

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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'Tis the season to be jolly -- and stressed out. But you don't have to be! Instead of overindulging in eggnog or cookies or unleashing your inner Scrooge on unsuspecting family members, take a deep breath. You can survive and thrive this holiday season by following a few simple tips:



**Be nice to yourself.** There may be pressure to be everything to everyone during the holiday season. But remember that sometimes taking care of yourself is the best thing you can do. Go for a walk, curl up and read a good book or get a massage. Take it easy on yourself; we all need time to recharge our batteries.

**Be realistic.** No holiday celebration is perfect nor do most of them come off like they do in the movies. An overcooked turkey or too tipsy Uncle won't ruin your holiday but they can make for great family memories. Embrace your holiday experience in all its imperfection.

**Be generous with others.** One of the best ways to stay calm and centered this time of year is to act generously with others. And we don't mean generous with money. You can be generous with your compliments, with your time, with your experience, and with your love. Be as generous as you can and your loved ones won't be the only ones to reap the rewards, you'll feel better too.

**Be grateful.** The barrage of holiday advertising can make you forget what the holiday season is really about: loved ones. Forget about the presents that may or may not be under the tree. Never mind the parties. Slow down and count your blessings. Something tells us that we've all got a lot to be grateful for.

**We wish you and your families a happy, healthy holiday season!**

## Gobble, Gobble!

The **Third Annual Turkey Trot** wrapped up on November 17th after a very active month for many employees.

We had challenged employees to strap on pedometers, get active and log their steps for ten days in November. And did they ever! Employees walked, danced, and gardened their way to a lot of activity and an impressive number of steps.

Congratulations to all participants and a special shout out to our top Turkey Trotters who each took home a gift card:

**Swashant'e Dillon  
Annette Eddings  
Sopheap Khoun  
Mei Yee**



## Employee of the Month

Our employees are some of the hardest working people in the field of nutrition and each month, we love the opportunity to brag about one of these super stars. The December/January Employee of the Month is no exception. She certainly works hard, but she is also “so nice, welcoming and easy to get along with”. “Nothing ruffles her feathers, she goes with the flow and can adapt to any situation.” This employee is also “sweet, smart and a great leader”. Well, who is this awesome Nutrition Services employee?

Congratulations to our December/January Employee of the Month:

**Roslynn DeCuir**  
of Skyline High School

We are so thankful to have Roslynn on our team! She will receive recognition at the managers meetings, a certificate, and a gift card! Our small way of saying thanks for a job very well done!

*Do you know someone who deserves to be Employee of the Month? Just fill out a nomination form, which can be found at the High Street Office, and either drop it in the nomination box right there, or fax it to 879-1779.*

## Student Taste Tests

“All this food is free?” asked a Skyline High School student on November 17th. Free indeed. Students were invited to take part in a school-wide taste test of seventeen potential new menu items and all we asked in return was their honest feedback on a rating sheet.



Would students eat these foods if they were served at lunch time? That’s the question we set out to answer.

Last month, several vendors were invited to showcase their food items, all of which were selected because they met or surpassed both USDA guidelines as well as our own stringent district standards.

Hundreds of students delighted in sampling delicious items including: whole grain biscuits, mac and cheese, sweet potato fries, Zac Attack bars, veggie noodles, grilled cheese and roasted potatoes.

Although students were thrilled with many of the items, the top five ranked items were pasta with marinara sauce, Asian chicken, meatballs, fish sticks and chicken marsala. “This is so good” exclaimed an excited teenager eating chicken marsala, “I would love to eat this at lunch!”.

We look forward to working with vendors on pricing so that we can include these popular foods on upcoming menus.

Many thanks to Skyline High School students and staff for their participation and feedback. And a special shout out to the entire Nutrition Services staff at Skyline for graciously allowing the use of their kitchen, as well as for their assistance and patience with the process!



## From our kitchen to yours

We take great pride in the recipes and meals created by Nutrition Services and we think it's time to share them. Check out one of the latest "student tested, Nutrition Services approved" recipes. To scale down the number of servings so that you can make this recipe in your own kitchen, visit a simple website like <http://www.halfrecipe.com/>.

