

**BVSD SCHOOL FOOD PROJECT**  
**VOLUNTEER PACKET**  
**FALL 2019**



Thank you for contributing your time to help us improve the way kids eat! You will play a vital role in helping our project grow and creating lifelong healthy habits for BVSD students.

*"We believe that all children of Boulder Valley School District will have daily access to fresh, flavorful and nutritious food made with wholesome and when possible, local ingredients, so that every child may thrive."*

[bvsd.org/food](https://bvsd.org/food)

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*We need your help to recruit additional volunteers at all BVSD schools. Our goal is to have at least one dedicated School Food Project volunteer for each school.*

## 1. Background: School Food Project and Chef Ann Cooper

### The School Food Project: BVSD's Food Services Department

At the School Food Project, we believe that for kids to learn, think and be the best they can be, they have to eat well. Because of this, we are dedicated to improving the health of each student by providing healthy food and offering nutrition education programs to grow young bodies and minds.

### Our Food

We serve fresh and nutritious food every day. This amounts to nearly 13,000 scratch-cooked meals each day! We use locally sourced and organic ingredients whenever possible, and we avoid highly processed foods, high fructose corn syrup, chemicals, dyes and food additives. All of our beef and chicken on the bone and nacho meat is hormone- and antibiotic-free and our bulk milk is organic. Salad Bars are offered daily at every school and are stocked with fresh, delicious and when possible, local farm fresh produce.

BVSD is the first REAL Certified school district in the country, a recipient of 39 USDA HUSSC awards, the only school district to be named to the Good Food 100 Restaurants List (earning the top mark of six links twice) and the first entity of any kind to receive the highest, 5-star rating from the Center for Good Food Purchasing.

Learn more about BVSD's award-winning School Food Project and the program's recent achievements on [our website](#).

## **Our Programs**

Our interactive food and nutrition education programs make eating healthy food fun for students of all ages. Through our programs, BVSD kids learn where food comes from, what fresh food tastes like, and even how to grow and cook their own food.

## **Sustainability**

BVSD has an ambitious sustainability plan, outlining a “green” mission and long-term goals including zero waste goals and sustainable purchasing practices. In order to align with this vision, Food Services has made significant improvements to its daily operations. We have moved to reusable trays, cups and silverware in all school cafeterias; purchasing organic milk in bulk containers; introducing reusable plastic containers (RPCs) for the delivery of local produce, chicken and beef products; and supporting comprehensive recycling and composting programs in all school cafeterias.

As a sustainability leader within the school district and the larger community, BVSD Food Services is continuously looking to improve our sustainability efforts through innovative and award-winning solutions. The district is now home to 11 LeanPath food waste tracking systems, monitoring both pre- and post-consumer waste in various parts of our operation and providing real-time feedback to those generating the waste.

## **Our Team**

Our director, Chef Ann Cooper, often referred to as the “Renegade Lunch Lady,” is a celebrated author, chef, educator, and enduring advocate for better food for all children. Our hard working food services team of nearly 200 employees in the cafeterias and central office are dedicated to providing excellent service and high quality meals to each and every BVSD student. BVSD Food Services is proud to have more than a dozen chefs and two Registered Dietitians on staff.

## **Chef Ann Cooper**

Chef Ann Cooper is an accomplished chef with experience at numerous hotels, resorts, cruises, and restaurants. She has been distinguished as the “Renegade Lunch Lady” due to her extensive work and efforts to improve the way children eat. Chef Ann was struck by the negative environmental and health effects of producing food in our country while researching for her second book, [A Bitter Harvest](#). Determined to be a part of the solution, Chef Ann has shifted her career path to advocate for a healthier sustainable model for schools nationwide.

In her work as a Chef, Food Services Director, Consultant, Author, Public Speaker, and Advocate, Chef Ann saw a need for change and now helps schools transition away from

a broken food system full of processed foods. Chef Ann’s vision for K-12 school meal programs centers around a whole foods environment where food is procured regionally and prepared from scratch. She envisions a time soon when being a chef working to feed children fresh, delicious, and nourishing food will no longer be considered “renegade.”

