



### **WaveCrest Cafe: Vista Unified School District**

We've been able to execute a broad-based nutrition outreach campaign with our district, engaging students, staff, parents and family members as well as community partners and civic leaders. From on-campus nutrition outreach to local media coverage, from using social / digital media as well as grass roots advocacy, we've been able to establish a respected nutrition brand in our community.

### **Team Nutrition Resources And Ideas**

**Cookbooks & Stickers:** We received a quantity of cookbooks and stickers from Team Nutrition that have become "go-to" handouts as a means of engaging students and families at many of the district events we attend.

**Partners:** We work with many partners to learn from, develop and share resources and insights, and expand our reach. Among those partners are those who are aligned with Team Nutrition, such as The Center for Ecoliteracy, Dairy Council of California, and Farm-to-School. We utilize resources and insights from each of these to communicate with our communities, and also to keep local community partners like PTAs, Chambers of Commerce, education foundations and others engaged with our work. We've found that great school food is a source of community pride, and partners help to fuel those efforts.

**Smarter Lunchroom:** We regularly utilize Smarter Lunchroom Trainer Guides and techniques, and encourage our staff members to explore how these tools can improve and enliven their service and the dining environment in our locations. We stress that just as teachers conduct ongoing professional development to stay at the top of their game, our team does the same, always looking to improve and innovate our service.

**Letters to Principals:** We contact each Principal multiple times throughout the year to arrange for on-campus nutrition outreach events, as well as information for students, parents/families and community members. The Team Nutrition letter templates are a great resource to build off of as we craft communication that is specific to our district's community.

### **Other Channels To Conduct Nutrition Outreach**

Our broad-based nutrition outreach includes a number of other ways that we engage with and distribute the stories of how we are working to be at the top of our field. Those include:

## On-Campus Outreach

**Classroom-based presentations:** We work with schools to visit individual classrooms to speak with students about nutrition and wellness. These typically happen by arranging to visit classes for an entire grade level at a time. These visits allow us to converse and engage with students in a space they are comfortable and familiar with.

**School-wide assemblies:** We also conduct school-wide nutrition assemblies to speak with the entire student body at a school in one (or two) sittings. This allows us to conduct higher energy events that can be supported with on-campus signage, email, and social media messages.

**Interactive events:** We conduct several interactive on-campus events, including a “Fear Factor Food Challenge” which has us providing samples of salad bar items (typically Harvest Of The Month) for students to taste in a fun and engaging way. We also conduct #CaliforniaThursdays photo rush events, where we visit schools during lunch periods, talk with students about our Farm To School initiative, and take pictures of students with large scale picture frames. These events allow us to have fun, high energy events that reinforce the strengths of our program.



**Signage:** We create myriad visual assets for display throughout the year, from large format photo menus to posters and flyers that feature menu items or students’ opinions on their favorite meals. Freshly designed images help to keep our signage current and engaging.



## Social Media

We maintain a Facebook and Twitter account, and each are updated most every day, Monday - Friday. Social media allows us to deliver quick bits of information and graphics that lead back to our website where we have more robust resources for students, parents, teachers and staff. We also create custom social media graphics featuring our menu items, student photos, staff images and resources for families.

## Media Outreach

We work regularly with local English and Spanish language media (tv, radio, print and online) to share

stories about school nutrition, locally sourced items, and human interest stories about staff, students, suppliers and community groups who support our nutrition efforts.

### **Website**

We maintain a standalone website for our nutrition services department, which we have branded ([WaveCrest Cafe](#)). The site allows us the ability to promote the brand and be easily accessible for the community. It also allows us to create custom content to give people a deeper look into what our department is doing. That content includes:

**Articles:** From stories about local vendors to campus visits from local collegiate student-athletes, from healthy eating tips to recipes, we work to provide a wealth of helpful content for our community.

**Videos:** We have created a number of videos to share our messages about how we source, plan and prepare our menu items, so that students parents, staff and the community can make stronger connections to our department and how we approach school nutrition.

### **Newsletter**

We produce a monthly email newsletter that goes to over 26,000 students, parents and staff members. This newsletter lets us have direct communication with those we serve, providing information, inviting feedback, and sharing resources with our community.

### **Surveys**

Our menu changes three times each school year, and we conduct surveys of students, staff and parents/family members to garner feedback on favorite and least favorite menu items, suggestions for meals or service improvement, as well as gauging the awareness of many of our efforts, including Farm To School / local sourcing of foods, nutritional content of our meals, etc.

### **Tips & Lessons Learned**

**Tips:** Utilize every resource multiple ways. For example, if we're using a tip from MyPlate, we can use that tip and write a short article that ties the tip to our schools. We then use images from MyPlate on our social media channels and link to the article on our website. We can follow that up with a snippet of the article and the image in our newsletter. So that one tip can generate 3 or 4 (or more) pieces of content to reach our audiences.

**Lessons Learned:** Be strategic in how we approach ideas. We generally divide our efforts into three areas: 1) Constants: our website, social media channels, menu designs, content, and newsletters. Without these we have little to talk about. 2) Controlled Components: These are things over which we exert a high degree of control. An on-campus event that requires little from a Principal or group of teachers. This allows us to execute and make others look good. 3) Opportunistic: These are things that rely on a third party to approve or green light. A news editor or producer running a story, a Principal approving an assembly, etc. They tend to be high profile

and high reward, but these are more difficult to arrange and execute. We do them, but they aren't the sole focus. A healthy mix of these three components help us to be productive and creative.