### Grits Au Gratin

50  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup serving Batch

2 gal Vegetable Stock  
1  $\frac{3}{4}$  gal water  
12.5 cups Grits  
12.5 oz Shallots  
10  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup Whole Kernel Corn  
8 cups cream style corn  
1 tsp Sage  
4.5 lbs Shredded Cheddar Cheese  
1.5 lbs Sliced green onions  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup Olive oil  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup salt  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup black pepper

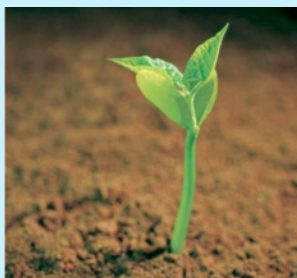
1. Combine stock and water, bring to a boil and slowly add grits, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and simmer until thick and creamy (about 20 min.).
2. Meanwhile, sauté shallots in olive oil until tender. Stir in corn, sage, salt and pepper.
3. Combine cooked grits and sautéed vegetable mixture then add cheese and green onions. Mix well. Bake for 20 minutes or until golden brown.

## Gardening Challenge **Green Thumbs**

Which awesome employees have the greenest thumbs in Nutrition Services?

Let's hear if for the following super gardeners who submitted photos of their gardens and/or bounty to take the top spots in our Spring Gardening Challenge. Well done ladies!

**Silvia Fong**, Stonehurst  
**Yuet Lee**, Prescott  
**LaJuana Lewis**, High St.  
**Deborah Shahbazzpour**, High St.



## Green Gloves Program

We are getting things ready for our first Nutrition & Custodial Services Green Gloves Symposium this coming January 27th. Details about the event will be shared soon.

Wondering how you can become more involved with Green Gloves? Here are three easy ways:

- "Take what you want, but eat what you take." Remind students to only take foods that they will actually eat.
- Encourage students to select healthful foods, reminding them that eating well is not only for their eating pleasure but to be healthy.
- If your cafeteria doesn't already have a food sharing table, consider setting one up. This allows students a place to put their unopened food and/or untouched fruit for others to consider.

For additional ways to be involved, or if you have thoughts or questions please contact Nancy Deming at [510-290-4875](tel:510-290-4875) or [sowingseeds@hotmail.com](mailto:sowingseeds@hotmail.com)

**Don't let opportunity go to waste.**



## OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Community Schools, Thriving Students

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OUSD Nutrition Services continually strives to create a world class Nutrition Services program that is recognized in the state of California. We will provide nutritious meals to satisfied customers each and every day, period.

Our goals are threefold:

- 1) to become recognized as the leading school nutrition services provider in the Bay Area
- 2) to become the number one revenue generating Service Area for the District, and
- 3) to reach the 80th percentile in RATER.

Questions or comments about Food For Thought? Please email [ericka.doolittle@consultant.ousd.k12.ca.us](mailto:ericka.doolittle@consultant.ousd.k12.ca.us)



**Yield: 6 to 8 servings**

### Ingredients

1/2 cup uncooked wild rice  
3 cups chicken broth, divided  
1 cup apple juice  
3/4 cup uncooked long-grain white rice  
1/2 cup golden raisins  
1/2 cup chopped dried apricots  
1/2 cup dried cranberries  
2 tablespoons butter  
3/4 cup chopped onion  
1/2 cup coarsely chopped pecans  
1/3 cup chopped fresh parsley

## WILD RICE WITH DRIED FRUIT

### Directions

Rinse wild rice and drain. Combine wild rice, 1-1/2 cups chicken broth and apple juice in 2-quart saucepan. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer, covered, about 45 minutes or until rice is tender. Drain.

Meanwhile, combine white rice and remaining 1-1/2 cups broth in separate saucepan. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer, covered, 12 to 15 minutes.

Stir raisins, apricots and cranberries into white rice; simmer 5 minutes or until rice is tender and fluffy and liquid is absorbed. Remove from heat. Let stand covered 5 minutes; set aside.

Melt butter in large skillet over medium heat. Add onion; cook and stir 5 to 6 minutes until tender. Stir in pecans. Cook and stir 2 minutes.

Add wild rice and white rice mixtures to skillet. Add parsley; cook and stir over medium heat about 2 minutes or until heated through. Enjoy!