Implementing Plant-Based School Meal Entrees

DC Central Kitchen

Edward Kwitowski, Director of School Food Service
OVERVIEW

• About DC Central Kitchen
  – Mission & Programs
  – School Foods Program

• Implementation of Vegan Entrée Choices
  – Why Vegan Entrees?
  – Successes
  – Challenges
  – Best Practices
ABOUT DC CENTRAL KITCHEN

- Mission: We fight hunger differently by using career training, job creation, and sustainable business practices to strengthen local food systems and reduce disparities in health and economic opportunity.

- Executed through programs such as:
  - Culinary Job Training
  - Campus Kitchen Project
  - Healthy Corners Program
  - Community Meals
  - School Foods Program
• Food service provider for 15 schools in DC serving over 7,000 locally sourced from scratch meals daily.
SCHOOL FOODS PROGRAM

- Utilize ingredients from over 30 local family farms and engage in contract growing for our schools
SCHOOL FOODS PROGRAM

- Innovative programs such as Cafeteria Chefs and Fresh Feature Friday allow for student engagement and feedback
WHY VEGAN ENTREES?

- Opportunity to partner with PCRM
- Introduce plant-based protein options
- Evaluate marketing strategies
- Increase vegetable and whole grain consumption
- Lessen environmental impact
SUCCESSES

- Increased plant-based recipe development
- Familiarity with beans and tofu as protein sources
- Students willingness to try new plant-based items
- Identified successful & low-cost marketing strategies
SUCCESSES

- BBQ Tofu Bites
- Super Sesame Tofu
- On the Go Sloppy Joe (Tofu Based)
- Sofritas Tofu Tacos
- Powered Up Pasta with Chickpeas
- Veg Out Chili
SUCCESSES

• Marketing
  – Taste tests
  – Stickers
  – Recipe cards

Veg Out Chili
Yield: 20 servings
Serving Size: 1/4 cup

Ingredients:
- 1/4 cup onions, chopped
- 1/4 cup green peppers, chopped
- 3 1/2 cups kidney beans, canned, low sodium
- 2 cups black beans, canned, low sodium
- 2 cups great northern beans, canned, low sodium
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons green chilies, canned
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 1/2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 1/2 cups tomato puree, low sodium
- 1 cup tomato juice, low sodium
- 1/4 cup tomato paste, low sodium
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup corn, frozen
- 1 teaspoon cumin salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

Directions:
1. Rinse and drain beans. Reserve for later use.
2. In a large pot over medium-high heat, add oil and sauté onions, green peppers, green chilies, garlic powder, and chili powder until vegetables are tender and aromatic.
3. Add all tomato products, water, corn, salt, black pepper and reserved beans. Cook until flavors develop, about 35 minutes.
CHALLENGES

- Initial student acceptance
- Competition with the regular entree
- Hazardous marketing materials
  - Pencils
  - Rubber bracelets
BEST PRACTICES

• Taste test in advance of introducing new item on menu
• Interact and engage students during tasting
• Adopting plant-based entrée as main entrée for day can increase consumption of the plant-based item
• Involve school teachers and administration to increase buy-in
SUMMARY

• Plant based entrée items add value to menu options
• Stickers, taste tests and recipe cards are low-cost effective marketing strategies
• Introduction of plant-based options can change perceptions both in and out of the school building
How Central Park School for Children Serves Plant-based Meals

Nadine Goodwin-Blake

Food Service Director
CENTRAL PARK SCHOOL for CHILDREN – CPSC

- Established Charter School in downtown Durham, North Carolina
- Petitioned state DPI in 2012 and received permission to weight lottery in an effort to bring in more economic diversity
- Recently completed expansion to include Middle School

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<th>2016-2017</th>
<th>K-4</th>
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<td>Membership</td>
<td>263</td>
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<td>Percentage of Free and Reduced</td>
<td>24%</td>
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• As the school was growing and evolving, there was an opportunity to create a unique lunch program
• Central Park School for Children envisions a school nutrition program that upholds and promotes...
  • Social justice • Community building and engagement • Academic success • Sustainability • Local economic investment • Lifelong positive nutrition skills and habits • Transparency throughout nutrition services • Student empowerment • Food and nutrition across the curriculum • Access to affordable good food • Delicious, kid-approved options

Food Matters!
CPSC NUTRITION VISION

• Develop and sustain a model nutrition program supporting our school’s mission of nurturing and developing the whole child.

• Offer healthful lunches with delicious, fresh, local foods to help all of our students gain the benefits of excellent nutrition.

• Bring together students and staff around food, and learning more about what healthy foods look and taste like.
• Embraced concept of whole, unprocessed, plant-based foods

• Almost 60% of daily menus* were 100% vegetarian – no meat offered on the menu.

• Over 70% of daily menus* offered vegan entrees and sides.

