

PRESS RELEASE

COOKING UP CHANGE®
Students Transforming the Future of School Food



June 8, 2015

Media Contacts:

Tatum Wan, The Tatum Wan Co.

tatum@tatumwanco.com

818-590-1530

Jeremy Borling, Healthy Schools Campaign

jeremy@healthyschoolscampaign.org

708-446-0225

Student Chefs Head to Washington, DC, to Compete in Cooking up Change National Finals

*National Cooking Competition Challenges High School Students to Create
Delicious Meals that Meet the National School Nutrition Standards*

CHICAGO – After an eight-month, nationwide tour, nine teams of high school culinary students from across the country are headed to Washington, DC, to compete in the Cooking up Change National Finals. The competition will take place on Monday, June 8, at the U.S. Department of Education. In addition, the students and their meals will be featured at two events on Capitol Hill. On Tuesday, June 9, the students will attend a House briefing where their meals will be served to members of Congress and where they'll urge their national leaders to support their health and learning by maintaining a high bar for school food. This message is more important than ever this year as some are calling for Congress to weaken the school nutrition standards that were recently adopted to support student health and address the nation's childhood obesity crisis. On Wednesday, June 10, the students will offer up their award-winning meals and cooking demonstrations at a Senate tasting event.

Cooking up Change is a dynamic culinary competition that challenges student chefs to create healthy school meals that their peers enjoy and that meet the national nutrition standards for school food. Each of the teams qualified for the Cooking up Change National Finals by winning a local competition in their hometown. After preparing and presenting their meals to a panel of esteemed judges—including national policymakers, nutrition experts and celebrity chefs—a national champion will be crowned.

Created in 2007 by Healthy Schools Campaign, Cooking up Change presents the future of school food with healthy, fun, locally inspired meals that appeal to kids. By complying with school nutrition standards and using only commonly available school food service ingredients and equipment, students create recipes that include no more than six steps so that their meals can be easily replicated on a large scale and in real school kitchens. Students have limited time to develop their recipes, test their creations and refine their ideas based on peer feedback and professional nutritional analysis.

Through creativity and hard work, Cooking up Change participants create healthy school meals that their peers love, and that can serve as a model for the future of school food.

“We’re incredibly impressed by and proud of the Cooking up Change National Finals qualifiers. Being here in Washington, DC, means they’re already winners,” said Healthy Schools Campaign President and CEO Rochelle Davis. “These students are doing much more than taking part in a cooking competition; they’re showing us the way toward solving the political debate over school food. While working within the constraints of the national nutrition standards, they’ve created healthy school meals that their peers love. By taking a page out of their cookbook, we can make healthy and delicious school meals a reality for all students.”

“Everybody finds something they care about doing in life—something that empowers them and brings out their talent. I admire that these students have found such passion, creativity and vision for making good food,” said Karen Duncan, Cooking up Change National Honorary Chair and wife of Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. “I am happy to be working with these students in Cooking up Change to help make their vision for school food a reality in their schools and in schools across the nation.”

Each Cooking up Change student-designed meal complies with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) school nutrition standards for calories, fat and sodium content, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, including side dishes, which meet USDA Smart Snacks in Schools standards. Meals are judged on their originality, taste, texture and appearance. Teams score additional points for the quality of their presentation to the judges.

Cooking up Change is supported by National Partner [Kids’ Safe & Healthful Foods Project](#), National School Nutrition Partner [Aramark](#), Official Travel Partner [Southwest Airlines](#), Official Culinary Partner [James Beard Foundation](#), and National Silver Sponsor [American Federation of Teachers](#).

2015 Cooking up Change National Finalists

Marshall Metropolitan High School – Chicago, IL

Da’ovan Brown, Autum Guyton, Zykeria Pearson

Menu: Haitian Spice Chicken, Slamming Collard Greens and Pineapple Surprise Parfait

Breithaupt Career and Technical Center – Detroit, MI

Alondra Garcia, Guillermo Garcia, Jennifer Mercado

Menu: Rio Chicken Wrap, Sunset in Hawaii and Tutti Fruity Parfait

Westside High School – Houston, TX

Jose Acosta, Jalien Noel, Briseida Salas

Menu: Cowboy Cajun Chicken Lollipop, Twisted Texas Cabbage and Collard Greens, and Pineapple Tart

Frank H. Peterson Academies of Technology – Jacksonville, FL

Alyssa McLendon, Bradley Patterson, Hali Hayes

Menu: Chicken Gyro with Tzatziki Sauce, Greek Cucumber Salad and Citrus Parfait

Memphis Health Careers Academy – Memphis, TN

Raijeen Davis, Shanterica Reed, TyJuan Turner

Menu: Explosive Chimichanga Surprise, Sensational Salad Blast and Apple Cinnamon Delight

Westminster High School – Orange County, CA

Elizabeth Castro, Shae Dela Pina, Jonathan Quispe

Menu: Mexican Chicken Street Tacos, Motherland Esquite and Peachin' Empanada

Wekiva High School – Orlando, FL

Lauren Earnest · Andy Obregon · Anthony Truong

Menu: Chicken Fried Rice, Miyabi Japanese Onion Soup and Peanut Butter Banana

Eastern Senior High and School Without Walls – Washington, DC

Tatyanna Clark, Dion Harrison, Ay Okuleye

Menu: Yummy Lo Mein with Colorful Salad and Sweet Peach Applesauce

Heights High School – Wichita, KS

Shaneen Anderson, Olivia Cox, Colleen Howland

Menu: BBQ Chicken Pinwheels, Roasted, Spiced Potatoes and Green Beans and Peach Crunch with Vanilla Drizzle

For more information about the Cooking up Change, visit cookingupchange.org.

About Healthy Schools Campaign

Healthy Schools Campaign (HSC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to making schools healthier places for all students. 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 among 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, or follow HSC on social media at facebook.com/healthyschools and twitter.com/healthyschools.

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