

TRADITIONS

A newsletter for and by the team members of Whitsons

SPRING 2012

FOR THE LOVE
OF NUTRITION

LEADING THE CHARGE IN
HEALTHY EATING INITIATIVES




WHITSONS
School Nutrition

*Whitsons Achieves BRC
Certification Status*

5

*Whitsons: Ready for the
New HHFKA Guidelines*

8

*New Employee
Assistance Program*

12

PEOPLE

Treat Everyone Like Family



*Gary Schall,
Lawrence UFSD
Superintendent*

The old Spanish saying "Barriga Llena, Corazón Contento" (a full stomach makes for a happy heart) comes true at Lawrence Public Schools. This year the Lawrence community partnered with Whitsons to make positive changes in the school dining program which reflected not only in an increase in lunch participation, but also in the overall happiness of the school community. Gary Schall, Lawrence UFSD's Superintendent,

tells us about the Lawrence dining transformation.

One of the biggest challenges we have these days as educators is to encourage students to be more conscious about nutrition and redefine their eating habits. Childhood obesity has become a major problem in our society and schools can no longer be apart from this reality. Battling commercial forces offering unhealthy foods is a constant struggle for parents and school administrators.

In Lawrence UFSD, we try to combat these forces with several initiatives: by providing health classes, science classes, encouraging Physical Education, etc. However, it is in the lunch room where we can actually put into practice what we teach, so if we provide unhealthy choices, how can we encourage healthy ones?

At Lawrence UFSD, we strive to be proactive and make sure we do not sanction unhealthy habits. At the end of last school year, we met with the parents and became attuned with the issues that concerned them.

A crucial subject in this meeting was school nutrition. We wanted to provide better choices to our children that were more consistent with the nutrition messages we were trying to convey. That's when we decided to overhaul our dining services and provide healthier and higher quality foods. We connected to Whitsons through the RFP process and we've been enjoying their services since September 2011.

Frequently I walk through the different cafeterias in the district and I observe the operations. They say the kitchen is the heart of the home, and in this case, you can really tell the center of the school is the cafeteria. Every day the cafeteria workers warmly greet the students and serve the food with a smile on their faces. These team members take pride in their work and understand how much they are contributing to the Lawrence community by serving the students wholesome and delicious meals.

"They say the kitchen is the heart of the home, and in this case, you can really tell the center of the school is the cafeteria."

The parents have also commented on how positive the change has been in the quality of the food and in the children's relationship with the school. We are offering more meals designed to please the different palates and ethnic backgrounds of our students. Not only has the volume of the cafe servings increased, but also the overall atmosphere in the cafe has changed greatly.

Nowadays, we observe a more pleasant environment with fewer disciplinary issues and more well-behaved students. For some kids, the school lunch is the main meal of the day, so obtaining a tasty, filling and nutritious meal definitely improves their demeanor.

It is incredible to observe what a great effect higher quality dining services has had in the entire school community. It is clear the students take pride in their school and appreciate the changes we have made to provide them with healthier, delicious foods.



PEOPLE

Treat Everyone Like Family

Whitsons Receives Surprise Award from Lawrence Schools

By Leslie Fazin

When Vice President **Michael Whitcomb** agreed to a meeting with Lawrence UFSD's Superintendent, Gary Schall, he had no idea it was actually a surprise award ceremony to thank the Whitsons team for their incredible service to the district! Students at the middle school especially have been raving about the healthier, tastier options, and even created a special poster detailing what they loved most about Whitsons.

We have also been featured in the local press for all of our efforts. It was truly an honor to be recognized for all that we do, and we would like to thank our Lawrence team, led by Manager **Stephanie Haynes** and District Manager **Christine Kunnmann**, for truly embracing and implementing the Whitsons spirit!

"The administration could not say enough wonderful things about Whitsons, the food and the staff. What a motivational experience! Christine and Stephanie's great leadership and support are evident everywhere in this school," says Vice President **Kelly Friend**. "We could not be more proud."

Neither can we, Kelly! Congratulations to our Lawrence team!



Collaborations with CAMBA

By Leslie Fazin

Whitsons is proud to announce our collaboration with CAMBA, a non-profit organization that serves and educates thousands of underprivileged families each year. Their *Next Step Food Protection Course* allows young adults to gain valuable, hands-on experience as they achieve their food handling certification.



Beginning in January, Whitsons scheduled an array of guest speakers to present their professional and personal experiences to the students. On Tuesday, January 17th, Chef **Peter Bellisario** of UBM was our first guest speaker for the program. He spoke to the students about topics ranging from sanitation and food handling, to getting ahead and staying active and engaged in the food service industry.

With more than 25 years experience, Chef Bellisario served as an excellent role model for CAMBA's students. At UBM, he supervises the production of breakfast and lunch for the office building's 1,000 plus employees. The café also prepares pre-ordered meals for young children in the on-premises childcare center.

In a letter of appreciation, Food Protection Trainer, Sherill Hampton, writes: "Our students were very impressed with the depth of knowledge and information [Peter] shared," she says. "His professional manner was approachable, which made it easy for the young adults to open up and engage in fruitful conversation."

The students unanimously agreed. One student writes, "Peter was extremely effective in showing us that all of the terms we have learned are actually everyday language in the kitchen."

Vice President **Michael Whitcomb** praises, "I am very proud of our team for making this happen. Great job, Peter; you are an inspiration and leader to these young, budding entrepreneurs." Throughout the course of the program, students also had the pleasure of speaking with **Billy Whitcomb, Jr.** of UNFCU.

