

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF OUSD NUTRITION SERVICES

NS Staff continue to beat feet all the way to Denver!



Denver, Colorado. One of the healthiest cities in the U.S. and the final destination for our walkers.

With almost five months under our collective (pedometer-clad) belt since OUSD Nutrition Services kicked off the Walk to Denver program in August, NS staff are speedily making their way to the healthy capital city of Colorado.

So far, participants have logged over 3,500 miles in all. How far is 3,500 miles, you ask? It's the distance from

Oakland to the Panama Canal in Central America! Now THAT is a lot of steps!

Currently, most of our walkers are nearing the Nevada-Utah border and continually vying for prizes and bragging rights. And one walker, Rosalin Cox, has already crossed into Wyoming! Can anyone catch her before she reaches Colorado? Only time will tell; stay tuned!

What about you? Have you committed to living a healthier life in 2009? It's not too late to join us on the road to Denver. Just drop by High Street to fill out a registration form and get your free pedometer. Then, simply attach your pedometer each morning and at the end of the day count your "steps" (not just from walking, but from any physical activity) Then, log your steps and turn in log sheets on a weekly basis. Everyone's progress is tracked on a map at High Street as well as via a weekly email. Prizes are continually awarded throughout the walk and we're getting fit while having fun!

W2D

- **Check out our progress on the U.S. map at 900 High Street!**
- **Don't forget to fax your log sheets to 879-1779 OR drop them off at Swashant'e Dillon's desk at High Street by Wednesday of each week.**
- **Congratulations to Diedra Tillis and Silvia Fong who are the lead OUSD NS walkers!**

Salad Bars are a hit in Oakland schools

"These grapes are phenomenal" shouted one of the students who had just filled his plate with fruits and vegetables from the school salad bar. Such comments are music to the ears of Marianne Dania, consultant to OUSD Nutrition Services, who has been instrumental in rolling out salad bars throughout the district.

"All of the salad bar sites are encouraging" she states, "because I see it on the faces of the students and the teachers tell me how much they appreciate our work". By exposing students to fresh fruits and vegetables on a daily basis, OUSD Nutrition Services is hoping to increase students' preference for and consumption of these

healthy foods.

Currently, **there are twenty-six school sites in Oakland that feature a salad bar** staffed by parents, students, or Nutrition Services employees. In the coming months, Dania plans to add seven more sites to the fold. Stay tuned for a salad bar coming to a school near you!

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Employee of the Month



The Employee of the Month will win a prize, a certificate, and recognition via this newsletter, a bulletin board at his or her school site, and an announcement at the next monthly meeting !

OUSD Nutrition Services is proud of its employees and wants everyone to know it! Starting in March, 2009, Nutrition Services will re-launch an Employee of the Month program.

Based on feedback from OUSD NS staff, we know what qualities YOU think are important and should be recognized and applauded in employees. Things like: “being a team player”, “following procedures”, “doing things without being told” , “attending

meetings on time”, “working as scheduled”, and “great attitude” came up again and again when staff were asked “What criteria could we use for selecting employee of the month?”

So, if you would like to nominate a colleague for Employee of the Month, please fill out the attached form and fax it to 510/879-1779 or drop it off in the Employee of the Month box at 900 High Street. You can also email your nomination

to ericka.doolittle@ousd.k12.ca.us (please make sure to include all necessary information). The nomination committee will meet once a month to go over the entries and will select a winner . Remember to be as thorough as you can when nominating someone — all that the committee has to go on is the nomination form that you turn in. The Employee of the Month will win a prize, a certificate, and recognition via this newsletter, a bulletin board at his or her school site, and an announcement at the next monthly meeting! Woo hoo! We can't wait to announce the winner for March!

Harvest of the Month

The Harvest of the Month program heads into the second quarter of the school year having featured **tangerines** in January, and we look forward to showcasing **cabbage** in February and **peas** in March. Although the program has proved to be quite popular with both students and teachers alike, some of you may be wondering where it came from and why OUSD Nutrition Services got involved.

Good questions! First of all, studies show that eating healthfully can have a huge impact on the minds and bodies of our students. Consumption of healthy foods, such as those provided through this program, support students' ability to think and learn, boost energy, and can improve school attendance as well as change attitudes, behavior and more.

The Alameda County Public Health Department and OUSD Nutrition Services partner on the Harvest of the Month program to ensure that select '50% free/reduced lunch' schools receive education materials and taste-testings that support healthy food choices. Moreover, this program has proved to increase students' exposure to, and preference for fresh fruits and vegetables!

Lastly, we believe that the Harvest of the Month program presents a strategic opportunity to 'bring it all together' by uniting the classroom, cafeteria, home and community, to promote healthier habits for students and their families, especially those in low resource schools.

For more information, please visit www.harvestofthemonth.com



Michael Pollan's simple secrets to better eating

A few of the rules:

Don't eat any food your great-grandmother wouldn't recognize as food. And these seven words: Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.

How do you define "food"?

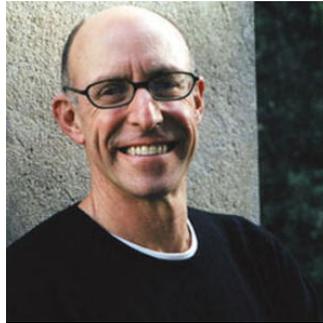
I have a very simple food pyramid. There's food, and then there's processed food. I cut out all the processed food. How can you tell when something is heavily processed? If it has more than five ingredients, it's probably not food.

