



# The changing role of Food Service

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## Introduction – The bad, the ugly, and the good

- Change happens when the pain of NOT changing is greater than the pain of changing
- Visionary
  - politicians, media, bigger community, hospitals, CDE
- 1 high school principal & staff
- Food & Nutrition Services
  - School District
- Non-profit
  - local health care district funding, consultants (Project mgr & videographer)

(L) A visionary in the community decided that she wanted to change the food in schools. She contacted everyone in the community except School Food Service. Her comments to politicians, city officials and Non-Profit organizations were far from complimentary or accurate. **This was the BAD.**

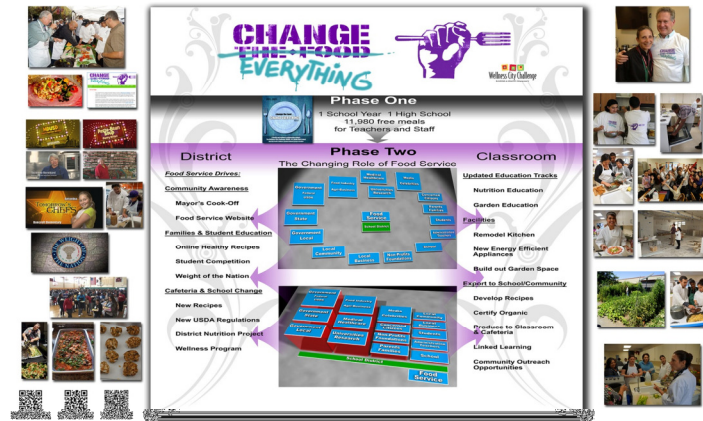
Her first idea was to feed teachers – the thought was that staff was the more consistent population, so let's start with them to change habits and they can become the role models and mentor the students...she collaborated with a school principal and staff.

Food & Nutrition Services was an afterthought – disruption resulted.

The visionary was funded by local health care district and brought in project management and a videographer to document and keep things going. The issues for Food & Nutrition Services revolved around her feeding teachers and students, free of charge, funded by the local Hospital District. This impinged on Food and Nutrition Services. They took away Food Service business, could potentially reduce Union jobs and started using Food Service kitchen/dining room space.

After we realized that the visionary needed to slow down a little and work with reality, we realized Food & Nutrition services & the District was the most important group to work with...so we began meeting with Food and Nutrition Services and requested funding for year 2. We needed to look at the impact this program had on the Food Service's Employee's Union contract, financial losses and we needed to come up with a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). This proved to be very difficult because the site administrator was not supportive of Food Service and allowed things to continue that should not have. The MOU was never finalized.

## Module 1



(L) We ended up getting the grant for year 2 to work with food services and so we developed a series of projects to answer the question

**“How can we make positive change in child nutrition?”**

**“How can we turn the bad and the ugly into the good?”**

Then we set out on an education process. The Non-Profit group needed to become educated about what School Nutrition is. We then began to define the existing system to determine where the feasible points to make change were...here's what we found.

Show video

## Our Projects: **The Good**

- Mayor's Cook Off
- Healthy Family Cooking Video Series
- Vegetable Grilling
- ROP culinary class
- Salad Bars
- BBQ's
- Kid's Culinary Competition
- Bring New Recipes to Cafeteria Menus
- Weight of the Nation



(L) The result of these conversations was the implementation of 9 projects we instituted last year.

We will be referring to these as we go along. We will discuss the elements of success and how we used them in our projects. The project isn't as significant as the **process which we will discuss as the elements of success.**

Our goal is that you can use these elements to work with community partners in your district.



## Elements of Success

- Convert Adversaries to Allies
- Partners
- Project
- Rules of Engagement
- Sustainability



(A) Has anyone here ever had a parent or other community member call you to complain about your department? When community members contact you it may appear that they are bringing another problem to you. It often feels like you want to say, **“I can’t take on one more thing, and we might even get a little defensive. (if you don’t like the job I’m doing, you can apply for it).”** It often feels like they are **adversaries**. That is definitely how we felt.

