Linguini wow Ego, the picky critic at the end of the movie with a delicious ratatouille dish, a simple medley of colorful vegetables. If your youth group or school has access to a kitchen, try making this dish with an adult supervisor! Use this recipe version below:

### INGREDIENTS

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
1 medium onion, thinly sliced  
1 garlic clove, coarsely chopped  
2 large tomatoes (about 1 pound), halved and sliced 1/2 inch thick  
1 medium eggplant (1 pound), cut into 1-inch cubes  
1/2 pound zucchini, sliced crosswise 1 inch thick  
1 medium red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces  
1 bay leaf  
Salt and freshly ground pepper

### DIRECTIONS

Heat the olive oil in a large, deep skillet. Add the onion and cook over moderate heat until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Reduce the heat to moderately low and add the tomatoes, eggplant, zucchini, bell pepper and bay leaf. Season with salt and pepper, cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are very tender, about 1 hour. Discard the bay leaf and serve warm or at room temperature.

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## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

- Host a French food festival (in honor of Remy). For more information on typical French cuisine, check out [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French\\_cuisine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_cuisine)
- Start a cooking club! Each week you can feature a unique recipe or pick a weekly theme. Invite local cooks and bakers to your group to give demonstrations and provide assistance.



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## TAKE THE LEAD

This section allows youth to explore actions they can take as individuals and in groups to reach out to others in need of support. The activities are designed to heighten youth awareness of how they can have immediate as well as a lasting positive impact on the recipients of their generosity.

As children develop, they benefit greatly from experiencing their own personal power, capabilities and talents. Parents, educators, youth leaders and child development specialists know that the best way for youth to learn responsibility is to take on responsibility. This process is captured in the movie, *Ratatouille*, through Remy's determination to reach his goal. Although his desire to become a chef is met by resistance, Remy is undeterred. Similarly, Linguini does not let go of his restaurant, which he rightfully inherits from Gusteau.



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## SERVICE PROJECTS TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING

DEAR YOUNG PEOPLE:

Think about a service project that your group would like to do that addresses an aspect of healthy eating. With his exceptional sense of smell and taste, Remy is disgusted by the scraps and trash that his fellow rats consume daily. He encourages his brother and father to try to savor food and enjoy healthy, delicious dishes. Although you are not a rat, literally eating moldy scraps from a dumpster, you and others in your school or community may be eating too much junk food.

Think about how you can help others adopt a healthy lifestyle through information about healthy eating.

### Look for Ways to Work in Cooperation with Adults

- Plan and conduct your project with the guidance and support of an adult partner.
- Read some of the tips for working well with adults below.
- Have your adult partner(s) read the tips for adults.
- Brainstorm your project ideas and plan the steps to carry it out. Use the F.I.L.M. service-learning supplement, available at [www.youthFILMproject.org](http://www.youthFILMproject.org).
- Then, get to work!!

Here are a few ideas—but, it is very important for you to organize your own ways to take the lead!

- Create food pyramid posters to decorate the walls of schools, libraries, community buildings and hospitals. Visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) to find various pyramids, adjusted for different people (kids, teenagers, adults).
- Cook with younger youth or older adults, using recipes that include healthy ingredients such as fresh fruits, veggies and whole grains.
- Volunteer at a local soup kitchen, helping prepare and serve food with fresh, local ingredients donated from restaurants and markets.
- Provide assistance at your nearby farmer's market, or help organize a new one!
- Plant a vegetable garden in your community.

Visit [www.youthFILMproject.org](http://www.youthFILMproject.org) to download the free service-learning supplement!

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## ADVOCATE FOR GOOD NUTRITION

### DEAR YOUNG PEOPLE

In addition to service projects (see the Service-Learning Supplement)—you can also be a powerful champion for change. The Youth Policy Action Center at [www.youthpolicyactioncenter.org](http://www.youthpolicyactioncenter.org) or 1-866-MOBILIZE, provides lots of tips and information for youth who have seen something in their community or heard something on the news that they wish to change. The Center gives young people the same “tools” used by professional lobbyists to work to change laws.

Despite recent efforts to improve the eating habits of the U.S. population, an obesity crisis still exists, especially among young people. Take the initiative to tell your policymakers that more changes are needed in order to preserve the health and happiness of today’s youth.

Ideas to advocate for healthy eating include:

- Petition your school board to introduce healthier options in the cafeteria. Soda machines and junk food can be removed, replaced by nutritious salad bars and fresh juices.
- Ask the government to include more detailed information about ingredients and nutrition facts on food labels.
- Food stamps allow individuals and families who don’t earn a lot of money to get food from supermarkets for free. Learn about the national food stamp program and find out how it can be improved! Visit [www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/)
- Visit [www.kidshealth.org/kid](http://www.kidshealth.org/kid) for more ideas on how to encourage others to stay fit and healthy!

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## FIVE KEY STEPS FOR BEING A CHAMPION FOR CHANGE

(Adapted from the Youth Policy Action Center) [www.youthpolicyactioncenter.org](http://www.youthpolicyactioncenter.org) or 1-866-MOBILIZE

**1) PICK AN ISSUE.** Maybe, like Remy, you will realize that if you don't take a stand, no one will. Be sure you are clear on WHAT you want to change.

**2) STUDY UP.** Even though studying is not everyone's idea of fun, putting in a little time to really understand an issue and WHY it matters, is important. You want to be able to convince your friends, adults and elected officials that what you say matters.

**3) FIND ALLIES.** You don't have to run a campaign by yourself. Chances are there are others who are interested in the same issue – and want to help. Find them.

**4) DEVELOP A STRATEGY.** While most of us experience the world broadly (we like or don't like our school, we do or don't feel safe in our neighborhoods), simply saying we want to improve the schools or our neighborhoods is not enough to get an elected official to do what we want. FOCUS on what specifically you would like elected officials to do. And, FOCUS on the right officials for your cause.

**5) LAUNCH A CAMPAIGN.** Send messages. Public officials keep track of how many messages they receive on specific topics. WRITE, CALL and USE THE MEDIA.



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## POST PROGRAM EVALUATION

Please take a few moments to answer the questions below. It should only take about 5 minutes. Once you have submitted the survey you will be entered to win a copy of the DVD, a book and an Activity Guide.

**ORGANIZATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY/STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ORGANIZATION WEB SITE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many individuals does your organization serve? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you classify your organization?

- School Based
- Library or Museum
- Faith Based
- Child Care
- After School

Approximately how many individuals completed one or more steps in the *Ratatouille* program? \_\_\_\_\_

*Steps include: See the movie and read a corresponding piece of literature, participate in activities from the Activity Guide, complete a service project.*

What age range participated in the program? \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate your overall impression of the Activity Guide.

Useful and appropriate for my organization (5)

Moderately useful (3)

Not at all useful or appropriate for my organization (1)

Comments:

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Please give us any additional feedback and/or suggestions you have to help us improve our future F.I.L.M. programs.

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May we contact you for additional information?      Yes      No

If yes, what is the best way to contact you? \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: F.I.L.M. Evaluation  
Heartland Truly Moving Pictures  
200 South Meridian Street, Ste 220  
Indianapolis, IN 46225

Or fax to (317)464.9409