

FRESH BITES NEWSLETTER

September 2019

Featured: NutriStudents K-12 discounted
\$1,000 thru 10/31

Have you said any of the following since school started?

"My USDA Administrative Review is this year. How am I going to manage that additional work and stress?"

"I wish I had more staff for all this work!"

"These compliance reports are time consuming!"

"I need new menus to keep the kids engaged all year."

NutriStudents K-12 has what you need to succeed in 2019-2020. If you're not already a client, you need to take advantage of the unprecedented discount available only during our fall promotion!

In honor of National School Lunch Week (#NSLW19) observed October 14-18 and Farm-to-School Month (#F2SMonth) in October, NutriStudents K-12 is offering \$1,000 off the initial system set-up fee through Thursday, October 31. Combined with our "love it or it's free" guarantee, now's the best time to get access to our 30-week rotation of student-approved NSLP menus, and "behind-the-lines" support for greater success this year.

Schedule a demo or contact Amanda (amanda@NutriStudentsK-12.com or 651.333.4295) today to find out how NutriStudents K-12 delivers #MenuFreedom and to take advantage of this offer! Already a client? Tell your FSD friends about NutriStudents K-12 and this amazing deal!

Schedule a demo

Editor's Note

Inspiring. Kids.

NutriStudents K-12 is a mission-driven organization. The #KidsWeServe inspire us and, in turn, we aim to inspire them to eat! Learn more about our #KidsWeServe campaign on page 2.

This month's newsletter has inspiration for you too. Learn from the successful program in Verndale, Minnesota. Tap into #NSLW19 and Farm-to-School Month to amp up the volume on your program.

In this issue

Fall Promotion. [Page 1](#)

#KidsWeServe Inspire Us [Page 2](#)

Rural District Offers Creative, Student-Pleasing Menus [Page 2-3](#)

What's on Your #NSLW19 Playlist? [Page 4](#)

Join in the #F2SMonth Fun! [Pages 5](#)

Make This: Curry Gravy Meatballs [Page 6](#)

#KidsWeServe inspire us!



NutriStudents K-12 is a mission-driven organization. By equipping FSDs with menus kids love, we help ensure more kids will eat, be well-nourished and ready to learn. The #KidsWeServe are the reasons we put our heart and soul into our work.

We'd love to hear about and share stories of the #KidsWeServe from programs offering NutriStudents K-12 menus. Which students of yours have high aspirations? Who is so thrilled to eat school breakfast or school lunch every day? Are there students

who learned to love new foods because they first tried them at school? Share your stories with us on social platforms with the hashtags: #KidsWeServe #MenuFreedom #SchoolLunch. Or drop us a note with a photo of the student at CustomerService@NutriStudentsK-12.com.

In some cases, the #KidsWeServe are even more personal. Pictured above, Director of Client Relations Shelly Miller recently enjoyed a NutriStudents K-12 meal (Spaghetti Bolognese) with her 8th grade son, Kevin (on right), and her 12th-grade niece Katlyn, and 8th-grade nephew, Eli. Shelly works hard to benefit them and the thousands of kids nationwide who enjoy NutriStudents K-12 menus. #KidsWeServe #MenuFreedom #SchoolLunch

Rural district offers creative, student-pleasing menus

The Verndale school district in central Minnesota is like many rural districts – limited in staff and under-resourced. Foodservice Director Vickie Thompson, who also works in the front office, came into the position with little training on menu planning, USDA nutritional guidelines, HACCP, allocating USDA Foods or ordering.

In her first year in the position, she relied on the district's existing USDA-compliant menus. She realized however, students and district staff wanted a new variety of menus. She also quickly discovered that the federal reporting requirements and service procedures were a challenge.

When a foodservice director she knew referred her to NutriStudents K-12®, Thompson checked it out and signed up!

