

# Indiana Nutrition Newsletter

## Keeping Schools 'IN' the Know

Issue 2015-1

Winter 2015

### Warrick County School Corporation is Changing the Look and Perception of School Meals

By Suzette Hartmann, School Nutrition Specialist

#### In this issue:

Changing the Look of School Meals 1

Continued Story 2

Continued Story 3

Director's Corner 3

Bleed Blue Blood Drive 4

Kitchen Nuggets Newsletter 4

Continued Story 5

SuperFood HEROES 5

Continued Story 6



Photo of a delicious school lunch offered at Warrick County School Corporation

If you know of a nutrition-related or Food Service success story, please click [here](#).

Shenae Rowe is a Registered Dietitian and the Food and Nutrition Director for Warrick County School Corporation. Rowe has worked for the corporation since 2003, and her goal has been to change the look and perception of school meals. Rowe stated, "It is very important for our students, staff, administrators, and parents to understand the efforts we are making in Warrick County to provide our students with healthy, well-balanced, quality meals each and every day." To this end, quality ingredients and food items are purchased, and more recipes are used than ever before to prepare delicious homemade items. At the beginning of this school year, a new project was implemented to help get the word out about their efforts. Rowe took photographs of school lunches and posted the pictures on

the corporation's Food and Nutrition website. The webpage is titled **What's For Lunch?** The photos depict the portion sizes and food items offered at the elementary, middle, and high school grade level. More photos will be added to the webpage in the future. Along with the photos, a wonderful description is included of each lunch. When viewing the webpage, you can click on a photo to enlarge the picture. To view this webpage, go to <http://www.warrick.k12.in.us/main.php?id=tray>.

Rowe learned how to take photos of school meals by attending an education session at the School Nutrition Association's (SNA) Annual National Conference in Boston last summer. The session was presented by Dayle Hayes. Hayes is a Registered Dietitian

## Continued from page 1

and a consultant for many agencies and organizations, including USDA and many state departments of education. Hayes' SNA session was titled **Amazing Results from Smartphone Food Photography**.

Rowe stated that the most common complaint she has received from parents since the new meal pattern regulations have been implemented is that there is not enough food on the trays. Their new webpage with photos of school lunch trays is a good way to show parents what is actually offered to students. The great photos help market the school meals to customers, and the accompanying descriptions of the menu items are a marketing tool as well. Rowe uses words like homemade, fresh, savory, roasted, fork-tender, and sweet n' tangy. Ingredients used to prepare the food items are also listed. The description of the menu items reads like a menu in a restaurant.

Rowe learned the following tips for taking great photos of school meals by attending Dayle Hayes' SNA presentation:

- Food looks best when presented on a solid color tray. A deep blue or red tray compliments school food items. Rowe purchased a deep blue tray for taking photos.
- Keep the background simple. Rowe created a simple background by putting the lunch tray on a white cutting board.
- Take photos in natural light rather than florescent light. Rowe got the best results by taking photos outside under an overhang to avoid direct sunlight. For comparison purposes, Rowe provided a photo of a school lunch tray taken in bad lighting. To view this photo, click on [bad lighting photo](#).
- Check the focus.
- Practice. It takes a lot of trial and error to learn how to take good photos.

The quality of the food items definitely shows in the photos. Rowe stated, "I feel strongly about investing in the quality of food. It is important to believe in the products you serve. Our school lunch is good, and I eat it every day."

Some of the quality items Rowe purchases include:

- Whole muscle chicken items
- Fresh fruits and vegetables - romaine lettuce (whole heads of lettuce purchased from a local farmer), cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, jicama, and pineapple
- Fresh herbs, including fresh basil, dill, cilantro, and parsley
- Tilapia, whole muscle raw filets
- Beef and lamb gyro meat

- Frozen broccoli florets (instead of broccoli cuts)
- Full beef roast (to make pot roast)
- All white meat unbreaded chicken strips (for homemade BBQ chicken)

Rowe calls herself a numbers person and stated, "You need to know how much a meal costs. You need to learn how to figure the cost of an item and your daily menu costs. This way I know how often I can menu a more expensive item." For example, the Gyro they serve is an expensive menu item to make, so it is only offered once every other month. Fresh herbs are also more expensive to purchase than dry herbs, but Rowe believes the cost is worth it and that fresh herbs are underused in school food service. Rowe has asked a local farmer to plant basil so that in the future it can be purchased locally. Fresh basil is one of the ingredients used to make Chicken Bruschetta Pasta. Any fresh basil that is not used right away is placed in a bag and frozen for later use. The frozen basil can be crumpled right in the bag, so there is no need to cut it.

