Nutrition Services team asked to be keynote speakers at local event

On Monday February 7th, Nutrition Services Director Rick Sherman and Manager Nicole Zammit were asked to be keynote speakers at the 5th annual “Local Food Connection,” a networking event held at Lane Community College for approximately 300 farmers, ranchers, fishermen and food processors.

The reason they were asked to speak was because the group that put on the event has heard about the great strides that the Nutrition Services department at 4j has made compared to the previous year. For example, from January-December 2009 4j purchased 1,340 lbs / $1,825 worth of local products from Lane County. From January-December 2010 4j purchased 14,252 lbs / $13,635 worth of products from Lane County. These numbers do not include items purchased from some Lane county operations like Lane County Dairies that supply our Milk company, and our Bakery in Springfield where we get over 95% of our baked goods.

The team was asked to share their purchasing philosophy and how they got to where they are today. It’s important to note that it seems everyone has a different definition of the word “local” due to a variety of reasons. For some it means the State of Oregon. For some it is a mileage radius. For others it means down the street. The definition of the word local was a common theme throughout the day.

The time at the conference included a day of breakout sessions covering a variety of topics. Attending the rest of the day by the Nutrition Services team was time well spent as many people continued to network and ask questions of them throughout the day over a variety of issues. One breakout session included a group of foodservice providers that talked about different purchasing issues they face. This group included Bethel School District, Willamette University, Albany General Hospital and Emerald Fruit and Produce.

HealthierUS School Challenge

In 2010, First lady Michelle Obama introduced “Let’s Move!,” incorporating the “HealthierUS School Challenge” into her campaign to raise a healthier generation of kids. At that time, monetary incentive awards became available for each HUSSC award level: Bronze, silver and gold, and gold award of distinction. So far the USDA has presented 1047 awards to date in the country. There are three criteria categories to this: A nutrition piece that our schools currently meet at the bronze level; plus nutrition education and physical activity categories. Currently Kelly Middle school has expressed interest in achieving the gold level for this award. If your school has an interest, the Nutrition Services Department can help get you started in the right direction. For more information, simply google the abbreviation “hussc” and you’ll be shown the link for the USDA team nutrition website.
Ask the Dietitian Nutrition

This Month’s question comes from Sharon, a 5th grader at Cesar Chavez elementary:

Does my body need calories when I am exercising?

Hi Sharon,

That is a great question. The short answer is YES! Your body actually needs calories all the time because calories are your body’s main source of energy. If you compare yourself to a cell phone battery, you know it is time to recharge your phone because the bars will get low and eventually start flashing. When you get hungry, this is equivalent to the cell phone battery getting low, and the flashing is equivalent to when you have gone an extended period of time in between meals and your body will indicate this by your stomach growling, loss of focus, and your body feeling weak.

Your body needs calories, approximately 1500 calories a day (amounts vary on age, weight, height, and gender), just to accomplish normal day to day functions such as breathing, digesting food, circulating blood etc. When you add any type of physical activity, (running, jumping, walking) it utilizes more calories. Exercise typically is a period of time where your heart rate is increased for an extended period of time and you are utilizing calories at a much faster rate. In order for your body to perform at it’s best, it is extremely important to make sure that you have enough calories in you before you start your workout and that you replenish your body after your workout. Exercising on low energy is dangerous and can cause your muscles not to want to work the way they should, which could lead to injuries. It is best to have a snack that contains a source of complex carbohydrate, protein, and small amount of fat before exercising such as whole wheat bread with peanut butter or string cheese with wheat crackers. Be sure to drink plenty of water before, during, and after your workouts as well to replenish the fluids lost during your workout.

Please submit any questions to Nicole Zammit (our Registered & Licensed Dietitian) by email at nzammit@4j.lane.edu.

Food For Thought

Catering Spotlight:

Patty Rigsby Community

Tough times have forced us to rethink the way we offer catering services...

Because we are all trying to watch every dollar we spend, our catering department has not been nearly as busy as it has been in the past.

The Nutrition Services department runs its catering department at the 4j Ed. Center. Patty Rigsby, shown here, is the person who does the catering on a day to day basis. Since the catering volume decreased, we’ve had to find other duties for Patty, like doing some production for our scratch-cooking operation, and managing the produce we order and receive.

Patty also runs the operations called the “Lunch Box” down at the Ed. Center which offers meals to the people who work there as well as people who visit for meetings. Although we offer this as a buffet service now each Wednesday, it’s open to anyone for $5.25 if you’re in the area for a meeting during lunchtime.

Another new service we offer through the Lunch Box is “Take-Home Fridays.” This enables busy people to take home a dinner for four for the weekends. Who has time to prepare a huge meal? The menus are designed to be popped in the oven to heat, and usually come complete with salad, rolls and sides. There’s also gourmet pizza available every Friday.

The menu and costs are on our website, but if you purchase the entire month’s “take-Home Friday” menu you get 25% off! This is open to ANYONE, not just Ed. Center employees. You just have to pick up the meal yourself Friday afternoon before 5 pm.

It’s important to note that we see caterings that happen all the time at various places around our buildings, but we haven’t had the opportunity to do them. That’s why we think it’s important to let you know that although we’ve found some items for Patty to do to keep her busy, we still do offer catering services when it’s feasible to do so. Simply call the catering department at 790-7954 or visit our website (www.4j.lane.edu/catering) for more details, including the Lunch Box menu and pricing.