"I loved that it has all the right portions and incorporates different foods," Thompson said. "I also liked that it has all the fats, carbs and sodium listed with each menu item." Those factors alone helped save Thompson and her staff time and worries about complying with the National School Lunch Program guidelines.

In the first year with NutriStudents K-12, the district offered a 6-week cycle from the system. Based on the positive reception from students and staff, Thompson moved to a 12-week cycle the following year.

...continued on page 3

Rural district offers creative, student-pleasing menus continued

...continued from page 2

“Our food tastes better because of the creative use of spices and sauces, and everyone really likes the variety of proteins we provide,” she said.

The buffalo chicken, grilled lime chicken and enchiladas are tops with students in Verndale. The foodservice staff learned to adapt a few recipes to please the particular tastes of the students, like substituting melted cheese for shredded cheese on the nachos. They also rely on pre-made dressings and sauces rather than the scratch-made recipes from NutriStudents K-12, simply for a lack of staff. They also offer some of the students’ favorites from the district’s previous menus.

The combination of fresh new menus tailored to the population and the addition of a salad bar has increased lunch participation among students and district staff. On average, 425 of the 525 students eat lunch daily. The foodservice staff quickly warmed up to the new system and menus as they saw the response from both the kids and adults.

The foodservice staff was further enamored with the system’s built-in Food Production Reports for every menu week. They no longer struggle with reporting requirements, which is a big relief to Thompson as she looks ahead to her USDA Administrative Review. She is also reassured knowing that the responsive client support from NutriStudents K-12 will be by her side as she goes into the audit.

In addition to the menus and reports, Thompson was thrilled with the simplicity of commodities allocations using the NutriStudents K-12 USDA Commodity Forecasting Calculator. She chose her 12-week menu rotation, selected those weeks in the calculator and was provided the exact amount of each commodity food to order. What could have taken hours or days to arrive at a “best-guess” estimate, took her only a few minutes and the result was much more precise than a best-guess.

In many ways, NutriStudents K-12 has become Thompson’s go-to resource to make her foodservice program the best it can be with the resources she has.

“NutriStudents K-12 makes my whole program a lot less stressful,” she said.

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Vickie Thompson, FSD, Verndale, MN

Get In Touch!
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According to the School Nutrition Association, “National School Lunch Week (NSLW) was created in 1962 by President John F. Kennedy. It’s a week-long national observance of events and activities designed to promote the benefits of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The week recognizes the importance of a healthy school lunch in a child’s life, and the impact it has inside and outside of the classroom.”

Take advantage of [National School Lunch Week](#), October 14-18, to shine a light on your foodservice program. This year’s theme, “School Lunch: What’s on Your Playlist?”, can be leveraged in lots of fun ways to appeal to students, parents and beyond. Check out the SNA’s [NSLW19 Toolkits & Handouts](#) for great engagement ideas, including:

- Survey students ahead of NSLW to determine your “Top 10 Playlist” and offer those meals during the week.
- Create special-edition, themed entree names, such as “Rockin’ Rosy Chicken Penne” or “Swinging Sloppy Joe.”
- Partner with the music department to host a school lunch rap or song contest, or to have a lunchtime jam session.
- Invite local musicians or student musicians/ensembles to play during lunch periods all week.
- Ask a student to be DJ during lunch and spin some tunes. Rotate DJs to mix up the playlists during the week.
- Invite parents to “Take a Parent to Lunch Day” on Wednesday, October 16. Provide them with a family-sized recipe of a student-favorite meal that they can prepare at home.
- Ask your local elected officials to participate in school lunch one day during the week. While you’re asking, request they officially proclaim the week School Lunch Week in your community.

You can also leverage social media to attract attention to your school lunch program and the NSLW activities you have planned prior to, during and after the week-long observation. Consider adding live video to your social mix as the fun happens. Be sure to include good quality photos and graphics with all your posts and include the designated hashtags on your posts: #NSLW19, #SchoolLunch, #SchoolLunchRocks, #LunchPlaylist, #SchoolLunchHits; and one for us -- #MenuFreedom. We want to see all the fun you’re having!