Rowe stated that students appreciate good quality food, and a telephone call she received from a parent supports her belief. Five years ago, Rowe started offering tilapia on the lunch menu. One day Rowe received a call from a parent. The parent said the family had recently gone to a restaurant where her son ordered tilapia. After eating the fish at the restaurant, the boy told his mother that she needed to get his school's recipe and send it to the restaurant! The school food service webpage describes the menu item as Citrus Herb Baked Tilapia – A fresh tilapia filet sprinkled with sweet lemon, basil, thyme seasoning and parmesan cheese.

Rowe stated, "I look for higher quality or restaurant quality items to purchase, including meat items, entrée items, and vegetables. The challenge has been to have our brokers show me some of their other lines – not just the Child Nutrition items. Brokers think that the only items school food service customers want are Child Nutrition items."

Warrick Schools have not served processed chicken nuggets for several years. The schools serve chicken bites and chicken filet sandwiches made from whole muscle, all breast meat chicken. Rowe diverts USDA raw chicken to be processed into the chicken bites and chicken filets, and she also diverts USDA raw chicken to be processed into dark meat chicken fajita strips.

Another way Rowe is working to change the look of school meals is to use recipes to make homemade items rather than purchasing heat and serve items. When starting to make menu items from scratch, Rowe recommends taking a look at the menus to find one item you are not as pleased with, and try a semi-scratch or

Continued on page 3

## Continued from page 2

scratch recipe. For example, the first menu item Rowe switched from a heat and serve item to a scratch recipe was pizza. The corporation use to serve a 4x6 inch pizza that was not very high quality. The inspiration for the recipe came from Rowe's daughter, who liked to order a pita bread pizza when dining at a particular restaurant. Rowe created a recipe for pita bread pizza topped with pizza sauce, fresh chopped basil, shredded mozzarella and grated parmesan cheese. The students like the pizza, and the cost savings is tremendous. Rowe stated the pita bread pizza is 9 cents a serving less than the CN label pizza she would otherwise buy.

Rowe loves restaurants and calls herself a foodie. Rowe gets her inspiration for new recipes from restaurants, the Food Network, online magazines, and hard copy food magazines. Rowe's school lunch recipe for Chicken Bruschetta Pasta was inspired by going to a restaurant where a similar item was served. Warrick schools previously used Butter Buds® and margarine, but the schools now use real butter and olive oil for some recipes. Rowe stated that sometimes only a little butter or olive oil is needed to flavor foods, and it tastes better. For example, sometimes broccoli florets are prepared with a little olive oil and grated parmesan cheese, and sometimes steamed broccoli florets are finished with a homemade jalapeno honey butter sauce. Rowe got this recipe from the manager at a restaurant. At first the manager declined to share the recipe, but he ended up writing the recipe down on a napkin for Rowe. The sauce is also used for carrots, edamame succotash, California mix, and corn. Homemade ranch dressing is prepared using fat-free buttermilk and light mayonnaise for fresh salads. Homemade ranch dip is made using plain yogurt and light mayonnaise for fresh vegetable cups.

At Warrick Schools, three fresh fruits and two USDA canned items are offered each day for lunch. Last school year, Rowe provided training for all food service staff involved in preparing fresh fruits and vegetables (about 70 participants in all). The Fruit and Vegetable Prep Class Rowe teaches is a hands-on training class held in a Family and Consumer Science room at one of the high schools. Fresh fruits and vegetables are provided to all the participants so they can cut up the produce as Rowe demonstrates the process. Six sessions were offered with a maximum of 20 participants per class. Participants learned the proper way to use a knife, how to sharpen a knife, and how to cut fresh items with the least amount of waste. Rowe is in the process of creating a book with photos to show how to cut fresh fruits and vegetables. When completed, the book will be provided to all the schools in the corporation. Rowe has graciously forwarded a page from the book. To view a page with photos and directions on how to cut a bell pepper, click [here](#). To view photos of the fresh produce used during the Fruit and Vegetable Prep Class, click [here](#).

Rowe has required all 16 cafeteria managers to visit all the other schools in the corporation and spend a day with each manager to observe the food service operation. The managers visited one school each month, so it took them over a year to visit all the schools. The managers have commented that they enjoy visiting the other schools, and they often learn new ways to do things at their own school.

Rowe stated, "I am blessed to have 16 cafeteria managers who embrace that I am the queen of change! The managers and all our 126 school nutrition professionals are proud of what they serve to our students. I want people to realize that we have an amazing opportunity to teach kids. We have an opportunity and an obligation to serve healthy food and be proud to serve it. This is my motto."