My first goal was to change **my** mind set. I determined early in my career to see complaints as opportunities to recruit concerned people to help me solve the concern. Often it feels like people who come to us with ideas for change are attacking the job we do. They use unflattering words to describe our food and quote out of date or inaccurate facts like “you count ketchup as a vegetable”. etc. I decided to try to chalk the insults up to ignorance and work towards collaboration. I wanted to educate people about our program and bring them in to help me meet needs I couldn’t meet on my own. **Convert Adversaries into Allies!**

Early on it is important to set ground rules for the interaction. **Find common ground** and determine if you can work as partners.

**Define the scope of the project.** You may want to consider **who** is in the room. The skills that they bring to the table will define the project you choose.

People stating they want to “improve school lunch aren’t helpful”. You need to identify “What in specific would they like to change?” Do they need to understand what our program already is doing and what our parameters are? Are they willing to learn about our program and participate with you?

Set down Rules of Engagement. Determine **what amount of time** can be committed? **Who** will do what? **Define the roles for each party.** Keep the ultimate goal in mind and work to map out the steps you will need to take to get there.

We also determined that the only project we wanted to invest in was one that was sustainable. We saw no point in putting time into something that would disappear if we left or the funding ran out.



## Element of Success - Partners

- Parents – PTA
- Students – NAC
- Non-profits
- Local hospital
- Local businesses/ restaurants
- Local government



(A) **Parents** may come to you with great ideas. I have found this to be the case with schools that wanted salad bars. Here is an opportunity to bring them in as partners. Think about what we can do together to make this salad bar happen.

This gives you an opportunity to **teach** them about the National School Lunch. Explain to them the meal requirements and financial limitations.

Invite them to see the food in you cafeterias and see what is being served.

I always ask them to be part of the solution. If they truly want to improve the situation at school they will be willing to participate in the solution

**Students** who write or call me with concerns about the food bring a perfect opportunity for you to start a NAC.

**Non-Profit and health care organizations** often bring funding. Kaiser funded our salad bars and our Weight of the Nation event.

**Local restaurant owners** freely participate in our culinary competition.

**Local Government:** The mayor's cook off not only includes local city mayors but also county supervisors and state legislators. This provides a contact between you and them and enables you to "teach" them about the facts of your program.

## Elements of Success - Projects

- Meatless Monday
- Salad bars
- Farm to school
- Using school garden harvest in cafeteria



(S) When our advocate for Meatless Mondays first contacted us again we felt like we couldn't change one more thing on our menus. However, after reminding ourselves of the elements of success we could see our common goals and approach this as a partnership.

(T)

Salad bars and school gardens have been a big collaboration between PTA's, concerned parents, local waste haulers and food service. Again approaching it as a partnership. Defining what time and effort each party is able to commit and setting ground rules up front is essential. Each member commits to following through with their own area of the project. This may involve fundraising to pay for the bars or getting volunteers to help supervise them.

We have a city council in one of our cities with a huge interest in Farm to School and they have brought together many volunteers to work on this project.

We wanted to be able to use the produce from school gardens in the cafeteria. The only way this would meet health department requirements would be if the Department of Agriculture would certify the garden. Our high school was the first garden in our area to do so and in two years the Dept. of Ag has certified over 100 gardens.



## Elements of Success – Rules of Engagement

- Consider impact on day to day work
- Food Service commitment
- Partner commitment
- Project management
- Funding source – ok multi – source funds
- PR / Marketing
- Agreement - MOU



(A) I was a new director two years ago. We also had the new meal pattern and I was chapter president. I had two new supervisors and a new secretary. I needed to consider the impact of the project on my “day job”. Most of these things come on top of the work you are hired to do.

Find a way to make sure your partners are fully committed. Volunteers often don’t follow through.

We needed a **project manager** for many of the projects. This person keeps the calendar, makes contact with the parties involved and keeps us meeting in a timely manner. They also can do much of the leg work like arranging with local business etc. to obtain their cooperation when needed. An example of this would be the grocery store tours in our videos or getting the gardens certified by the Dept. of Agriculture so that we could use the produce on the menu. Laurie was our project manager and without her, nothing would have happened.