How does the average person afford farmers' market produce?

Shop strategically. Buy things at the height of the season.

The true cost of food:

There's no question that healthier food costs more, in general, than processed food. But you pay the cost of that cheap food eventually, in health. One of the most astonishing statistics I came across: The amount of money we spent on food, when I was a kid, in the 1960s, was 18 percent of our income. Now we're down to 9.5 percent, so it's dropped in half. Over that same period, our spending on health care went from 5 percent to 16 percent. As the amount we spent on food went



The author Michael Pollan

down, the amount we spent on health went up. So you either pay by eating good food or you pay with your health. The so-called high price of food at the farmers' market — you have to realize that's the *real* price. That's the real price of food when you're not borrowing from the future, from your health, from the environment, from the workers.

On science, grandmothers, and common sense:

As I studied this whole question of food and health, one of the most surprising things I learned was that culture may have more to teach us about how to eat well than science. What is 'culture'? Culture is traditional diets, culture is the advice of our mothers and grandmothers, culture is eating according to traditional cuisines that have all sorts of wisdom about

food and health built into them without anyone knowing it.

It's that example I give of eating tomatoes with olive oil. That was hit upon probably for taste reasons, but it turns out it's a very healthy way to eat tomatoes because the olive oil helps deliver the lycopene* to your body; it's a medium in which the lycopene is dissolved. Science has just figured this out. Culture knew this for a couple hundred years.

Basically, I'm telling people to trust their gut, in a sense, about food, and trust tradition rather than the latest theories. I don't feel comfortable telling people how to eat. And I don't feel it's science's job either. So I came up with a couple of rules that don't tell you what to eat but kind of how to think about eating.

** lycopene is the carotenoid pigment that gives tomatoes their red color, and its antioxidant properties may help reduce the risk of certain cancers.*

The future of food

I'm very excited by what's going on right now. There's the whole movement to improve food in the schools and to get junk food out. There's a movement to stop marketing to kids. There's the sustainable agriculture movement and developing better ways to farm. You have farmers' markets and the activism around the farm bill. There's the issue of getting more access to fruits and vegetables for people in the inner city. It's a very multipronged effort to reform the American way of growing and eating food.

Visit www.michaelpollan.com for details on Pollan's five books, webcasts, and upcoming events.

Excerpted from Sunset Magazine, 2008

RATER Focus

Reliability

Assurance

Tangibles

Empathy

Responsiveness

As we embark on a new year, it's an ideal time to refresh our memories with the RATER model and how it is applicable to what we do, how we do it, and how others are affected. Used to identify and assess customer expectations, to plan and improve services, and to measure customer satisfaction, this model name is an acronym, titled after its most important attributes (see box at left).

This quarter, *Food For Thought* is focusing on *A*, for Assurance. What is Assurance exactly? It's the employees' knowledge and courtesy and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.

So, how can you tell if you are doing all that you can to provide Assurance on the job? Ask yourself the following questions: Do you have the right knowledge and skills to deliver the service

you promised? Are you respectful of your customers? Do you convey trust and confidence? Hopefully the answers to all three of these questions is a resounding YES! If not, ask yourself why not and talk to your supervisor for assistance. Then and only then will OUSD Nutrition Services be the best it can be!

Expect Success.
every student. every classroom. every day.



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Thanks to Harry LeBlanc for suggesting the name of this publication.

OUSD Nutrition Services continually strives to create a world class Nutrition Services team that is recognized as the best in 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 80% percentile in Reliability, Assurance, Empathy, and Responsiveness.

We - administrators, supervisors, managers, and staff - are committed to expanding and improving our service and stand behind our product 100%.

Comments or suggestions about *Food for Thought?* We'd love to hear from you. Please email Ericka at ericka.doolittle@ousd.k12.ca.us

Seasonal Recipe: Winter Lentil Soup

Prep and Cook Time: 1 hour

Ingredients:

- 4 leeks, white and light green parts only
- 1 bunch kale
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 28-ounce can whole tomatoes, drained
- 6 cups water
- 2 sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into a 1/2-inch dice
- 1/2 cup brown lentils
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 12 fresh basil leaves (optional)
- 1/4 cup (1 ounce) grated Parmesan (optional)



Preparation:

Slice each leek in half lengthwise, then slice each half into 1/4-inch-thick half-moons (about 2 cups). Place in a large bowl of cold water and swish to remove any grit. Drain and pat dry.

Remove the stems from the kale. Stack the leaves on top of one another and slice them crosswise into 1/2-inch-wide strips; you'll need 3 cups.

Heat the oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the leeks and cook for 3 minutes. Add the tomatoes and cook, breaking them up with a spoon, for 5 minutes. Add the water and bring to a boil. Stir in the kale, sweet potatoes, lentils, thyme, salt, pepper, and basil (if using). Simmer until the lentils are tender, about 30 minutes. Spoon into individual bowls. Sprinkle with the Parmesan (if using). Enjoy!

Yield: 6 servings

Each serving of this cozy soup has only 190 Calories, only 1 gram of saturated fat, zero cholesterol and 9 grams of fiber!

Do you have a healthy dish you'd like to share? Please enter our quarterly recipe contest. All entries must be: low in fat, low in added sugar, and feature a seasonal fruit or vegetable. Please email entries to Ericka at ericka.doolittle@ousd.k12.ca.us Here's to healthy eating!