Shenae Rowe has graciously agreed to share two recipes used at Warrick County School Corporation. Click on the following to view:

- [Chicken Bruschetta Pasta Recipe](#)
- [Nutrition Information for Chicken Bruschetta Pasta](#)
- [Jalapeno Honey Butter Sauce Recipe](#)
- [Nutrition Information for Jalapeno Honey Butter Sauce](#)

These links are provided for your information; however, check with your local/county health department regarding temperatures/Critical Control Points to follow during food preparation.

In addition to the photography tips listed in this article, Dayle Hayes has written several articles about taking photos of school meals for her blog called **School Meals That Rock** found at <http://schoolmealsthatrock.org> or at <https://www.facebook.com/SchoolMealsThatRock>. To quickly view eight different articles written by Dayle Hayes, click on [how to take photos of school meals](#).

## Director's Corner - By Julie Sutton

**Next school year we will be required to switch to the new USDA Administrative Review process.**

**This will change the way we look at your programs on a review. We will focus more on the corporation level information and the financial management of the School Nutrition Programs. We will also gather more information up front and hopefully shorten the amount of time we have to spend on site in your schools.**

**We will provide training on this new review before it is implemented in the fall, so be on the lookout for an announcement. Attending the training will help you to be prepared when we arrive at your schools for a review.**

**This is a new process for all of us, so be patient as we all work through it together.**

**Thank you. Have a great Spring Break!**

## Bleed Blue Blood Drive

Lucas Oil Stadium, home of the Indianapolis Colts, was the site for the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Bleed Blue Blood Drive and Health Fair on Saturday, December 13, 2015. About 10,000 people attended the event, and 2,000 adults donated blood. One of the health fair booths was represented by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Team Nutrition Program, Lori Taylor (also known as The Produce Mom®), and the IDOE Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) program. These partners are working together on several projects for Indiana's 2014 Team Nutrition Grant. One of the goals of the grant is to give students opportunities to be educators and role models for healthy eating and physical activity. High school FACS students working at the booth helped distribute over 2,500 fresh fruit and vegetable samples and got everyone thinking about nutrition by asking fruit and veggie trivia questions. These students participate in Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), a Career and Technical Student Organization for FACS students. Parents and children attending the fair enjoyed meeting Power Panther - the mascot for USDA's Eat Smart. Play Hard. Campaign™. Colts Cheerleaders and Blue, the Indianapolis Colts mascot, were also at the event.



*Pictured left to right: Lori Taylor (The Produce Mom), two FCCLA students from Carmel High School (one as PowerPanther), and a FCCLA student from Tri-Central High School*



*Pictured left to right: Beth Foland, Team Nutrition Senior Specialist/IDOE, Colts Super Fan, and Alyson McIntyre-Reiger, FCS State Specialist/IDOE*

## Newsletter Provides Nuggets of Wisdom and Smiles

*By Suzette Hartmann, School Nutrition Specialist*

Last school year, Stacie Light, Assistant Director of Food and Nutrition Services for Warsaw Community Schools, took on the task of creating a new newsletter for all of the food service staff. The newsletter is called **Kitchen Nuggets**. Light stated, "It is definitely one of my fun jobs that I enjoy. The newsletter was created with a vision that our employees stay connected with each other. We want to share their joys, talents, strengths, encouragement, and their ideas. We also wanted to provide them with learning opportunities and tips for their profession in ways that are fun and memorable. We want them to know that we recognize them for their many talents, hard work, and dedication."

Warsaw Schools includes eight elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, and one alternative learning center. The newsletter keeps everyone informed about celebrations and special occasions held in each school cafeteria.

**Continued on page 5**

Continued from page 4

Light stated the food service department has Standard Operating Procedures regarding food safety, but this topic is so important that each newsletter includes a Food Safety and Sanitation section with reminders for extra learning enforcement. Each newsletter includes a section called Employee Corner, Employee Wellness, Did You Know, and Kitchen Celebrations. A Celebrity Chef and Recipe Exchange section are often included as well. Light enjoys interviewing staff members for the Employee Corner and the Celebrity Chef section of the newsletter. Light encourages the food service staff to submit photos and exciting news about themselves and their families for the Employee Corner. With almost 100 food service employees working in the school district, Light has written articles about some of their own "Celebrity Chefs" and included their favorite family recipes. School lunch celebrations featured in past newsletters have included photos of Dr. Seuss Day and 50's Day. Employees have commented to Light that they like reading about what the other schools are doing, and the newsletter helps them keep in contact with each other. Each employee receives a copy of the newsletter. To view a recent issue of the newsletter, click on [Kitchen Nuggets](#). This link is provided for your information; however, check with your local/county health department regarding food safety and sanitation procedures to follow during food preparation.