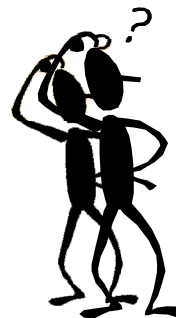
(Laurie) What responsibilities did she have: tracking the schedule, making sure resources were available, documenting and reporting to the grant funding source. She also worked to make the project sustainable and repeatable.

We needed someone to assist with marketing because that was not an area of strength for us. A lot of time people come to us with miss-information because we don’t tell them what we do. Marketing is essential to overcoming these misconceptions. We were very fortunate that one of the members of the group working with us was a professional videographer. Of course the skill set of the group may dictate the project you choose to do.





## Questions to ask:



- 1. What is the Funding for your project?
- 2. Can food service funds be used?
- 3. Do you have the money?
- 4. Are there other sources, grants?
- 5. Who will apply for the grant and keep up with the paperwork?
- 6. Grants can be very time consuming for a little money.
- 7. If funding is involved or interaction with students what are the legal ramifications?
- 8. Do you need an MOU? Do you need parental releases?

### (A) Questions to ask:

1. What will be the funding for your project?
2. Can food service funds be used? You will be funding the time that is spent on these projects.
3. Do you have the money?
4. Are there other sources, grants?
5. Who will apply for the grant and keep up with the paperwork?
6. Grants can be very time consuming for a little money.
7. If funding is involved or if you are interacting with students what are the legal ramifications?
8. Do you need an MOU? Do you need parental releases?



## Elements of Success - Sustainability

- Re-useable tools
  - Media – press kit, website, etc.
  - Educational tools
- Repeatable processes
  - Develop rules of engagement
- ROP class
- School garden – Dept. of AG certified



(Laurie) We committed to a project that would live on after we retired. We wanted to develop re-useable tools like the media presentations.

We wanted to develop a process that was repeatable in any school not just a school with an active volunteer group.

We wanted to find a way to integrate the projects into existing job descriptions. For example the BBQ's had to utilize existing kitchen staff not supervisors.

The grilled vegetables had to be reproducible at all the sites using that menu. Once the school garden was certified, was there a paid position (not grant funded) to keep the garden going? The ROP class came about as a result of these projects because that is sustainable. During the first year, we developed a curriculum proposal that was submitted to our ROP principal and subsequently a new healthy food curriculum was approved and is being offered for the second year.

Sustainability requires that when the funding goes away there is still a means to continue to run the program. For example you might look at what kinds of tools you can develop that can be re-used again. In our case,

we developed educational media tools, and content for MDUSD website. You might also include a press kit.

You might want to work with school garden team to get it certified so you can use produce in the cafeteria.

Look for repeatable processes – as an example rules of engagement – so

## Our completed projects

- Mayors Cook off – annual
- Healthy Family Cooking-Media Tools-Re-useable



(A) Some of the projects began with our visionary. This is the case for the Mayor’s Cook off, it existed for a few years before we became involved. It has now spread to a second county. This is where Mayors for the cities in our county come to a park, partnered with a local chef from their city and a student from our culinary academy and are given a bag of groceries. They have 1.5 hours to make a meal and are judged by local dignitaries.

(L) That was one of the first projects where we got funding to partner with school food service. We then invited Anna and MDUSD students to an annual Mayor’s cook off in Contra Costa County. We gave the mayors and the chef’s the new school meal guidelines as a requirement. This was a way to generate community awareness of the school meal requirements and also empower the students.

(Suzanne) The Family Cooking tool was a series of 13 short videos teaching families how to stock a pantry so that they can produce fast meals at home and minimize the need to fast food. We took them on the tour of 3 different grocery stores, one low end, one high end and one ethnic. We then took those ingredients and showed them how to make simple recipes.

(L) Project Manager: Contact stores, coordinate with videographer and food service. Write the script. **Be a hand double.** Buy all the ingredients. Bring all of the utensils and presentation materials, etc.