In a nation where children are born with shorter estimated life expectancies than their parents because of diet-related illness, Ann is a relentless voice of reform focused on the links between food, family, farming and children’s health and wellness.

## **Central Kitchen**

In 2014, voters approved a bond program that will include the construction of a new central kitchen. Currently, all meals for BVSD schools are cooked from scratch in three regional production kitchens. However, these retrofitted kitchens have reached their capacity for storage, preparation, cooking and refrigeration.

Construction on the new central kitchen began in February 2019, and will be located behind the Education Center. The new central kitchen, including additional storage for locally purchased products, a café, a dedicated area for the No Student Hungry bag program, and eventually, a teaching kitchen, is scheduled to be completed and full operational by school year 2020-21. For more information, including construction updates, please visit the BVSD Bond Program website.

## **2. Volunteer Options**

Thank you for supporting the School Food Project! Parent and community volunteers are essential to our mission to provide healthy food to growing bodies and minds. We are fortunate to have help from parents, grandparents, and community members with diverse talents. Important volunteer information and required paperwork can be accessed online at:

- <https://www.bvsd.org/parents-students/get-involved/volunteers>
- <https://www.bvsd.org/about/board-of-education/policies/policy/~board/i-policies/post/school-volunteers>
- <https://www.bvsd.org/about/board-of-education/policies/policy/~board/i-policies/post/school-volunteers-regulation>

**All School Food Project volunteer are considered “Level 1” volunteers and must submit their [Volunteer Application](#) to the District prior to helping at any in schools.**

## **Events**

Our volunteers assist Food Services staff in the cafeteria with Tastings, salad bar supervision, Rainbow Days, Harvest of the Month education, and other SFP events. The

Programs Coordinator will provide volunteers with dates and times of lunchroom events via Google Calendar invites. Volunteers must RSVP to volunteer at events.

## Tastings

Volunteers at tasting events provide healthy food samples called “tasters” to our students. These tasters allow the kids to try our food without paying for a full meal. Tasters are handed out early in the week to introduce students to the menu item that is served later in the week, ideally the next day.

When you hand out the samples, tell the students when that meal will be coming up on the menu - this is a very important step! You will be able to talk to the students, get feedback on their likes and dislikes, and become a vital part of the School Food Project. We will consider all feedback we receive from you and use that information to help guide menu selection in the cafeteria. We hope the students enjoy the tasters and we see increased school lunch purchases for the menu items sampled.

## Rainbow Days

Rainbow Days are a special event we hold in each elementary school in the district where everyone in the school gets to make a salad at the salad bar for free! We challenge the students to “Make a Rainbow” on their tray, and take and eat *at least 3* colors of fruits and vegetables. Volunteers are stationed at the salad bar to encourage the students to try new things and “Eat a Rainbow”. Getting three colors can sometimes be a challenge for the students, but with a little extra encouragement, and the incentive of a sticker, they are willing to be adventurous. Rainbow Days are high energy and sometimes a little chaotic, but the students love it and it is a great way to generate excitement about the salad bar.



Some of our younger students could use a little direction when using the salad bar. Volunteers offer encouragement to try new things, practice good hygiene, make a colorful plate, be aware of portion sizes, eat what they take, etc. Supervising the salad bar involves standing by the bar and directing students – as well as following up that the students have finished their creations!

## Harvest of the Month

Our nutrition education program is built around the Harvest of the Month (HOTM), which celebrates the seasonality of local foods. Watch for HOTM posters in cafeterias, Harvest Collector Cards and HOTM stickers and bracelets for our elementary students and local produce on our menu and salad bars each month. Elementary students may receive a Harvest card, sticker or bracelet when they try



the HOTM item. Encourage students to take their cards, stickers or bracelets home and talk about the fruit/veggie or local farm with their families.