Website Update Activity

If you haven’t stopped by our website in a while, feel free to “drop by” to see what we’ve been up to. Here’s a couple of our recent changes:

• Menus / Our Food: A parent group suggested that we should find a way to list all of our ingredients that we serve. After trying to figure out an efficient way to do this that we could update every year, we decided to list them all here. It’s pretty user-friendly. You simply click on each category, and there is a index list that tells the ingredients in order.

• Event Calendar / BBQ’s: our BBQ schedule is up, click on this link to see how to schedule a BBQ for your school. Read about the specifics of scheduling a BBQ, because we have some logistical delivery limitations which preclude us from having more than two per day, one on each side of town.

• Catering: If you ever need something, we’re still open for business. Remember to visit this tab first if you think you need catering for that meeting, then send us an email!
New Assistant Director

Please join me in welcoming Nicole Zammit!

As most of you probably know, Javier Lopez, our Assistant Director for the past two years, has moved on and accepted another job with Sodexo in Sunny Minnesota.

His job was posted, and we interviewed many candidates. I pleased to announce that Nicole Zammit has been awarded the position of Assistant Director of Nutrition Services! Nicole of course has already been working for us here at 4j as Nutrition Services Manager. This promotion for her will enable her to continue to work as a registered and licensed dietitian for the district, as well as assume some of the duties that Javier used to do.

Nicole has been instrumental in the continual improvement process of our menus, using her knowledge to ensure that the USDA standards are met (We just passed our State audit with flying colors!) and at the same time try to incorporate as many scratch-based recipes using fresh ingredients as possible.

It was very evident that Nicole is uniquely qualified for the job. She has improved tremendously in her two years here at 4j, and has done countless projects for us, while maintaining her regular duties, and lending dietetic support for neighboring districts.

We are currently evaluating her former NSM position to figure out the direction we want in terms of specific duties for this position.

We will likely start the process for hiring a new NSM early this Spring that will give us more coverage for the schools. In the meantime, Rick and Nicole are “stepping up their game” to ensure that the schools are getting adequate coverage.

Also, a couple Managers or Directors from neighboring school districts are lending a hand for a while until things stabilize.

Welcome aboard (again) Nicole!

Earth Day

Isn’t Every Day Earth Day in Eugene?

Earth Day is Friday, April 22nd this year. We’re planning a couple promotions for us to all get involved with and make a commitment to make a difference with our planet. For starters, we’re planning a “sustainable menu, along with some cool activities.

The first thing we’re planning is a “Planet Pledge” for our elementary schools where students can pledge to make a difference in their neighborhood.

For the secondary schools, we’re planning a “Clean Up, Green Up” promotion. More information will be on our “green cafeterias” tab on our website as we get closer to April.

Food for Thought

When Will Spring Get Here?

A Horrible cold snap in the southwestern United States has forced us to closely examine the way we serve fresh fruits and veggies.

As you can see by our “rainbow offering bar” picture on our website, we have been proud that we normally serve approximately 80% fresh fruits and veggies during a time when produce is available and plentiful.

Even in the middle of the winter, we have only dropped to the 70% mark. As most people have discovered in the grocery store, some produce items are of poor quality or unavailable altogether due to the freezes in the southwest. As the farms locally will not be ready to do any harvesting for months, this has caused us to substitute some fresh items with other items, like canned items where necessary. We will monitor the situation closely and we have made changes on a day-to-day basis. Our local suppliers have been trying hard to get us high-quality produce at a fair price as well.

This has affected our offering bars as well as some items we serve on our fresh-made sub sandwiches at our schools. It’s important to note that when the supply is depleted in one area, people might switch to another item, causing that supply to either be depleted or cause the price to have a domino effect and affect the pricing on the item. Please be patient as “this too shall pass” and we’ll be able to again offer the produce that we expect as soon as we can.

A picture off our website of some of our offering bars

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2nd Annual Future Chefs Culinary Competition

Our second annual “Future Chefs” cooking competition for 4th and 5th graders was held at South Eugene High school on Saturday, February 12th. We handed out recipe cards to every 4th and 5th grade classroom in Eugene-2500 in all—and received over 230 of them back. A complete list of winners as well as this year’s recipe book can be found on our website: www.4j.lane.edu/nutrition/futurechefs There were 35 other school districts doing the same competition across the US this month. This year, our 39 finalists boiled down to one grand prize finalist, Dylan Waggoner from Willagillespie. His recipe will be submitted along with the grand prize winners from the other contests to determine a national winner. Dylan has won at least an ipod nano for his efforts. He might win an ipod touch if he’s one of the five grand finalists at the National level. Those kids will submit a video on youtube of their cooking. The ones with the most “like” votes will be the national winner. GOOD LUCK DYLAN!

Local Partner
Stephanie Pearl-Kimmel

The last time we talked about Stephanie in the newsletter was our opening meeting, in which she came and was our keynote speaker to all of our employees, talking about the “chefs move to school” initiative.

We agreed that there would be other opportunities for people like her as well as other local chefs in terms of training or partnering with us for other activities.

This month, such an opportunity took place as she helped us choose the finalists for our 2nd annual “Future Chefs” culinary competition. She then came for the cook-off event. She spend the afternoon circulating among the young chefs, lending her expertise to them.

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