* Calculated based on 45 days in initial menu cycle
PAD-THAI YOUR WAY

• Savory Whole Grain Noodles
  • *Topped with Crispy Tofu*
• Stir-Fry Veggies (soybeans, baby corn, broccoli, red pepper)
• Soy-Glazed Carrots
• Choice of Fruit
• Choice of Milk
  - Soy milk available upon request
INDIAN CUISINE

- Vimala’s Curryblossom Chicken OR Savory Daal over Aromatic Brown Rice
- Blistered Green Beans
- Bhangan Bharta
  - *(How fun is that to say?! It’s yummy Indian eggplant)*
- Choice of Fruit
- Choice of Milk
  - Soy milk available upon request
FOOD TRUCK FARE

- Sweet Corn Black Bean Soft-Corn Tacos OR
- Garlic Pinto Bean on Soft-Corn Tacos
- Chopped Romaine Lettuce
- Pico de Gallo
- Hot Sauce

- Mango Tango
- Choice of Milk, soy milk available upon request
POTATO BOAT!

- Choice of Russet or Sweet potato piled high with your choice of:
  - Beans
  - Lettuce, Tomato, Salsa
- Chili Lime Corn Salad
- Whole Grain Oatmeal Cookies!
- Choice of Fruit
- Choice of Milk
  - Soy milk available upon request
CHILI NACHO SCOOPS

• Tex-Mex Beans
• Fresh Chopped Romaine
• Sassy Salsa
• Hot Sauce
• Choice of Fruit
• Choice of Milk
  – Soy milk available upon request
BURGER DAY

• Portobello Burger with White Bean Spread
• Dinosaur Kale Salad
• Hand-Cut Wedge Fries
• Choice of Fruit
• Choice of Milk
  - Soy milk available upon request
• FOOD tastes, variety, acceptability were NOT a challenge
• Caterer had difficulty in paradigm shift of:
  – Entrees focused on vegetarian and plant-based items
  – School-provided menus and recipes
  – Additional fruit and vegetable offerings
• Caterers costed menu based on more traditional school lunch menu
• Serving time is an issue, requiring adjustment to some meals
  – Salad and sandwich bar
SHIFTING TOWARDS SUCCESS

- Limited, processed food menu
- Hot/cold bag lunches
- Averaging 60 meals per day
- Students and parents accepted food, did not love
- CPSC covered all costs for free students, all but $0.40 per meal for reduced
- School had net expense of $5865 for meals in August 2015 (23 days, 1380 meals)

- Expanded, whole-food menu
- Buffet-style serving line
- Averaging 170 meals per day
- Students and parents excited about options, enjoying food!
- CPSC joined NSLP, gaining financial subsidization
- School had income of $12,260 for meals in August 2016 (23 days, 3072 meals)
SUCCESSES

• Managed through a change in caterer mid-year
• Completed initial year on NSLP
• Received Golden Carrot Award from Physician’s Committee for Responsible Medicine
• Chickpea Tagine with Wild Rice Pilaf Recipe was featured in the Physician’s Committee for Responsible Medicine Online Cookbook “Vegan Recipes for School Lunches”
CENTRAL PARK

SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN
Seeds of Success
with the
Golden Carrot Award

Atlanta Public Schools
Dr. Marilyn Hughes, RD, LD
Director - Nutrition Department
Atlanta Public Schools 2015 Golden Carrot Award Winner

- Student Wellness Ambassadors promote healthful behavior changes.
- Atlanta Salad Bowls feature hearty bean based salads, sliced fruit, and students’ favorite vegetables.
- “Chef’s Table” encourages student feedback.

FUTURE PLANS

“More Please” campaign offering seconds of fruits and vegetables.

APS Full Service Menu Offerings

APS Salad Bowl
APS Salad Bowl

• Atlanta Public Schools (APS) offers a variety of vegetarian entrees daily

• Initiated by the Vegetarian Club at Grady High School, a vegetarian meal line was piloted in 2005

• APS offers a daily salad bar, known as the APS Salad Bowl, that includes tossed leafy greens, carrots, cucumbers, beans, and tomatoes; along with seasonal fruit and vegetable options.

• Locally grown produce is served weekly on the salad bowl
USDA Grant Awarded Program
Atlanta Public Schools

Fruit and Vegetable Program
USDA Grant Awarded Program
Atlanta Public Schools

- USDA Grant Program awarded to 36 school sites
- Operating for 7 years within Atlanta Public Schools
- Currently serving over 18,000 APS students
- A variety of 60 different fruits and vegetables served this school year
- Over 30 locally grown fruits and vegetables served with at least 1 local item served each month
Only during the school day – not before school, after school or during afterschool programs

FFVP produce must be served at least 2 days per week.