## **Other Events**

There are many events in the school district during the school year that the School Food Project will work with either by serving food or running a booth - for example, BVSD Day at the Boulder Farmers Market (Sept. 21, 2019), A Taste of BVSD (Oct. 19, 2019), and the BVSD Plant & Seed Sale (May 8, 9, 15 & 16, 2020). An email alert will be sent to all interested volunteers prior to the event, requesting an RSVP.

It is important to refresh your knowledge of the School Food Project before arriving at the event because you will be representing the organization. Be prepared for lots of questions! You can always direct hard queries to the SFP Program Coordinator, Program Assistant, District Manager, or other School Food Project employees.

## **Farm to School Program**

We host nearly 200 nutrition education programs each year including farmer visits, Harvest of the Month activities, and supporting school garden development in BVSD schools. Our farm-to-school programs are a great way to connect students with where their food comes from and how it is grown.

Farmer Visits enable students to meet BVSD farmer partners who grow the beautiful produce for our salad bars and lunch menu.

Chef Demonstrations engage secondary students with a sensory approach to our lunch menu and encourage them to try new foods.

## **3. How to Properly Sample Food**

### **Tastings**

*\*If you will not be doing tastings, skip this section\**

When you arrive at your assigned school, it is *very* important that you sign-in at the front office of the school and receive a volunteer sticker or pass. School security is tight and they should ask why you're visiting and where you're headed. You are a "Food Services volunteer" and the front office can direct you to the cafeteria.

Upon arriving in the cafeteria, let the Food Services staff (green, gray or black chef coat) know you're there to volunteer. Samples may or may not be prepared for you in the kitchen. Open communication with cafeteria staff will really help you out during your volunteer time. Introduce yourself to everyone, and do not be afraid to ask questions.

If you have to prepare samples, keep in mind that the kids have a very short lunch period and not much time to eat. Samples will be handed out in individual compostable cups or boats. Plastic silverware may or may not be needed. (Please note: Within city of Boulder

boundaries and other select schools, we try our best to use only compostable silverware. Please be sure to ask the Program Coordinator, Program Assistant or District Manager about what is or is not compostable.)

While preparing samples, try to think ahead about the types of questions the students will ask you. Some example questions: “Does this have meat in it?”, “I’m allergic to \_\_, can I still have this?”, “How much will we get?”, “Is there a vegetarian option?” All of these are good questions for cafeteria staff. You must know if the sample contains allergens and alert every student. If you’re unsure, again, please be sure to ask the Program Coordinator, Program Assistant or District Manager.

We want students, whether they brought their lunch or are buying their lunch, to receive a sample. Samples are brought to the tables where the students are eating. While handing out samples, ask the kids to try it and make sure to let you know if they like it! Please pass along any verbal feedback that is given to you during a tasting event. This helps us to continually improve our recipes to meet students’ taste.

## **Rainbow Days**

*\*If you will not be doing Rainbow Days, skip this section. RDs are elementary only.\**

When you arrive at your assigned school, it is very important that you sign-in at the front office of the school and receive a volunteer sticker or pass. School security is tight and they should ask why you’re visiting and where you’re headed. You are a “Food Services volunteer” and the front office can direct you to the cafeteria.

Upon arriving in the cafeteria, let the Food Services staff (green, gray or black chef coat) know you’re there to volunteer. Open communication with cafeteria staff will really help you out during your volunteer time. Introduce yourself to everyone, and do not be afraid to ask questions.

Keep in mind that the kids have a very short lunch period and not much time to eat. Rainbow Days will be encouraged as hot lunch students go through the lunch line. It is important not to impede the movement of the line, but to also remind kids to grab three different fruits or vegetables before they move through the register.