We’ve actually created a video documenting each of these projects, so we have a record of what we did, and also it demonstrates where we made changes right along with the video in module 1 we showed you.

We also decided it would be good to develop healthy family cooking media tools. So Suzanne became our “celebrity” chef on camera we demonstrated how to make simple recipes at home. We also created a grocery shopping media tool taking tours on camera to Grocery Outlet, a local Hispanic market, and Whole Foods.



## Our Completed Projects

- Grilling – on-going
- Salad Bars
- BBQ's – on-going



(Suzanne) We began grilling vegetables at the secondary schools. The students go crazy for this. It started with a \$1,000 grant. That was the catalyst to begin this project. In the end it was well worth it, however, realize that there was a tremendous amount of time spent planning, documenting, reporting and implementing any grant. This became a sustainable project with grilled vegetables on the menu at 10 schools every week. We didn't have a BBQ at 9 of the 10 schools, however, we adapted the recipe to be done in the oven.

(S) We purchased a gas BBQ and we now take it to one or two elementary schools/week during Fall and Spring to do a BBQ menu for that site. We have banners to advertise the day and balloons and everyone gets very excited. It increases participation by about 25% and this has helped to increase participation on the rest of the days as well. It also has increased employee morale.

(A) Salad Bars: When I first became a supervisor we had a very adversarial community member who was spreading very unkind comments about the school food service operation. **(The UGLY again)**. I contacted her and we planned our first salad bar together. Gradually we have brought salad bars to many more schools, usually with the help of the PTA. Last year I saw the "Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools" website and saw an opportunity to bring salad bars to the rest of our elementary schools. Through my work with Kaiser on the Weight of the Nation project, they were knew me quite well. They contacted me and offered to fund the salad bars. They funded 8 salad bars and may fund 5 more this year.



## Our Completed Projects

- Kid’s Competition - annual
- Bring new recipes to cafeteria menu from ROP culinary class and Kid’s Culinary Competition
- Weight of the Nation



(A) We held a culinary competition for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders from 4 different elementary schools in our district. Each school was in a different city and we paired 4 students from each school with a local chef. Together they prepared the student’s 4 recipes for a total of 16 recipes and were judged on 4 categories: Nutritious, Kid Friendly, Plate Presentation and Tastiness. Each student received a chef coat and hat and a medal for some category.

We included the winner’s recipe on the cafeteria menu. It was Lebne, a middle Eastern yogurt dish.

(S) We also featured recipes from the new **ROP** cooking class and from the **Family Cooking** videos on the cafeteria menu including vegetarian chili with a baked potato, Chicken Fajitas and polenta. (L) And a very big project was the Weight of the Nation. Kaiser Heal funded this and we showed every student at one of our High Schools an excerpt of the movie “Weight of the Nation Kids in Crisis”. Students held discussion sessions about the concepts raised in the video and created their own video.

(S) Food Service was not originally included in this discussion. **This definitely the UGLY.** Even having set the Rules of Engagement and defining our roles, we were still blind sided by the event. At first we were quite angry and saw these people as adversaries. We realized that we had to become part of what was happening so we **inserted** ourselves into the planning meetings. Though it was a bit awkward at first, the committee finally realized that “we were not the enemy” and we were not going away. “If you are going to serve food on my campus, you are going to deal with me!” We explained about School Food Service and our role on campus. Ultimately we were welcomed as part of the planning committee. In the end we provided breakfast and lunch to every student as well as to 120 dignitaries including Tom Torlakson. Kaiser funded the meals. Let’s watch the video we created from that event.



# Weight of the Nation Viewing



<http://vimeo.com/channels/mdusd/67688897>



## Useful Resources

- [www.freshmeals.org](http://www.freshmeals.org) California Healthy Kids Resource
- <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/solutions.html> CDC Resource
- <http://saladbars2schools.org> Let's move salad bars to schools
- <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/tchk.asp> Team California for Healthy Kids
- <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tN/library.html> Team Nutrition
- <http://www.mdusd.org/departments/foodservices/pages/default.aspx>
- <http://www.chef-k.com> Chef-K website