

"Bulldog Bites": Food For Thought

Here is the text of Director of Food Services, Pam Maloney's featured article in the Indiana School Nutrition Association's Summer 2010 edition of *Food For Thought*.

Crown Point Community Schools has started their own food revolution. We are a corporation with over 7000 students in Northwest Indiana. We have 10 great schools staffed with the best food service employees any director could ask for. I was talking with several of the managers and we discussed how Chef Oliver was really making school food service look bad. We all agreed that how he portrayed us was really not how we are. One thing led to another, and I said to the managers how I would really like to do a spin off of his show but do it in a productive way rather than negative. I sent letters out to the area chefs and waited for replies; and they came.

Points of Interest and the reasons why:

- 1) We do understand the importance of eating healthy and teaching good habits to our students in our corporation. We would like to encourage the Dietary Guidelines which promote fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, whole grain products and less processed food.
- 2) Chef Jaime Oliver gave great publicity to the school lunch programs but his actions came across somewhat negative. School corporations have strict guidelines mandated from state and federal regulations. Not only do we have to follow the guidelines but we have to keep costs down and serve meals students will buy. Food Service departments are self funded so they must make good business decisions. Our program will focus on choices, emphasizing if you make healthy choices most days, go ahead and have pizza one day, but get back on schedule the next day, and by all means take the walk around the block a few times.
- 3) Michele Obama and her "Lets Move" Program is an inspiration to us all, students must be given healthy choices with good quality food. School corporations in our area and throughout the nation understand the thought process and improve their programs every year.

In addition to our local chefs and Seattle Sutton, I have been working with our state dietitian, Barb Wine. She has been kind enough to look over our menus and give us the approval we are looking for from her end.

So Chef Oliver gave us great publicity, now we had to have some fun. We gave the chef's a few recipes to experiment with, our start to their finish. I gave them simple rules, sodium and fat were both a no, no, cost was a factor, and the students had to like it. We planned a professional development day with our cooks and they each came in and showed us how it's done. The cooks loved it, they picked up a few pointers, they were able to see and taste the finished product so they would know what to expect in August. Some of them were so much more relaxed as they were all getting nervous not knowing what to expect.

Chef Ian from Zodiac brought us the finished recipe for Fiesta Chili over Bow Tie Pasta (359 calories and 12 gms fat – black beans kidney beans tomatoes, peppers and corn along with several different seasonings) and Island Chicken over Garden Rice (225 calories and 4 gms of fat – teriyaki glaze made of teriyaki sauce and pineapple sauce).

Chef Carl from Amore came with his corrected version of Oriental beef with lo Mein (318 calories and 11 gms fat) and Chicken Alfredo with penne pasta (319 calories and 10 gms fat – made with cottage cheese and parmesan cheese along with chicken base and seasonings).

Chef Dave from Youche Country Club gave up his own creation of southwest chicken salad (332 calories 9 gms fat) and Cranberry BBQ Pork Mini's- (455 calories and 12 gms fat).

Seattle Sutton gave up her recipes for Chicken Parmesan over pasta (273 calories and 8 gms fat) and Spaghetti with turkey meat sauce (226 calories and 5 gms of fat).

We aren't doing anything that the rest of you aren't doing we just decided to PR it. Everyone seems to love the ideas (see attached) but the real story will come if students buy lunches.

Our goal is to have parents talk about the menu with their kids; items will be starred on the menus that have 30% or less of the calories from fat. If they want to eat chicken nuggets or pizza, that's fine, but the next day they need to make a healthier choice which is one of the starred items.

Seattle donated several one week gift certificates that we will raffle among the teaching staff with hopes that they will market our program with in their classrooms.

The teacher's class that chooses the healthiest items will go into the raffle for the week's worth of her food.

I have invited the mayor to come to school for lunch on our first Wednesday to try our Chef's items. I know our superintendent will be there as well. Our administration is very excited about the program and we all can't wait to see what happens.

I do want to mention our Go Green day every other Friday came from Hanover School Corporation, which is a neighboring corporation. We changed it up from what they did but the idea is all theirs. My staff has really taken off on this and it really has been a morale booster too.

All of the Crown Point Community School managers took an active role in our revolution idea, special thanks to Mary Kay Ruble (Eisenhower Elementary) and Gladys Rediger (corporation coordinator) for going the extra mile making sure everything is in order.

*Pam Maloney
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