



Dispelling the Myth of “School Lunch”

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Partners in creating an enjoyable dining experience for students



OBJECTIVES:

- Recognize perceptions versus reality of our industry.
- Gain perspective on American culture over that past 70 years so that we can keep up with the times...
- Identify resources that can be used in marketing our programs to be an enjoyable dining experience for our customers.
- Decide on at least one new goal upon returning to your district.



Perception

- Identify Stereotypes – How are we perceived?
 - Share funniest names you’ve heard or been referred to as re: “Lunch Lady”



The Facts

- **What do we do?**
 - **Feed 31 million students across America/day**
 - 14,000 school districts
 - 2200 meals/day per location
 - 1100 meals/hour (based on 2 hours/day) – **AMAZING!**
 - **McDonald's serves 69 million consumers/day**
 - 34,000 restaurants
 - 2000 meals/day per location
 - 100 meals/hour (based on 20 hours/day)



Article in Fresno Bee by David Masumoto



SW PARRA/THE FRESNO BEE

and a health consciousness.

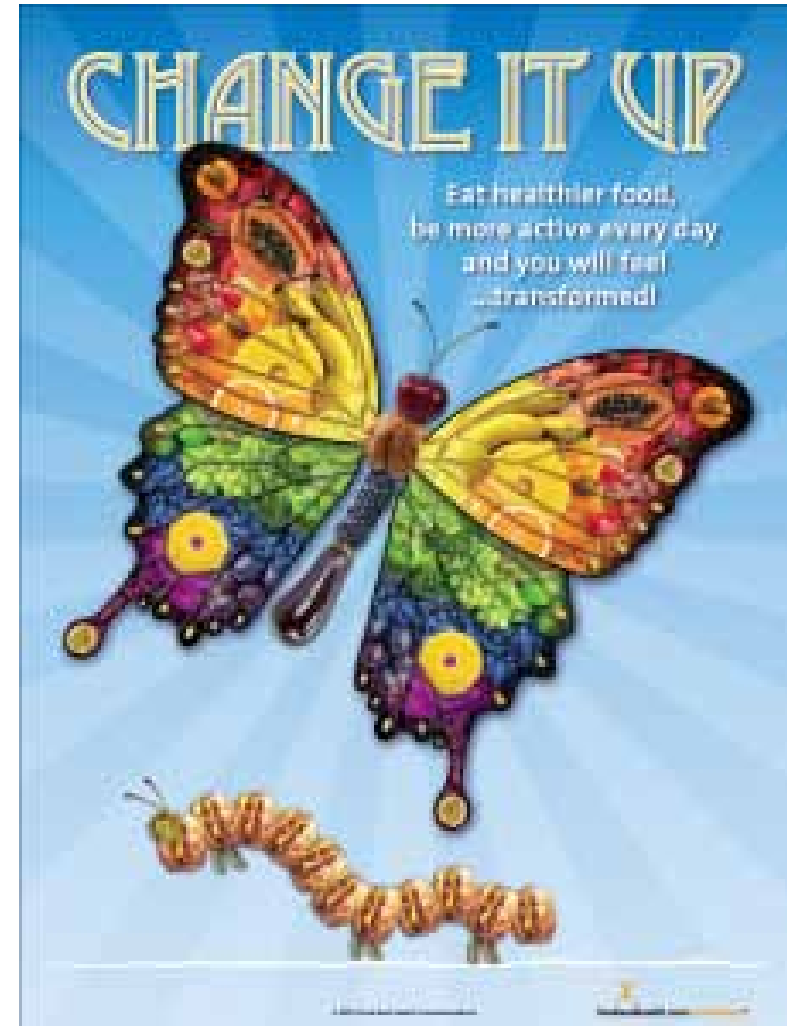
School meal workers are the caregivers for this generation of youth. However, like many caregivers, they are underappreciated. They work quietly, field complaints and hear few compliments. They are invisible because like educators, their impact can't be directly measured by dollars and cents. And there are no API test scores for healthy kids. Too often the world ignores the work of caregivers.