Keep up the inspiring work, team! We hope our collaboration has helped pave the way for the next generation of food service professionals!

PEOPLE

Treat Everyone Like Family



Nancy Schmidt, breakfast grill cook and lunchtime cashier, has worked at Eastchester Schools for 8 years, taking two buses, a train and a cab to get to and from work each day. Her trek is an exhausting one, but she couldn't imagine her journey any other way. "I do it because I love to be with the kids and my fellow co-workers," she says.

Eastchester Food Service Director, **Karla Grimaldi**, says this love goes both ways. "Nancy is everyone's dream team member. She is always happy and in an upbeat mood; it's hard to feel blue in her presence," she says. "She will bend over backwards to help out wherever I need her in the district. The students all love her, and she gives each of them special attention."

"When it comes to the grill, Nancy is a perfectionist."

Nancy serves breakfast to approximately 100 children each day, serving individualized meals and special orders, and making each, she says, with a sprinkling of her own special ingredient: love. Not only do her students appreciate her tasty and nutritious meals, but her meticulous work and sunny disposition have never gone unnoticed by school staff members. Teacher Edward Crespo praises Nancy: "When it comes to the grill, Nancy is a perfectionist. She is methodical in her approach, turns anything you order into a work of art and always has a smile for you."

Nancy's key to success? Taking one day at a time and treating others as you wish to be treated. Nancy's co-workers unanimously agree that her positive and energetic attitude towards her work is contagious. She is a true team player who easily creates a sense of unity between everyone at Eastchester. "Everything about Nancy is positive," says Karla. "She wears her uniform proudly."

We are lucky to have you on board, Nancy!



Mary Vanzo starts and ends each day by shooting for the moon. "Even if you miss," she says, "you'll land among the stars." This well-known phrase — which happens to be Mary's personal philosophy — exemplifies her hard work and dedication. From her former position as Food Service

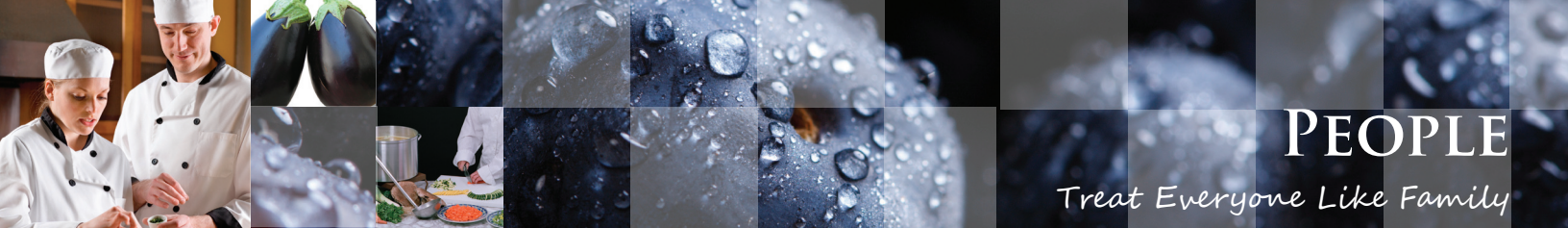
Worker and Lead Cashier at Port Chester Schools, to her new position as Assistant Manager at Ossining Schools, Mary continues to strive for the moon, the stars and beyond.

Mary's journey with Whitsons began as a high school student at The Ursuline School in New Rochelle, where she worked at SUNY Purchase College from 2001 to 2003. A few years later, Mary rejoined Whitsons while pursuing her degree in Restaurant Management at Westchester Community College, where she swiftly impressed her co-workers. "Mary started as a food service worker and quickly became a lead in our very busy middle school," says Port Chester Schools Food Service Director, **Trish Looney**. "She expressed an interest to learn and took the initiative to shadow the director, chef and bookkeeper. I taught her all the facets of our school lunch programs, including state regulations, client requirements and Whitsons' policies, practices and procedures; she listened, watched and learned."

These experiences presented Mary with wonderful opportunities to improve upon her natural managerial skills. "Mary made a significant contribution to the unit in preparing for the Whitsons' audit, where we received a score of 94 percent," says Trish. Soon thereafter, Mary was promoted to Assistant Manager at the Ossining School District.

To all who work alongside Mary, it is evident that she takes great pride in her work. "I understand that in many cases, working in a school nutrition setting means children could very possibly be eating their only meal for the day," says Mary. "I have a sense of pride knowing that I have a part in feeding children a wholesome, nutritious meal, and that maybe these children will not go to bed hungry today."

Everyone at Port Chester wishes Mary continued success as she begins her new position. Never lose sight of the moon, Mary!



PEOPLE

Treat Everyone Like Family

Whitsons Receives Highest Industry Standard

By Leslie Fazin

Congratulations to our Prepared Meals Division for receiving an 'A' on the industry's highest standard: the British Retail Consortium's Global Standard for Food Safety Audit, an internationally recognized safety and quality certification program. By becoming BRC Certified – a culmination of over a year and a half of hard work and dedication – Whitsons is now certified as an international food manufacturer, demonstrating our ability to provide safe, high quality foods that meet global industry standards. This achievement categorizes us into an elite class of BRC Certified facilities worldwide!

