For Immediate Release

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Rural Illinois School District Completes First Semester of Scratch-Cooking School Meal Program

January 14, 2020 – Chicago, Illinois. Lincoln Elementary School District launched a farm to school cafeteria program, Lincoln 27 and Beyond, at the start of the 2019-2020 school year. As part of the program, students tour the cafeteria to learn more about cooking preparations, meet farmers and learn about food and agriculture within the classroom.

At the end of the first semester the cost-neutral program reached a rate of 60% scratch-cooked breakfast and lunch meals with 45% preferred foods and 13% local foods. Preferred foods consist of fresh and sustainable ingredients. Program savings come from measured reductions of waste, both what students throw away and what cooks prepare, as well as kitchen operating efficiencies. The district serves more than 360,000 meals annually to 1,200 students.

Students commend the district for increasing fresh foods for breakfast and lunch meals. Many recognize that cooks are preparing recipes from scratch and cite the improved taste. A second grade student speaks to the long term benefits of scratch-cooked school meals, "We can remember when we are older and get out of school; we can still eat healthy and be strong." New cooked-from-scratch lunch favorites include Sloppy Joes featuring Toohill Seed and Beef Service (21 miles from the schools) and hand-breaded chicken breast fingers. Breakfast highlights feature scratch cooked biscuits and gravy with Huelskoetter Pork (10 miles from the schools) and frittatas with seasonal vegetables.

Greg Christian, CEO and founder of Beyond Green Sustainable Food Partners, a consulting firm contracted to lead the district for the first year asserts, "Creating the foundation for daily learning and setting kids up for a lifetime of healthy eating starts with training for school nutrition staff on how to cook from scratch. We're focused on increasing the culinary skills and leadership of the existing team to successfully run their own scratch cooked program."

Lincoln 27 and Beyond builds upon the success of Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH), a national program that has historically launched kids and communities toward healthier lifestyles. The Abraham Lincoln Memorial Hospital (ALMH) Community Health Collaborative brought CATCH to the district and now Lincoln 27 and Beyond with funding provided by the ALMH Foundation. Angela Stoltzenburg, director of the hospital's Community Health Collaborative, championed the program due to "the promise of cost-neutrality and developing a nutrition program in schools that sets up student palates for a lifetime of craving nutrient dense foods." Lincoln 27 and Beyond is part of a county wide effort to reverse health trends and create the healthiest community in the country. **#lincoln27andbeyond**

About Beyond Green Sustainable Food Partners
Beyond Green Sustainable Food Partners is a consulting and foodservice company that promotes scratch-cooked foods, local sourcing, and zero-waste. Founded by chef and "eco-preneur" Greg Christian, their consulting services offer customizable and measurable strategies that offset the costs of increasing quality and environmental stewardship across food, waste, energy, water, and community for institutional kitchens. Their team is devoted to client success and is pleased to provide tools that help others contribute to a healthier, cleaner, and more efficient food system while connecting with the communities they serve. In the greater Chicago area, they operate a zero-waste foodservice company that provides local school lunches based upon fresh, scratch-cooked foods that kids love in a zero-waste kitchen. To learn more about Beyond Green Partners, please visit www.beyondgreenpartners.com.

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