

Cafeteria Chronicles: Cherry Creek School District

If you want to provide hands-on nutrition education to students, look no further than Cherry Creek School District in Greenwood Village, CO. The district's Food and Nutrition Services Department developed a Food Literacy Program and as a result, the district was awarded Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) and USDA's **Innovation in Nutrition Education Recognition Award**.

Cherry Creek's Executive Chef Cady Molloy says the goal of the Food Literacy Program is for students and their families to develop an "environmental, culinary, and nutritional understanding of food, and more specifically, an understanding of the food that we serve in the cafeteria."

How did they accomplish this? After partnering with a local university, staff trained Elementary school teachers to deliver hands-on cooking and nutrition lessons for students. In the 9-12th grade level, the nutrition education class discusses topics such as the benefits of reducing sodium and added sugars, the past, present and future of school food, along with opportunities to taste test and gather menu feedback.

In addition, the food and nutrition department host an open house twice a year, where parents and families tour the Student Nutrition Center's warehouse, central bakery and production kitchen. Samples of scratch-prepared recipes are served.

Cherry Creek was also recognized for their leadership in scratch cooking when they were awarded AFHK and USDA's **Innovation in the Preparation of School Meals Recognition Award**. Executive Chef Cady Molloy developed eight new scratch-prepared recipes using the [USDA's Recipe Standardization Guide for School Nutrition Programs](#).

Check out some of Cherry Creek's scratch-prepared recipes in this [video](#).

To ensure the long-term success of their switch to scratch-prepared meals, Cherry Creek hired a Culinary Trainer so all staff would feel confident in their scratch-cooking abilities.

Congratulations to Cherry Creek School District for all of the efforts made by the food and nutrition department!

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