Through the completion of this certification, Whitsons is monitored daily on product quality, safety and legality, to ensure our policies and procedures are effectively met on a continual basis. Our team has worked diligently to implement stringent quality assurance practices, and continues to accurately document every aspect of our operations to maintain compliance with BRC standards. Our entire team has embraced the standards as an integral part of their daily responsibilities; as one example of this commitment, a team member instantly communicated a safety shoe violation of a visitor to the plant, and the situation was immediately rectified before the visitor could re-enter the facility.

Chairman and CEO **Bob Whitcomb** commends our team for their efforts: "Congratulations to **Maria Inetti**, Manager of QA, **Chris Fautas**, Director of Operations, and the entire Culinary Center Team. I would also like to thank the corporate team for collaborating and supporting this effort. My family and I are very proud of this accomplishment. This is just the beginning. Onward and upward!"

Chris also offers commendations: "I would like to thank all of my managers and their staff for their hard work in accomplishing this certification. This was a total team effort." What an extraordinary accomplishment!



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**"Give the world the best that you have,
and the best will come back to you."**

~ Madeline Bridges ~



Life Beyond Whitsons: In the Name of Charity

Outside of work, many of our team members open their hearts to donate time, money and service to organizations that are near and dear to them. Here are some of the few personal philanthropic efforts of our team:

Greg Godfroy of the Elizabeth Culinary Center and his wife Karen support an animal rescue group, Halfway Hounds, whose mission is to give abandoned and homeless dogs obedience training, behavior modification and emotional rehabilitation so that they can become adoptable pets.

Sheldon Alman of Masconomet and his family are involved in the Northeast Animal Shelter in Salem, MA. His daughter partnered with the Tewksbury Girls Basketball League to help raise money for her proudly named Woofers' Wishes initiative through raffles and bake sales, as well as posted pictures of all the animals available for adoption at the shelter, which resulted in four of these dogs getting adopted.

Marcy Larkin of Plainview is proud to announce her boys were shaved for St. Baldrick's Day at Molloy on March 5th to raise money and awareness for cancer.



Michael Panarello, Executive Chef at Estee Main, recently won first place in the Soup category for his Buffalo Chicken Chowder at Lindenhurst High School's Fourth Annual 'Souper Bowl' of Caring charity cook off held right before the Super Bowl. The money raised went to Island Harvest and Habitat for Humanity.

Holly Von Seggern, VP of Marketing, is heavily involved in the community. She is the Sunday School Superintendent at her local church, and a Silver Award leader of a 3-year Girl Scout community service program supporting a local food pantry. She also volunteers with a peanut butter and jelly crew at church that makes sandwiches for a local soup kitchen.

PEOPLE

Treat Everyone Like Family

Promotions

Congratulations to the following team members!

Oswaldy Vargas was promoted to Warehouse Supervisor at Boston Public Schools.

Susan Longo was promoted to Lead at Canton Middle School.

Stacy O'Neill was promoted to Administrative Assistant at East Islip Schools.

Kim Wilkins was promoted to Operations Support Manager at Newark Schools.

Beth Silva was promoted to Cook at Grafton Schools.

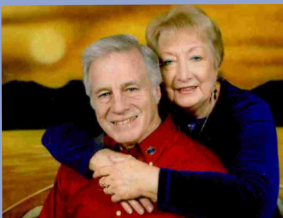
Baby Blessings



Congratulations to **Howard Nelson** of Harrison Schools. His stepson John Guadagno and his wife Amy had twin girls on December 9th. Simone Emily was 20" long and 7 lbs 3 oz and Brynn Taylor was

19" long and 5 lbs 8 oz. The twins join big sister Marnie who is 1 ½ years old. Their birth marks number 6 and 7 grandkids for Howard and his wife Donna (6 granddaughters and 1 grandson). Best wishes!

A Mineola Love Story



Sandy Pustarfi of Mineola Schools and her husband, Bob, celebrated 50 beautiful years of marriage this Valentine's Day by renewing their wedding vows. Sandy and Bob were married on

June 3, 1961 and have 3 children, 10 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild. Congratulations, Sandy and Bob! What an inspirational story!