The FFVP cannot be served during the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs’ reimbursable meal service periods

The FFVP must be served within 90 minutes of receipt from the cafeteria due to food safety concerns
Curriculum Integration

- Weekly educational resources are provided

- Resources can be integrated into history, geography, science, technology, math, art, and nutrition/health lesson plans

- Only raw produce were served three times per week and accompanied by an interactive nutrition education resources

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**Mini Bananas**
Serving Size: 1 whole

**GA Grown Apples**
Serving Size: 1 bag (2.5 oz)

**Sugar Snap Peas**
Serving Size: 8 each

**Tree Fruit**
Native to Colombia

**Native to the Mediterranean region**

Considered a staple to many outside of the United States, it is also known as a Finger, a Baby, or a Nino banana.

Mini bananas are only three to four inches in length. How long is your mini banana?

Mini bananas are sweeter and easier to peel than regular bananas.

They are a good source of complex carbohydrates, making bananas a perfect snack, providing a good energy boost for active kids.

**Bananas** are one of the few foods to contain the 6 major vitamins.

*Apples* were brought to North America by colonists who planted the first apple orchard in Boston.

**Your apples are Georgia Grown from Mercier Orchards** located in North Georgia.

*Apples* have to have help from honey bees to carry pollen so they can grow fruit.

The phrase, “an apple a day keeps the doctor away”, dates back to the 19th century.

**Apples** are high in fiber, which helps you feel full longer.

The vitamin C in apples helps heal wounds and keep your skin healthy.

*Sugar snap peas* are easy to grow. They are planted in the early spring and are harvested before the weather gets too hot.

*Sugar snap peas* are excellent. They are grown in a pod.

During winter months, sugar snap peas are generally bigger and sweeter than they are in warmer months.

Enjoy the whole pea pod fresh as a snack and in salads or have peas as a healthy side dish.

*Sugar snap peas* are an excellent source of fiber and protein that helps make your muscles strong.

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APS Nutrition Introduces FFVP Garden Princess & Veggie Man
APS FFVP Garden Princess & Veggie Man Initiative

APS Nutrition Presents the 2nd Annual: Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Pageant

Where we will crown the next District Garden Princess and Veggie Man

“Heroes on a mission, promoting good nutrition!”

Pageant will be held during the annual SWA Leadership Academy (Preregister Here)
Saturday, March 25th, 2017
Sylvan Hills Middle School – 1461 Sylvan Rd SW 30310

Now accepting entries from eligible FFVP participating schools
Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Visits Morningside Elementary
USDA Official Visits Mays High School to see Successful Farm-to-School Program

14 Dec 2016

Atlanta Public Schools, Environment, Health & Wellness, High Schools, Mays High School, Nutrition, nutrition department, Schools, Science, Technology

United States Department of Agriculture Under Secretary Kevin Concannon learns about the Mays High School greenhouse and its use of aquaponics from senior Sydney Stepney during his visit to the campus.
Garden Grown Day
April 21st, 2017

In observation of Earth Day, all Atlanta Public Schools Cafeterias, will feature Garden Grown Recipes. This celebration will be held on Friday, April 21st in partnership with the Humane Society of America’s Lean and Green campaign! Join us for a healthy vegetarian school lunch and help protect the planet!

**Elementary**
- Black Bean & Corn Quesadilla (V)
- Spinach Dip with Tortilla Chips (V)
- Vegetable Garden Salad (V)
- Mexicali Corn (GF)
- Pineapple Salsa (GF)

**Middle / High**
- Spinach Dip with Tortilla Chips (GF)(V)
- Baked Buffalo Cauliflower (GF)
- Blazin’ Buffalo Ranch Wrap (V)
- Black Bean & Corn Quesadilla (V)
- Black Bean Burger (V) (HS only)

[Icons showing reduce, reuse, recycle for a happier earth]
APS Earth Day Tweets

Spinach Dip was #1 with APS student’s #EarthDay 🌿 celebration serving plant-based foods to save the planet. #leanandgreen #plantstrong

Look at our #Lean & Green on #EarthDay @ APSupdate. #leanandgreen #veggiepower #reducereuserecycle #plantstrong #gardengrownday
First graders at Mary Lin Elementary School enjoyed meatless lunches in observance of Earth Day.

**APS Nutrition Department Serves Meatless Meals in Observance of Earth Day 2017**

In observance of Earth Day last week, the Atlanta Public Schools Nutrition Department did its part to help protect the environment, as APS cafeterias featured plant-based school menu items to promote healthy eating and the conservation of the Earth's resources. Held in partnership with the Humane Society of America's Lean and Green campaign, the initiative - a first for APS - featured the following meatless menu items: black bean and corn quesadillas, spinach dip with tortilla chips, vegetarian garden salads, baked buffalo cauliflower, black bean burgers, and seasoned baked fries.

According to APS Nutrition Director Dr. Marilyn Hughes, one of the easiest ways to help the planet is to reduce the amount of meat consumed by eating more plant-based foods. "These foods help the environment because less resources and energy are used in growth and production," she said.