Food and Feedback: Aramark Student Nutrition Embraces Community and Change for Collaborative Dining

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PHILADELPHIA--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jul. 30, 2024-- As the school year opens for Aramark (NYSE: ARMK), Student Nutrition is ready to power the potential of every student by serving up outstanding hospitality and culinary innovation throughout all the school districts it serves. This innovation has been fueled by the results of tens of thousands of student and caregiver surveys gathered this past spring.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20240729752260/en/



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“When we say that we value engagement and community voices, we mean it,” said Barbara Flanagan, President and CEO of Aramark Student Nutrition. “Our outreach to middle and high school students, along with elementary school parents and guardians, and their feedback has shaped our dining experience for the upcoming school year. Students looked to taste, freshness, and appearance of food as priority, while the parents added healthy food options to that list.”

To meet these needs, Student Nutrition has tasked its Culinary Alliance of chefs to work with its Nutrition Network to add even more exciting from-scratch recipes that use fresh and local ingredients. These recipes include special limited time offers for each month of the school year, as well as homemade cinnamon sugar churros with sun butter cocoa dip for a breakfast option, turkey barbacoa tacos, a “new-stalgic” patty melt, a permanent addition of last year’s hit high school LTO quesa-birria, and a special Rally café station Mediterranean grain bowl.

Community Involvement

This melding of community desires and national trends doesn’t stop with Student Nutrition’s teams. Indian Hill High School in Ohio led the way through its Guest Chef program – the Principal worked with food service director Peter Wynne to develop his special menu item, Italian Sausage and Peppers. This was quickly followed by the Athletic staff’s Kickin’ Spicy Chicken Sandwich and Slow Roasted Pulled Pork Sandwich.

“I’ve spent over 20 years in food service,” said Wynne. “And I know one of the most essential parts of hospitality is building relationships.”

Part of building authentic relationships that reflect communities is a commitment to offering diverse culinary menus. Aramark created new Chef Spotlight meals for Hispanic, Black History, Women’s, and Asian American and Pacific Islanders Heritage Months for participating districts this year. In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month in September, Student Nutrition districts will feature authentic and tasty Arroz con Pollo, Sopita, and Picadillo Burrito meals.

“Food is a communal experience. We absolutely love getting students and the greater K-12 community involved in their dining program,” said Senior Executive Chef Laura McMann. “When we can incorporate their kitchen innovation, whether it is through shared guest recipes or adapting winning student chef menus, we can create a unique feel that speaks to its locale.”

Culinary Evolution

It’s not only the community that can show off its culinary chops; in Texas, there is a piloted Culinary Camp program that trains every kitchen worker on the techniques and processes that promote excellence. Not every person in the dining hall is a chef, but all staff members can enhance their skills.

“Our people continuously seek learning and new experiences,” said Terry Kirk, Vice President for Human Resources for ASN. “It is our privilege to be able to find new ways to provide that kind of lifelong education for our staff, whether it is in traditional training modules completed annually or in hands-on skill shops that are conducted with a significant helping of fun in a ‘summer camp’ setting.”

Enhancing skills and knowledge goes beyond operational teams. The Nutrition Network deployed a member survey to catalogue its member strengths and find ways to share expertise. The current network has nearly 450 combined years of nutritional experience, as well as holding multiple additional degrees and credentials. The range of key knowledge areas is diverse, with special concentrations in allergen and special diet knowledge as well as deep understanding of USDA regulations.

Additionally, Aramark has launched Connect365, a wellness communication hub providing turnkey resources to power client health and wellbeing communications. Through this powerful new tool, partner school districts can pull informative blogs from Aramark’s latest *What's a Parent To Do* series to share parenting tips and tricks for their school children and then distribute crafted wellness communications to help parents on their path to healthier living for the entire family. Thanks to the insights and inspiration of hundreds of our chefs, dietitians, and other wellness experts, this library of knowledge can be shared in digital communications with three simple steps: copy, paste, post.

Want to see what Aramark Student Nutrition is cooking up this school year? Visit the freshly redesigned website to access what the districts’ latest dining program innovations are, plus informative articles and case studies on how Student Nutrition is powering student potential nationwide.

About Aramark

Aramark (NYSE: ARMK) proudly serves the world’s leading educational institutions, Fortune 500 companies, world champion sports teams, prominent

healthcare providers, iconic destinations and cultural attractions, and numerous municipalities in 15 countries around the world with food and facilities management. Because of our hospitality culture, our employees strive to do great things for each other, our partners, our communities, and the planet. Aramark has been recognized on FORTUNE's list of "World's Most Admired Companies," The Civic 50 by Points of Light 2024, Fair360's "Top 50 Companies for Diversity" and "Top Companies for Black Executives," Newsweek's list of "America's Most Responsible Companies 2024," the HRC's "Best Places to Work for LGBTQ Equality," and earned a score of 100 on the Disability Equality Index. Learn more at www.aramark.com and connect with us on LinkedIn, Facebook, X, and Instagram.

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