Join in the F2S Month Fun!

October is Farm-to-School Month - a perfect time to teach students about the origins of their food and the benefits of locally produced and processed foods and ingredients. Farm-to-school foods ensure the freshest foods in school meals and help support local economies at the same time. Money spent in your community, stays in your community. And while most of us think of crop agriculture when we hear farm-to-school, it can also encompass local fisheries, beef ranchers, chicken farms and food processors.

[The National Farm-to-School Network](#) and many state and local agencies offer [resources](#) that districts, child care centers, Head Start and ECFE programs can use during October to educate kids about the origins of their food and hard-working farmers and ranchers in our country. Some of the tools available include [a full toolkit](#), downloadable coloring sheets, cafeteria posters, stickers, and more. If you already have your plans, submit them to the Farm-to-School Month calendar of activities, or check out the calendar for what others have planned. There's fun in store across the country!

Here's a fun activity: gather your students together for a celebrated Apple Crunch. The idea is simple and can be used to highlight farm-to-school month on your school's/district's social media platforms. Simply gather students, give them all a locally grown apple, and have them simultaneously take a bite while someone snaps a picture. (For those of you in the south, there are [variations using citrus fruit](#) rather than apples.) There are several apple crunches, with dates varying throughout the month:

- [Great Lakes Apple Crunch](#): Thursday, October 10 at noon
- [FarmOn! Big Apple Crunch](#): Wednesday, October 25 at 2 p.m.
- [CT HardCORE Apple & Pear Challenge](#): Monday, October 7 through Friday, October 11

If it doesn't work for you to time your crunch to coincide with other districts, no worries. It's still a great way to show off farm-to-school to your social followers no matter when you do it during October.

Need funding to support your plans for expanding farm-to-school efforts? The [USDA FNS Community Food Systems](#) annually awards as much as \$5 million in competitive grants to support farm-to-school initiatives. These grants are typically dispersed via state agencies through a formal application and review process. (Minnesota is seeking applicants for the [AGRI Farm to Early Childcare](#) and [AGRI Farm to School](#) planning and equipment grants through November 7.) [The Whole Kids Foundation](#) also is currently seeking grantees for its school gardens, salad bars and beehive grants. Apply by October 15.



The NutriStudents K-12 team took part in the 2018 Great Lakes Apple Crunch as part of #F2SMonth.

Farm-to-School Resources

[How to Start a School Garden from the Washington Post](#)

[USDA Farm-to-School \(Community Food Systems\)](#)

[National Farm-to-School Month fact sheet](#)

[National Farm-to-School Network](#)

[USDA Farm-to-School Planning Kit](#)

Make This! Curry Gravy Meatballs



Our Curry Gravy Meatball recipe has been a long-time favorite entree of both students and foodservice staff. It's easy to prepare and pairs well with pasta, potatoes or rice.

Servings: 100

Serving size: 3 meatballs

1 serving provides 1.5 oz equivalent meat/meat alternate

Ingredients

300 Turkey Meatballs (Jennie O 639930)

1/8 c + 1 T + 1 t Chicken Base

7-1/4 c + 1 T + 2 t Water

1 T generic curry powder

1 t generic onion powder

5.5 lbs sliced frozen carrots (USDA 100352)

[Download recipe and nutritional detail.](#)

Instructions

Cooking method: standard oven, 4" deep full hotel pan

1. Blend base & water to make chicken stock.
2. Place thawed meatballs into the pan.
3. Add broth, carrots & spices and mix well.
4. Wrap pan with plastic wrap & tinfoil.

HACCP: Keep cooled below 41° until ready to cook.

5. Preheat oven to 325° (if using a convection oven, decrease temp by 25° to 50°)
6. Heat until entrée reaches 165° or above, hold above 135° until end of service.
7. Serve each student 3 meatballs each

Creditable products: Product#: Jennie O 639930