Light had never written a newsletter until she started writing *Kitchen Nuggets*. Light stated that writing the newsletter is not hard to do, and it gets easier to write with each issue. If anyone has questions about how to start a newsletter for their school district's food service employees, Stacie Light has graciously offered to provide her email address so that you can ask her questions! You may send questions to Stacie Light at [SLight@warsaw.k12.in.us](mailto:SLight@warsaw.k12.in.us). Thank you Stacie!

## Southwest Indiana Schools are Participating in an Exciting Program called SuperFood HEROES

*By Maggie Schabel, Wellness Specialist*

The HEROES initiative provides financial and guiding support to schools to evaluate and implement their own school's health culture, based on the Center for Disease Control's research-based and proven Coordinated School Health Model (CSH). HEROES stands for Healthy, Energetic, Ready, Outstanding, Enthusiastic Schools. Indiana schools located in Posey, Gibson, Vanderburgh, Pike, Warrick, Dubois, Spencer and Perry counties are eligible to apply for this grant opportunity through the Welborn Baptist Foundation. The initiative focuses on five of the eight CSH model components. These five components are related to the promotion of healthy weight: physical education, health education, nutrition services, family and community involvement, and health promotions for staff. This tight focus makes HEROES the only school-based program in the region that addresses the importance of healthy weight in children.

SuperFood HEROES is part of the health education component of the HEROES initiative. SuperFood HEROES is an elementary school program designed to increase students' knowledge and consumption of vegetables. This research-based intervention educates students on the "superhero-like" nutrients that vegetables provide in our diet. The intervention lasts for a minimum of 20 weeks and provides 40 opportunities for students to sample at least five different vegetables. Taste tests are usually conducted in classrooms. The vegetables are served fresh and cooked in various ways in hopes of broadening acceptability and instilling healthier eating behaviors. The targeted vegetables are often offered as part of the school lunch as well. There are 20 SuperFood HEROES characters designed to appeal to students and promote the super power for which they are named (Ex: Samson Spinach, Sabrina Sweet Potato, and Rhett Red Pepper).

Research shows that the more times children taste a food, the more likely they are to begin liking the food. Sometimes, however, it can take eight or more times of trying the same food to start enjoying it. Because of this, students are encouraged to taste the same vegetable multiple times.

Expected outcomes of the SuperFood HEROES program include an increase in vegetable recognition and consumption among students, an increase in students' preferences for targeted vegetables, and an increase in knowledge about the benefits of consuming the targeted vegetables.

After hearing about SuperFood HEROES, I wanted to see it happen in action! I had the opportunity to visit an elementary school and observe the program. The school principal and foodservice staff prepared food samples and the principal delivered the samples to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes. The students welcomed the principal with big smiles and couldn't wait to discover what they would be sampling. On this day, the featured SuperFood HERO was Rhett Red Pepper. Students tasted a homemade dip made with fresh red bell peppers served with tortilla chips. This was definitely a crowd pleaser; the students exclaimed this was one of their favorite recipes.

As I visited classrooms with the principal, teachers were



**Photo: Principal delivers samples to the students**

Continued on page 6

## Continued from page 5

conducting lessons about vegetables and healthy eating. One of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers incorporated vegetables into her English lesson. The students were instructed to write a short story about their favorite vegetable and include nutrition information and fun facts about the vegetable. When we entered the classroom, the students were sharing their stories aloud. The teacher stated that SuperFood HEROES is a great program, and it has given her students the opportunity to taste some vegetables they have never eaten before!

### Student Quotes about SuperFood HEROES:

**"I'm glad that we were chosen to do this!"**

**"I like the red peppers so much that my mom bought me some from the store to pack in my lunch."**

**"It's healthy AND delicious!"**

To view a fact sheet about the SuperFood HEROES Program, click [here](#).

To view the HEROES webpage, visit <http://heroesinitiative.org/>.



Fresh red pepper dip and tortilla chips

This is a quarterly publication, developed by the Indiana Department of Education Office of School and Community Nutrition.  
<http://www.doe.in.gov/nutrition>



*The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or if all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)*

*If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).*

*Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish).*

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

It is the policy of the Indiana Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability, in its programs, activities, or employment policies as required by the Indiana Civil Rights Laws (I.C. 22-9-1), Title VI and VII (Civil Rights Act of 1964), the Equal Pay Act of 1973, Title IX (Educational Amendments), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 USCS § 12101, et seq.).

Inquiries regarding compliance by the Indiana Department of Education with Title IX and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Title IX Coordinator, Indiana Department of Education, Room 229, State House, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2798, or by telephone to (317) 232-6610 or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 111 North Canal Street, Suite 1053, Chicago, IL, 60606-7204 (312) 886-8434 – Glenda Ritz, Superintendent of Public Instruction.