



Tasty Choices

Today's Special: Our Kids

Cambridge Food Service Department

The Tasty Choices food service program has completed its first round of recipe development and staff training this spring and it's been a big success! The program was started by Cambridge Food Service, who in partnership with the City's School Health Program, received a Massachusetts Department of Public Health mini grant to improve school food. The program will continue next year with funding from the Cambridge Public School District.

We hired a part time chef, Vin Connelly, who previously brought successful changes to the Brookline school menus. Chef Vin built on the work already accomplished by the Food Service Department, who introduced veggie wraps, Chicken Caesar salad, and broccoli cheese pasta last year. We hired staff to organize and do educational work with students in the cafeteria, such as taste tests and voting.

Here's what we accomplished:

- Fresh broccoli, local butternut squash, and roasted red bliss potatoes will be added to the lunch menu in all K-8 schools for the fall. We will be adding some new veggie wraps and salads to the High School menu.
- We piloted new dishes at eight cooking trials and one focus group. The kids got to vote and the results were overwhelmingly positive. Broccoli was #1!
- On 16 occasions in eight schools at lunch, we trained food service staff and introduced the children to the new food!



- We partnered with the CRLS culinary program to do taste tests; they will work with Chef Vin in the fall to introduce new menu items at lunch at the High School.
- We were filmed by The Food Network channel for a segment on creative solutions regarding the national school lunch program and childhood obesity.

Thanks to the Cambridge Public School Physical Education Department for further funding support from the PEP grant. Thanks to everyone at the Institute for Community Health, CitySprouts, Public Health, and the School Health Program for enthusiastic support and assistance.

We have heard from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health that they would like to fund us again, if they receive the funding to continue their grant program.