Team Members of the Month

NOVEMBER

NY/NJ Schools: Serge Trevil, East Ramapo Schools

CT/MA Schools: Anne Sepavich, Winchester Schools

Residence: Milagros Cerda, Casa Promesa

DECEMBER

NY/NJ Schools: Barbara Aloia, Mineola Schools

CT/MA Schools: Melissa Stout, Ledyard Schools

Residence: Natalya Zhilenko, Carnegie East

Corporate Dining: Yeni Melendez, Estee Research Park

JANUARY

LOCATION: Melvin Fernandez, Estee Lauder - Aramis

NY/NJ Schools: Linda Porter, Valley Stream Schools

CT/MA Schools: Kimberly John, Attleboro Schools

FEBRUARY

NY/NJ Schools: Bernice Brickell, Ossining Schools

CT/MA Schools: Laurie Shea, Hamden Public Schools

Corporate Dining: Faye Bailey, Estee Lauder Main

MARCH

NY/NJ Schools: Cathleen Calabrese, Irvington Public Schools

CT/MA Schools: Jermaine Rice, Boston Public Schools

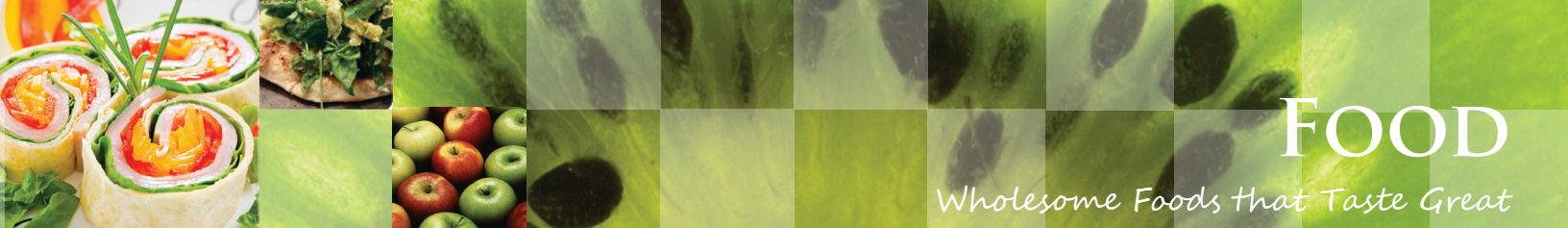
Corporate Dining: Melbin Arias, UBM

APRIL

NY/NJ Schools: Kim Bravo, South Country Schools

CT/MA Schools: Angela Massarotti, Newton Public Schools

Corporate Dining: Angela Racco, Estee Lauder Main



FOOD

Wholesome Foods that Taste Great

New Changes in Store for NuLife

At Whitsons, we understand how tricky it can be to find safe, tasty, gluten-free meals. That is why we created NuLife Foods in May of 2010. From the very beginning, we have been committed to providing nutritious and wholesome meals for children and adults with gluten allergies and other food sensitivities. Our motto, "Be Free," allows children and adults to discover healthy meal options that free them from the challenges associated with a gluten-free diet.

In December, we received a wonderful thank you letter from a parent: "I am writing to thank you for the introduction of gluten-free lunches for my daughter who is in first grade. My daughter was diagnosed with celiac disease this past spring, which is an autoimmune disorder that does not allow her to eat anything with gluten. Several freedoms were taken away with this diagnosis. However, what bothered her most was not being able to buy lunch at school anymore.

NuLife...Helping People with Gluten Sensitivities be "Free"

"I want you to know it has been a pleasure working with **Sergio Tenaglia** and **Dawn Jeziorkowski** from the cafeteria. Dawn and I set a schedule whereby my daughter is able to buy lunch two days a week. My daughter came home the first day of buying and said, 'I am back to buying!' As a working mom with two kids, it is so wonderful to know that my child is being taken care of."

We are so pleased with such positive feedback and strive to continue our mission to enhance life one meal at a time. We are offering brand new changes this year for our NuLife Foods customers, including an expanded product line that features more gluten-free breakfast and lunch options. In addition, all NuLife products are Certified Gluten-Free, and will now be individually packaged to preserve the quality and integrity of each meal,

By Leslie Fazin



never exceeding 10 parts per million. Many of our products are also free of other common food allergens, such as dairy, soy, corn, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts and shellfish.

Directors and parents should carefully review our NuLife Foods ingredients and work with their child's school nurse and food service director to ensure these items meet their dietary needs.

For more information on new items or to locate a distributor near you, please email us at befree@nulifefoods.com or call 888-285-6633.

NuLife Foods Shines at TACA Meeting

Special thanks to our NuLife Foods General Manager, **Ron Bergida**, and the Whitsons/NuLife team for arranging a tasty assortment of NuLife Foods for guests at the first official meeting of Talk About Curing Autism's (TACA) New York chapter, TACA New York. The inaugural meeting was held on March 2 at our Islandia Culinary Center.

Chapter Coordinator, Deanna Connahan, raves about the meeting's success. "TACA New York is so thankful for the support and hospitality of Ron and the entire Whitsons team. Not only did Whitsons provide a wonderful site to host our first meeting, but graciously offered NuLife's deliciously addictive gluten-free cookies and coffee to our members," she says. "We are looking forward to a long and lasting relationship with Whitsons as we grow TACA New York and spread our mission of hope and support to families in need."

We couldn't agree more, Deanna. Best of luck!

Nourishing Growing Minds: A

How Whitsons Exceeds New HHFKA Guidelines By Leslie Fazin

Schools around the country are splashing color and freshness into their school menus in response to the new changes implemented to Congress's Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA). These changes include more colorful fruits and vegetables, in larger portion sizes, and an emphasis on all whole grains and fresh meals for the 2012 – 2013 school year.

Fortunately, Whitsons has been proactive in introducing healthy and wholesome meals into our school menus long before the HHFKA was established. We have been actively removing trans fats, partially hydrogenated oils, artificial colors and flavors from the foods we serve, and have added leaner proteins, lower fat options and fresh fruits and vegetables to our menus, all of which have helped us stay one step ahead. Additionally, since 2003, our Nutrition Safari® education program has immersed children in fun, nutritional and educational activities with safari animals to jumpstart healthy eating habits at a young age.

The great news is that the above requirements have been mandated by Whitsons for over a year, and most of our school nutrition programs are already in compliance with many of the new HHFKA mandates. Our teams are ready for the changes:

- Whitsons' new WMP automated menu system has been designed to follow the Food Based guidelines for menu development efficiencies and compliance.
- Our menus harness the HHFKA's new menu component changes by providing a colorful array of fruits and vegetables and adding new bean options weekly. We hold fruit and veggie tastings at most of our accounts to introduce students to new produce options and to encourage them to try a wider variety.