Yet they are skilled as financial wizards, making due with a lunch budget under \$3 or less per meal. They manage thousands of meals a day for perhaps some of the most picky eaters in the nation. For the most part, school food workers are not paid well. They work in teams, mostly women, and labor behind counters and in antiquated kitchens as their craft is squeezed into shorter and shorter lunch hours. Welcome to the world of "lunch ladies" who feed our children.

Still they inspire. As a parent, as a farmer, and as someone who hopes for a healthy future, I thank them.

Changing our image...

- **How can we market ourselves?**
- **How can we change our image?**



Foods of Yesterday and Today..



American Food Cultures Through the Decades

- 1940's (late) – 1946 National School Lunch Act
 - Families had to ration food
 - Government restricted each American to 28oz meat/week
 - Limited sugar, butter, eggs, cheese, milk, coffee
- 1950's



- Mom's who had worked during the war found it hard to work as housewives again = more ads for appliances and prepared foods which reduced time they had to spend in kitchen.
- National highway system built after WWII
 - Resulted in mass distribution of processed foods
 - Hamburger chains became popular along the highways

American Food Cultures Through the Decades

- 1960's
 - Hippies – wanted unprocessed foods - more made from scratch
- 1970's
 - Immigration Act 1965 brought many Asian to America
 - Asian cuisine was becoming very popular
 - Ethnic foods in general were very popular

What foods do you remember from eating lunch at school?



American Food Cultures Through the Decades

- 1980's
 - Very popular to go out to eat
 - Simple comfort food
 - heavy food – change dietary habits – obesity
- 1990's
 - Low fat, fat free products were very popular
 - Fashion cooking
 - chefs combining different cultures' foods
 - Martha Stewart
 - Online recipes available



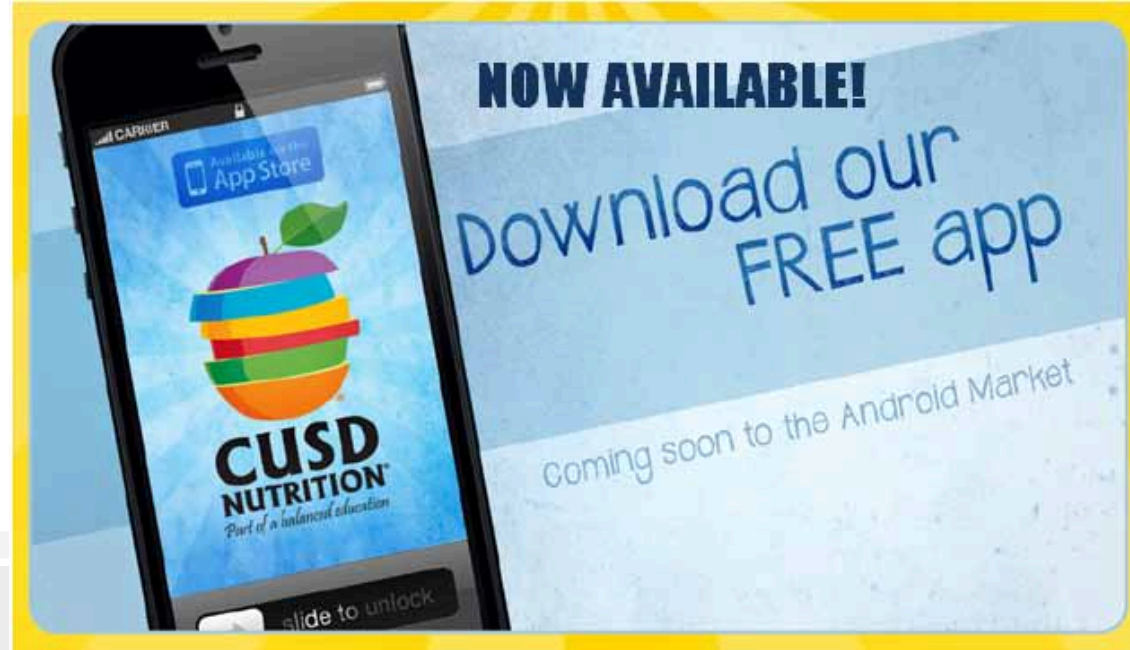
American Food Cultures Through the Decades

