



Those Sensational Silver Platers

Food Management

Ideas for Onsite Foodservice

May 2009

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front of the house

SCHOOLS

Survey: Kids Want Wider Ethnic Choices

K-12 customers asked to design “ultimate” school cafeteria menu come up with a cross-cultural mix.

A poll of school-aged students by the Y-Pulse, LLC, youth marketing research group supports the notion that youngsters are knowledgeable about and want more ethnic choices in school cafeterias. That was the major conclusion of Y-Pulse’s Dream Kitchen Survey, conducted through the whyville.net website, which asked participants about their notion of the ultimate school cafeteria.



How Does Your Garden Grow? Executive Sous Chef Mike Passanita of Parkhurst Dining Services at St. Francis University tends the school’s greenhouse garden. The garden, part of a sustainability effort, supplies fresh produce and herbs for special event meals and other catered functions. Products include Little Gem romaine lettuce, Black Simpson leaf lettuce, flat leaf parsley, curly parsley, thyme, sweet basil, stevia, winter thyme, cilantro, rosemary and cosmos, an edible flower.

“This is a generation that knows—and orders—menu items like baba ghanouj, tiramisu, pad thai and empanadas,” says Y-Pulse Co-founder Sharon Olson. “Through this survey, we learned that they are interested in having a broader variety of authentic ethnic foods as choices for school meals.”

Beyond citing specific dishes—wonton soup, Japanese sushi, hummus, quesadillas and calamari, to name a few—they would like to see menued in their dream kitchen, the respondents also said they would like to see a regular cross-cultural mix of items.

“One student requested that their cafeteria include four different sections devoted to authentic regional dishes, including Chinese, Italian, Mexican and traditional American,” says Tami Cline, another Y-Pulse co-founder who is also a former foodservice director.

“Another envisioned a ‘World Wonder’ cart that would rotate multicultural foods such as Swedish meatballs and Indian fare. These and many other answers show there is a strong exposure to global cuisines that can be successfully tapped in the school foodservice setting.”