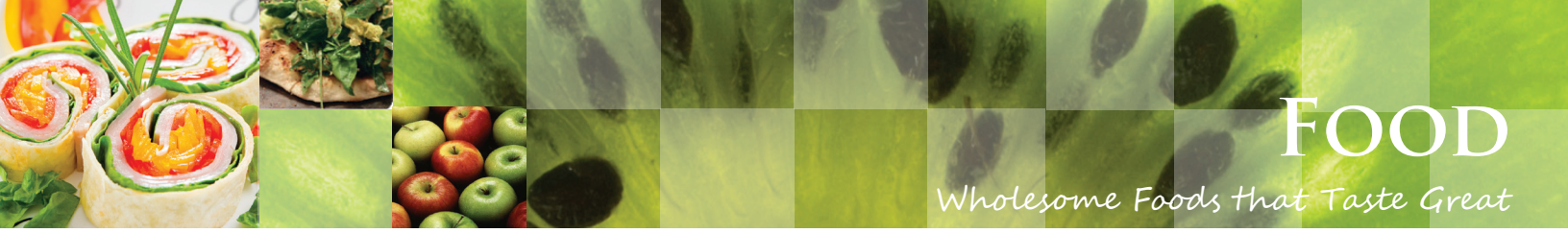
- We are also pleased to announce that we currently meet the new reduced sodium requirements and have eliminated whole milk options to only include fat-free and 1% low-fat milk in all of our accounts.

In addition, Whitsons requires that all of our school accounts serve fresh fruits and vegetables daily, along with fresh salads for all grade levels, Smart Choices entrées and meals that contain zero trans fats. Whitsons also requires whole grain and whole wheat ingredients as our primary deli and bread offerings, including whole grain pizza crust and pasta, whole wheat breads, buns and wraps and brown rice.

"Whitsons has been proactive in introducing healthy and wholesome meals into our school menus long before the HHFKA was established."

To keep things fresh and exciting, we are proud to report that many of our school accounts are incorporating healthy, fresh and creative meal options for students year-round. Our new traveling elementary chef, **Kimberly Reynolds**, teaches children that healthy bodies and minds are the direct result of eating nutritious meals (see side-bar on the next page for details).

New Britain Schools sparked change with a Build Your Plate program (see page 11), designed to teach children how to prepare and "build" well-balanced and nutritious plates.



Nutrition Program Ahead of Its Time



Winchester and Hampton Bays Schools are also bringing fresh ideas to the table by generating guest chef programs that harness local produce and freshly prepared meals (see page 10).

With these new changes announced, we know our schools will continue to encourage students to reach for the rainbow of wonderful fruits and vegetables offered in their school cafeterias. The HHFKA is designed to keep kids healthy and active, and reduce the threat of childhood obesity in the United States. Whitsons is proud to support this initiative in all of our schools and encourage all school districts to ensure their compliance before the 2012 – 2013 school year. Please discuss an appropriate course of action with your district manager and vice president if you are not yet familiar with all of these new standards.

Whitsons Welcomes Chef Kim

We are proud to unveil our new Elementary Visiting Chef Program, co-developed by Chief Operating Officer **John Whitcomb** and Senior Vice President **John Gersbeck**. A Whitsons executive chef travels to regional elementary schools to provide exciting promotions to the students, as well as work with onsite team members to train them in creative menu, production and presentation techniques. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new traveling elementary chef, **Kimberly Reynolds**.



Chef Kim, as she is affectionately known, visited her first elementary school in March to teach the children at Hamden Public Schools about the importance of fueling their bodies with healthy and nutritious meals. Her school visit introduced the kids to the splendor of delicious, fresh spinach hummus dip, which she served with an assortment of fresh vegetables. Chef Kim prepared individual platters for the kids and went around to the tables with a cart so they could try it – and we're happy to report that the majority of the children loved this healthy offering! Each child who tried the dip received a Luke the Lion sticker to commend them for trying something new, which was a big hit!

We encourage all of our accounts to partner with Chef Kim this year to bring fresh new ideas to the menu, and to help educate and promote elementary school programs such as Nutrition Safari®, Vegetable and Fruit of the Month and Wellness Days – the list of possibilities is truly endless! Bookings are on a first come, first serve basis. Contact your District Manager for more details on how to schedule a visit.

Trend Watch: Going Local Keeps it Fresh

Local produce and freshly prepared meals are the key ingredients to success at our "Go Local" guest chef programs. Chef **Rich Sandmann** and Food Service Director **Kevin Silvia** harnessed this delicious new trend at the "Guest Chef Going Local" event at Winchester High School last November. Our team promoted our Greenleaf Cuisine concept by partnering with local farmers and businesses to source local and/or organic ingredients.

Menu items included hearty soup, vegetarian and non-vegetarian sandwiches and paninis, a fresh pasta dish, a pasta salad and a vegetable pizza. Lead administrator at Winchester High School, Mia Gustin, praised Chef Sandmann and our team in a local newspaper article for delivering such a successful school program: "I know I speak for lots of staff members in saying thanks to the cafeteria folks for putting on such a great lunch – the food and preparation were amazing, not to mention there probably aren't many high schools out there bringing in chefs to serve organic and locally harvested offerings."

Hampton Bays High School also introduced local meals at their newly created local guest chef program back in November. As part of their exciting new promotion, chefs from local restaurants are invited to cook meals onsite at Hampton Bays to encourage the student body to consume healthy and freshly prepared meals. Together with our onsite team, the chefs prepared meals ranging from barbeque pork sliders and mashed potato salad, to split pea soup served in bread bowls and pear almond cake for dessert.

As quoted in a local paper, District Manager **Christine Kunnmann** says, "The chefs have already asked us when they can come back. It is exciting for us and the staff and the kids... It really is an unbelievable opportunity."

