

PRESS RELEASE

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Chicago Public School Students Are Cooking up Change at Healthy Schools Campaign's Annual Fundraiser

17 High School Culinary Teams Vie for the Opportunity to Have their Meal Served to their Peers across the Entire CPS District

Students from 17 Chicago public high schools are Cooking up Change as part of Healthy Schools Campaign's annual healthy cooking contest and fundraiser. Cooking up Change challenges high school culinary students to create healthy and delicious school lunches that their peers will enjoy. The dishes are created using standard school kitchen equipment and ingredients, and must meet the district's strict nutrition guidelines and budget constraints of about \$1 per meal.

"Cooking up Change is an exciting competition that puts student voices front and center in the conversation about school food," said Rochelle Davis, president and CEO of Healthy Schools Campaign. "A healthy meal has a direct impact on students' success in the classroom. Cooking up Change is an opportunity for students to be part of that dialogue, and to speak up about the importance of healthy meals that fuel their learning and lifelong health."

Cooking up Change participants are enrolled in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Career and Technical Education (CTE) Culinary program, which focuses on professional food preparation and restaurant management. The student chefs create their meals over a period of weeks, refining the ingredients and nutrition content to meet their tastes and contest requirements. While the meals are their own, they work under the guidance of their culinary instructors and professional mentor chefs from the community. Through Cooking up Change, students achieve academic credit while gaining valuable real world experience.

"Students aren't just learning how to cook, they're gaining a better understanding of nutrition, health and wellness," said Leslie Fowler, director of nutrition support services at CPS. "And it's an opportunity for them to inform the menu. At the end of the day, kids are looking for flavor." The culmination of the Cooking up Change program will take place at Healthy Schools Campaign's annual fundraiser on October 30 at the Bridgeport Art Center in Chicago, where the student chefs will present their meals to a panel of expert judges, consisting of professional chefs, food service professionals and policymakers, among others. The meals are judged according to a variety of set criteria, including taste and the students' visual and oral presentations of their meals.

Next semester, the winning team will have their meal added to the CPS menu and served across the entire 400,000-student district. In June, the winning team will travel to Washington, D.C., to compete in the Cooking up Change national finals against other winning teams from

across the country and to take part in a legislative briefing on Capitol Hill about the importance of healthy school food.

Cooking up Change participating high schools include:

Chicago Vocational Career Academy
Clemente Community Academy
Corliss High School
Curie Metro High School
Dunbar Vocational Career Academy
Fenger Academy High School
Juarez Community Academy
Manley Community Academy
Marshall Metropolitan High School
North-Grand High School
Prosser Career Academy
Richards Career Academy
Roosevelt High School
Simeon Career Academy
Southside Occupational Academy
Vaughn Occupational High School
Washington High School

Cooking up Change is supported by Aramark, the Presenting Sponsor and National School Nutrition Partner; Southwest Airlines, the Official Travel Partner; The James Beard Foundation, the Official Culinary Partner; American Federation of Teachers, National Silver Sponsor; and Aetna, Hero Sponsor.

Guests wishing to attend the Cooking up Change competition and fundraiser at the Bridgeport Art Center on October 30 can purchase tickets at cookingupchange.org.

About Healthy Schools Campaign

Healthy Schools Campaign (HSC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to learn and thrive in a healthy school environment. HSC believes that health and wellness should be incorporated into every aspect of the school experience. Founded in 2002, HSC advocates for children to have better access to nutritious school food, physical activity, school health resources and clean air to shape their lifelong learning and health. HSC facilitates collaboration between students, parents, teachers, administrators and policymakers to help prepare this diverse group of stakeholders to lead change for healthier schools at the school, district, state and national levels. For more information, go to healthyschoolscampaign.org.

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