



Lincoln 27 and Beyond formed in support of creating a foodservice program at Lincoln Elementary School District 27 (LESD27) that contributes to the vision of becoming the healthiest community in the nation. The initiative set out to create a food culture that prioritizes nutritious, delicious menus while creating a sustainable, equitable food system that empowers students to live their full potential.

LESD27 serves more than 360,000 meals annually to approximately 1200 students. With grant funding from the Abraham Lincoln Memorial Hospital Foundation and staffing support from the Abraham Lincoln Memorial Hospital Community Health Collaboration (ALMHCHC), LESD27 worked with Beyond Green Sustainable Food Partners (BGP) to transition district cafeterias to scratch cooking using fresh, local foods by the end of 2019-2020.

WHERE TO START

Lincoln 27 and Beyond builds upon the success of Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH), a national program that shepherds kids and communities toward healthier lifestyles. ALMHCHC brought CATCH to the district to prevent obesity through programming that promotes staying active, healthy eating and adopting healthy habits.

The project launched with a one week summer training for district cooks in July 2019. In addition to cooking skill development, nutrition staff visited farms, learned how to use production schedules and waste logs to operate more efficiently.

IDENTIFY PRIORITIES

From the beginning, project leadership engaged the entire district and community in changing the culture of health. Teachers and farmers filled the role of food and agriculture educators, janitors became waste monitors and evaluators, administrators provided leadership to the school and community and parents attended family nights to learn about cooking and healthy eating.

In addition to prioritizing this integrated approach to wellness, the district focused on students' input to drive menu changes. One student shared, *"I am going to turn into Popeye"* and he flexed his muscles after sampling an egg casserole with spinach.

" We can remember when we are older and get out of school; we can still eat healthy and be strong. "

– Lincoln Elementary 2nd Grader

Supporting the community's farmers and economy provided a central theme throughout the project. New cooked-from-scratch lunch favorites included Sloppy Joes featuring Toohill Seed and Beef Service (21 miles from the schools) and hand-breaded chicken breast fingers. Breakfast highlights comprised of scratch cooked biscuits and gravy with Huelskoetter Pork (10 miles from the schools) and frittatas with seasonal vegetables.

TRAINING FOR SUCCESS

BGP assessed all kitchen staff knowledge and cooking execution at the start and end of the year-long project in key culinary areas including:

- Tools, Equipment and Appliances
- Knife Skills
- Basic Cooking Principles
- Recipe Production, Weights and Measurements
- Kitchen Efficiency Systems and Logs
- Food Identification and Knowledge

Throughout the project BGP provided frequent culinary skills training. All 11 cooks demonstrated cooking ability improvement with a median score increase of 28%. 9 out of the 11 cooks achieved a score higher than the goal score.



What one student said about the progress:

“ It’s like my grandma’s cooking – the world’s best! ”

GETTING RESULTS

It takes a village to change the culture for students to crave nutrient dense foods. The school and community stepped up to the plate in significant ways to set a new path towards becoming the healthiest community in the nation. Some of the achievements include:



▲
146%

Preferred Food (fresh & sustainable)
To reach 63% of total food purchases



▲
109%

Local Food Purchases
To reach 40% of food purchases from local farms



73% of Menu Items Now Cooked from **Scratch**.



43% decrease Overproduction Waste

4.6% decrease Total Lbs. of Plate Waste*
*per serving, per day

70.7%

▲
68.8%
Participation Rate
from baseline



Avg. Meal Cost
within reimbursement rate



 **beyond green**
sustainable food partners

Is your organization looking to green things up?

WE CAN HELP!