Special thanks to Chef Sandmann, Kevin, Christine and our teams at Winchester and Hampton Bays for keeping things fresh and exciting for our students!

Quality: What Does it Mean?



John Koutras

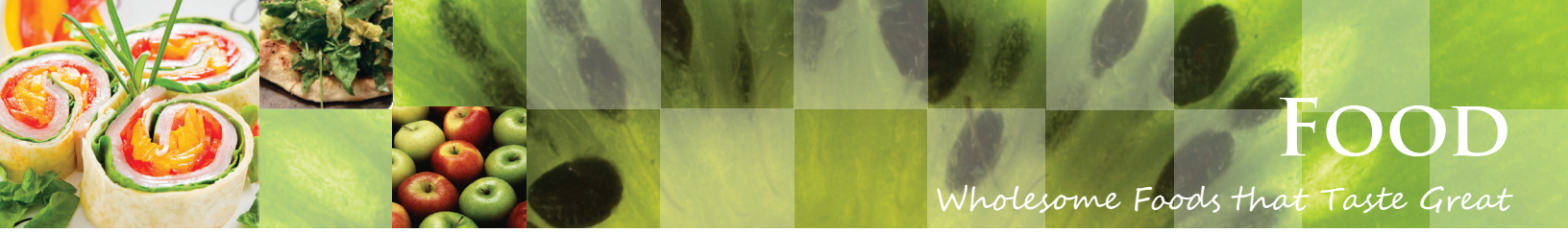
As Merriam Webster defines it, "Quality" is an adjective meaning "very good or excellent." As a noun, it's "a degree of excellence, superiority of some kind, or a distinguishing attribute." Quality is a critical part of our business. How do we at Whitsons bring *quality* to both the food and the service we provide every day?

It of course begins with our ingredients. As a company, we are dedicated to sourcing natural products free of harmful additives as the base of our quality standards. But quality is more than our wholesome ingredients; it is about the care that is taken in the receiving, storing, preparation, cooking, holding and taste of our meals! When we receive food, we store it quickly and remove when needed. We make sure the temperature is just right on the steam table to maintain freshness and moisture, as well as to ensure the safety of our meals. Consistently following these steps will ultimately ensure the quality that Whitsons prides itself on is provided for our customers.

We utilize techniques such as cooking from scratch and batch cooking in the preparation of our meals, and that level of care provides a quality that surpasses our competition. Think about this: you can start with a "perceived high quality" item such as filet mignon, but if it is held on a steam table for a few hours, or reheated, it loses its visual appeal, texture and taste. Not very quality-like, is it?

The key is to treat every ingredient and every meal with a fresh approach. Any meal can be of "filet mignon" quality when it's prepared fresh with its flavor preserved. Plus, our team members who serve it make a difference in how it is presented on the line, assembling the meal to order for each customer and delivering it with a smile. We can't underestimate the importance of the human element in the overall quality of our meals.

At Whitsons, quality is exemplified in our preparation and service; how will you continue to provide it?



FOOD

Wholesome Foods that Taste Great

News



Christine Clementz, RD

Nutrition Symbols Decoded

Do you find searching through the Nutrition Facts label to be a little overwhelming? You are not alone! Fortunately, many manufacturers and organizations have created a solution: a language of symbols

that makes shopping for healthy and nutritious food choices easier than ever. Labeling systems are used to identify wholesome ingredients that have the potential to help improve our diets and reduce the risk of diet-related diseases.

What to Look For:



Heart Check. Heart-healthy foods that meet specific AHA criteria for total and saturated fats, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, vitamins A and C, iron, calcium, protein and dietary fiber.



Whole Grain Stamps. Basic Stamp: Contains at least eight grams (a half serving) of whole grains. 100% Stamp: Contains all whole grain ingredients and at least 16 grams or more per serving. You can find the stamp on whole grains like cracked wheat, oatmeal, brown or wild rice or products that contain these or other grains.



Nutrition Keys. Includes four nutrition essentials: calories, fat, sodium and sugar, which are four nutrients we should limit due to their contribution to obesity, heart disease and diabetes.



USDA Organic. Contains at least 95 percent organically produced ingredients, excluding water and salt. In other words, this means no pesticides, fertilizers, hormones, antibiotics, radiation or genetic engineering were used during the production of the product.

Happy and healthy shopping!

Fresh Ideas Abound at New Britain Schools

Food Service Director **Jeff Taddeo** is bringing fresh ideas to the table at New Britain Schools. His Build Your Plate program, co-developed by Food Service Director, **Michael Koch**, teaches children at Smith Elementary School about the importance of eating a well-balanced meal and encourages long-lasting healthy eating habits. Each child prepares and “builds” their own nutritious plate, including an entrée, side dish, beverage or snack, and dessert, all while learning about the meal’s ingredients and nutritional contents.

New Britain has also introduced an inspiring new program that helps address the growing number of families and students who struggle to eat three meals a day. As featured in the *New Britain Herald*, an increase in the number of hungry students prompted the district to expand their meals to include an after-school dinner program at New Britain High School.

Hot meals are served weekdays from 3:45 to 5:30 p.m. in the school cafeteria, and include ethnic and vegetarian varieties for about 200 students each day who are involved in after-school activities. Students who do not participate in any extracurricular activities can also sign up for a supper pass.

Way to encourage healthy eating habits, team!