- 2000's
 - Obesity epidemic
 - Food Network cooking shows
 - Convenience foods



How to Market our Programs

- Watch market trends and pay attention to how successful restaurants market themselves.
- **What have you done lately to market your program?**



MENUS

- People eat with their eyes & nose!
 - Description of Food – **Experience the food before you eat it!**
 - Descriptive terms: Roasted, Crisp, Glazed, Flavorful, Hearty, Steaming Hot
 - Branding – well known labels
 - Pictures on printed menus
 - Appearance/Presentation of Food
 - Acceptable pairing of food
 - Color
 - Texture
 - Taste
 - Don't underestimate their sophisticated palate!



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MENUS

- Presentation:
 - Pagoda Box
 - Scratch Plus – Speed Scratch



- “Food Decorating”
 - Confetti Salad Sprinkles
 - Enchilada/Wet Burrito
- Aroma in cafeteria
 - Freshly baked bread from scratch or par-baked



Implementation of New Products in Cafeteria

- **Recipe Development**

- Know your customers
 - Talk with them re: their preferences
 - We want them to consume their meal (not healthy garbage!)
- Pay attention what they bring for lunch/snacks
 - Make similar (possibly healthier) versions



- **What's happening on kids' television shows/advertisements?**

- iCarly - spaghetti tacos
- They will run their course...
 - So be ready with your next idea!



Implementation of New Products in Cafeteria

– Involve kitchen staff

- Ownership in concept
- Discuss production of product
 - Speed scratch - What steps can be simplified
- Determine presentation of product and ease of service
- Repeat acceptable well-liked flavors

Successful items at CUSD:

- Chicken Cordon Bleu
 - Spicy chicken patty – 3 uses
- Jambalaya Rice Bowls then turn into Wraps
- Pho Soup



RESOURCES

- **Students –**
- **How do you communicate with customers?**
 - Talk with them routinely with specific questioning
 - Pry as to whether they enjoyed their meal
 - Dig in and get the truth
 - It may not be what you want to hear – watch out!
 - Conduct taste testing with students to determine preferences
 - Formal – NAC groups
 - Informal – sample during meal service



Comic – CSU, Fresno Dietetic Interns & CART Students

- Hold student art contests and create videos – involve yearbook/ broadcasting
- **What have you done in your district lately involving students?**

WHATCHA MUNCHIN? | Illustrated by Samantha Jay Victoriano



RESOURCES - School District Resources

- **Own District Staff**
 - **Cooking Competitions/Recipe Development**
 - Allow staff to be creative – increase pride in workplace
 - Shows you care and students receptive to new items
 - Once you menu a new item be creating another...
 - **Marketing/Communication Department**
 - **Maintenance & Construction Personnel**
- **Other District Personnel**
 - **Online websites**
 - **E-mail correspondence**
 - **Phone call conversations**
 - **Tour their facilities**



RESOURCES - Industry Members & Associations

- Food Brokers

- Open communication – POS & Recipes
- Knows what is working in other districts
- Help with operational issues
 - If product won't work operationally, it won't work!
- Tour manufacturers' facilities
 - Gain greater understanding of their product line



- SNA & CSNA & local chapters:

- Websites – best practices & marketing tools
- Meetings/Conferences
- NETWORKING – sharing ideas!
 - It's OK, we can't take each others customers!



CALIFORNIA
SCHOOL NUTRITION
ASSOCIATION

RESOURCES - Social Media

- www.MyPlate.gov and www.NFSMI.org and www.letsmove.gov
- Internet – good way to market Child Nutrition Program

How do you use Social Media?

- Facebook
- Twitter



What periodicals do you read/reference?

- Poppy Seeds
- Restaurant Management
- University Dining



Cafeterias of Yesterday & Today..



ATMOSPHERE

- **What do you do to attract student into the cafeteria?**
 - Inviting
 - Decorative/POS materials
 - Comfortable
 - Power Colors
 - Efficient
- **How do you offer food to students who don't come into the cafeteria?**





Questions/Comments?



So, where do we go from here?

- What is your “take back goal” in continuing to create an enjoyable dining experience for your customers and how are you going to make that happen?



Thank you!