COMMUNICATIONS

Listen, Learn & Lead

Introducing Whitsons Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Treating our team members like family is a time-honored tradition we are proud to uphold. When one or more of our team members is facing a tough or unexpected life situation, we strive to provide them with as many resources and opportunities as we can to help them cope and prevail.

Partnering with the National Employee Assistance Providers, Inc. (National EAP), we are excited to announce our new Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a free benefit available to all team members and their immediate families. Our program provides confidential counseling and work/life services to help address a number of team member needs, including (but not limited to):

- Workplace performance issues
- Financial and legal consulting
- Grief, alcohol and substance abuse counseling
- Childcare and eldercare concerns
- Physical and mental illnesses
- Stress and crisis management

In addition, our EAP provides free access to trained wellness coaches, who help inspire and motivate our members to achieve individual wellness goals, including weight loss, nutrition education, active exercise routines, managing stress and living healthier and happier lifestyles. In fact, the National EAP's online portal hosted an online webinar, *Eating Your Way to Wellness*, which linked to various news articles filled with information about nutrition, healthy meal choices and exercise.

All EAP services are pre-paid by Whitsons and are extended to the members of our team's immediate household. We understand that life is filled with various struggles and uphill battles; we are here to help you through your times of need. We encourage all members to take advantage of this wonderful team member benefit.

SHOW ME THE \$\$\$

Contest of the Season:

GET THE PARTY STARTED! APPETIZER RECIPES

Deadline: July 15, 2012

Description: Submit an appetizer recipe that uses Idaho® potatoes. You may use Idaho® fresh, frozen or dehydrated processed potatoes. Include a digital photo of your entry.

Eligibility: Open to legal residents of the United States who are 18 years of age or older. Must be an American Culinary Federation (ACF) member or student member.

Prizes: First Place: \$1,500

Second Place: \$550

Third Place: \$400

The first 75 entries receive a Swiss Army watch.

Details: Check out the official rules and details at <http://foodservice.idahopotato.com/partystarted>

Web Bites

<http://vegnews.com>

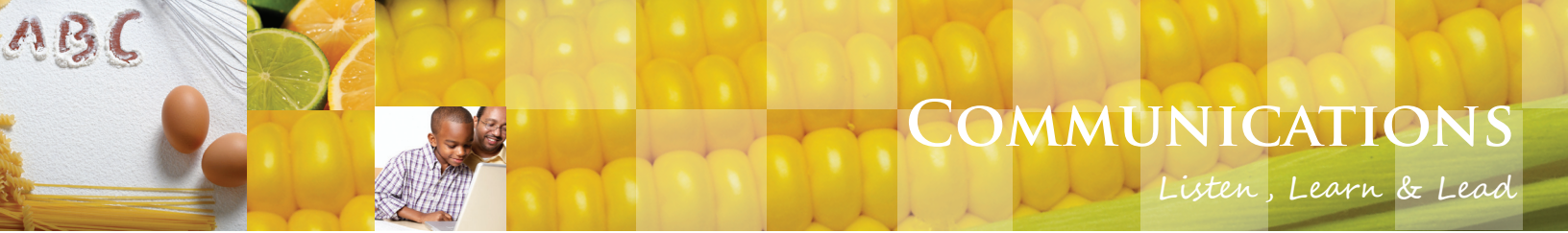
This site features a great publication that is 100% vegan. Plus, the site is beautiful, with vegan food photos galore.

<http://www.food.com>

Here is another massive recipe site, with great food finds.

<http://newyork.grubstreet.com>

A shout out to the NYC NYMag crew! Grub Street has been updated so much it is addicting. Check out the occasional vegan posts for a great read!



Whitsons Family
FOUNDATION

Who Does the Foundation Help?

"My father died of lung cancer, and he was our primary provider"

"A team member was seriously injured and left unable to resume work"

"I am fighting a battle with breast cancer and unable to work"

"A widowed single mom struggles to support her young children"

"My husband is unemployed and we just need to make ends meet this month"

It Helps Fellow Team Members.
It Helps Their Families. It Helps YOU.

The Foundation is here to assist team members who struggle from unexpected life circumstances. Over 130 team members are actively contributing, with roughly 11 team members who have been assisted so far. With your support, we can help many more.

Please consider contributing to the Fund so that we can continue to help our own during their times of need. Help us make a difference in the lives of those we work with; or maybe even your own. Please contact familyfoundation@whitsons.com for more information.

New Website Debuting This Spring!

Over the next few weeks, keep an eye out for exciting new changes coming to www.whitsons.com. Our new website offers our clients, our team members and our customers a dynamic and interactive view of who we are as a company: our mission, our culture, our values and our personalized commitment to providing unparalleled services. It tells a story; the story of Whitsons. Meet the people who are dedicated to treating each other, and our customers, like family. Experience the wholesomeness of the nutritious meals we serve our communities. Read about our innovations through exciting communications such as blogs, articles and newsletters, and interact with us through social media. Our most innovative new change, debuting at the start of the 2012 – 2013 school year, will feature fully customized web pages that link to each and every one of our school nutrition clients, with custom menus hyperlinked to real time nutritional and allergen information. Join us in our excitement as we roll out our new site, reflecting our mission of Enhancing Life One Meal at a Time!

"Go Red for Women" Luncheon Honors Whitsons



The American Heart Association honored our very own **Beth Whitcomb Bunster**, Chief Financial Officer, at the 11th Annual Long Island "Go Red for Women" Luncheon. The event celebrated Beth's dedication to heart disease and stroke awareness, especially in women, and also honored

Whitsons for teaching children about making smart choices to fuel their bodies and minds. Let's keep up the great work!

COMMUNICATIONS

Listen, Learn & Lead



Bits & Pieces...

Apples Abound at Irvington Schools

Students at **Berkeley School** were treated to a delicious array of apple-inspired meals, including cinnamon applesauce, apple grape blend 100% juice, fresh apples and apple muffins to encourage children to choose healthier options for breakfast and lunch. Our team spoke to the students about the wide variety of delicious apples on the market, such as gala, red delicious, golden delicious, honey crisp, empire and fuji, and left the apple muffins on display to entice the children to return for breakfast the following morning. The apple muffins were such a hit that the breakfast average increased by 40 meals! Great job, team!



April Liles, SNA Future Leader

Congratulations to **April Liles**, Food Service Director of Newton Public Schools, who recently entered the national School Nutrition Association (SNA) Future Leaders Scholarship – and won for the State of Massachusetts! Only two people in each state were selected for the award. To apply, April wrote a personal essay about the positive and inspirational impact school nutrition has had on her life, and how her skills and knowledge have proven her to be an excellent leader. She attended the SNA's 2012 Future Leaders Conference in Louisville, Kentucky at the end of April, and will attend the SNA's 2012 Annual National Conference (ANC) in Denver, Colorado in July. Wonderful news, April!

Keeping it Flat with Chef Sandmann

Check out these photos of the "Flats" concepts that debuted at Newton Public Schools, Ledyard Schools and Norwalk Schools.



Chef Richard Sandmann prepared delicious Sushi Flats (above) at Newton Public Schools, which included California Rolls, Cucumber Rolls, Spicy Shrimp Rolls and Philly Rolls, accompanied by a side of spring greens salad with white miso dressing, and a cup of miso soup. At Ledyard Schools, he prepared three variations of "Flat Out" Flat Bread Pizza (lower left), and at Norwalk Schools, students enjoyed Ruby's Flats (lower right), complete with Shaved Steak, Chicken Fajita, Mojo Turkey, Memphis BBQ Pulled Turkey and a platter of assorted fresh roasted vegetables.



Nutrition Safari Adventures Valley Stream Schools

Grant the Gazelle was a real treat for the elementary school students at Valley Stream Schools, who received an exciting visit by team member **Vicki Dalton**, who played Grant, and Assistant Director, **Gina Jones**, who played the Ranger. Together, they elaborated on the importance of eating nutritional snacks, like fresh and dried fruits, fresh veggie sticks, low fat yogurt and low fat pudding.



Mineola Schools

Luke the Lion and our Nutrition Safari Ranger visited Mineola Schools, where nutritious protein was the hot topic for the day. Luke the Lion loves protein, so we discussed with the students the importance of eating healthy proteins, like lean beef, chicken, turkey, eggs, beans and nuts. We found out how much the students love protein, too. Flounder and deviled eggs were a few of their favorite protein choices.



Ossining Schools

Ossining Schools recently held a Health and Wellness Fair, which was a big hit with the students. Pictured is **Dawn McGinn** of New Rochelle, who helped out all day with Murray and Hardy speaking to the parents and students.

New Yogurt Bar Debuts at UBM

Our UBM account offers a Yogurt bar, complete with diced fresh fruit, plain and fruited yogurt, granola, cranberries "and all the other good stuff," says Chef **Peter Bellisario**. UBM switched up their offerings after listening to the needs of our clients: a group of doctors from North Shore-LIJ who host monthly meetings at UBM. Specializing in Diabetic issues, "They asked to have something better suited to their mission, instead of the usual carb-loaded bagels and pastries," says Peter. Great job, team!



Good Shepherd Services Creates Nutrition Awareness

Every Wednesday throughout February, students and staff at Good Shepherd Services enjoyed cooking demos and seminars as part of the Good Shepherd Wellness Initiative. Guest chefs **Emanuel Montalvo, Sharlene Bejarano, Shanay Mason** and **Peter Bellisario**

took center stage at GSS's cooking demos, while District Manager, **Mark Kirn**, led the nutritional seminars. All were aimed at increasing awareness of healthier food options and nutritional education, and were a great success. Way to go, team!



EDITORIAL ADVISORY TEAM
JENNIFER WATSON, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
LESLIE FAZIN, MANAGING EDITOR/
FEATURE WRITER

FEATURE/GUEST WRITERS:
CHRISTINE CLEMENTZ, RD
JOHN KOUTRAS
GARY SCHALL, LAWRENCE SCHOOLS

CONTRIBUTORS:
KELLYANN FRIEND
PAMELA GIAMBRONE
TRINA SCOTTI

Do YOU have an interesting story, idea or experience you'd like to share? Call Jennifer Watson at 631-750-1465 and you can be featured in our next issue!



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER.

Check out our Online edition @ www.whitsons.com

From the Kitchen Of...

Trina Scotti, Winchester School District

Peach and String Bean Salad

Ingredients - Serves 6 to 8
2 lb fresh string beans
2 large peaches (sliced length wise)
1 large onion (sliced)
¼ cup olive oil
½ tsp black pepper
½ tsp garlic powder
1 fresh lime
1 cup basil (chopped)

Directions

1. Saute onion in oil.
2. Blanch string beans and add to onions. Then add pepper and garlic powder.
3. Remove from heat and chill.
4. Toss fresh peaches to chilled beans and onions.
5. Squeeze lime juice and top with basil. Chill and serve on platter.