After hot lunch students have received their food, cold lunch students can be invited up to the salad bar and will be handed individual compostable boats and disposable silverware. (Please note: Within city of Boulder boundaries and other select schools, we try our best to use only compostable silverware. Please be sure to ask the Program Coordinator, Program Assistant or District Manager about what is or is not compostable.)

Many students get excited about the prospect of a sticker and overload themselves with food they will not eat. Keeping in mind portion sizes and reduced waste, it is sometimes necessary to talk with kids about taking too much food. We want students to get only as much salad as they will eat. “Eat what you take, take what you eat” is our motto.

After everyone in a grade has picked their salad bar snacks, stickers will be handed out to students who have *tried* (not just picked up but actually consumed) at least three different fruits or vegetables from the salad bar. Again, consuming the food is important to educate students both about eating healthy and being mindful of the food waste they are creating by taking too much. As you hand out stickers, you may choose to ask them about their favorite selection or why we need to eat different colors of fruits and veggies.

## 4. Uniform and Hygiene Policies

*\* All School Food Project volunteers must abide by the following Uniform and Hygiene Policies. Please review each of the Dress Code and Hygiene rules and show up prepared to your volunteer sessions. \**

### Dress Code

According to the Boulder Valley School District Food Services Manual and Boulder County Public Health standards:

- Dark, preferably black, full-length pants in the style of slacks (jeans, leggings, "sweat pants" or other "tights-style" pants are unacceptable).
- Dark, preferably black, closed-toe shoes and socks. Shoes should have composition soles and heels to prevent slips and falls. Canvas sneakers, open toes, open heels, sandals, or high heels are not permissible. CROCS are NOT appropriate footwear in the food preparation and serving areas.
- Aprons, provided by Food Services, can be worn while serving.
- Hair must be pulled up from the shoulders and tied back. Hats or hairnets, provided by Food Services, can be worn while serving.
- No jewelry, except for a plain wedding band, may be worn during a volunteering session in the school kitchen or cafeteria.

According to the COLORADO RETAIL FOOD ESTABLISHMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS (6ccr 1010-2) of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment:

- "Nutrition employees shall keep their fingernails clean, trimmed, filed and maintained so that the edges and surfaces are cleanable and not rough."
- "Unless wearing intact gloves in good repair, a food employee may not wear fingernail polish or artificial nails when working with exposed food."
- Proper use of gloves is vital in preventing cross-contamination and keeping the children safe from foodborne illness. Always use gloves when directly handling ready-to-eat food. Always wash hands before donning gloves.



## 5. Proper Conduct and Interactions with Students of BVSD

In general, you must *avoid touching BVSD students*. It is not permissible to hug a student. If a student approaches you for a hug, you must make all efforts so that the hug does not take place. You can put your hands up in the air, turn to the side, or verbally explain to the student that you cannot hug them.

*\* Please ask the District Manager for your site, Program Coordinator, or BVSD Human Resources if you have any questions concerning appropriate interactions with students. \**

## 6. Conversation Topics

The following list of conversation topics will be helpful in case tasting falls through. If you cannot sample for some reason, you can use these conversation topics to help start a discussion with the kids about food. *Please take time to read through this list.*

- Talk about how eating a good, balanced, and healthy meal makes them feel. Tell them that eating this way not only makes them feel better – run faster, jump higher, play harder, but also makes them look better as well – makes your eyes sparkle, your skin glow, your bodies feel strong, etc.
- Talk about what it feels like to be *full*. Talk with them about how they know when they are full, the difference between being sufficiently full and stuffed, talk about what some healthy snacks are to have in between meals, etc.
- Start a conversation about the difference between organic and non-organic. Start a conversation about why it is important to eat foods that are considered *local*.
- Talk to the kids about each ingredient in their lunch. This gives you a good chance to show how a meal bought from school satisfies each of the food groups. Reference Chef Ann’s Meal Wheel or the USDA’s “MyPlate” if it is posted in the cafeteria.
- Ask the students passing by the salad bar to try one new thing – after they have, talk to them about what they tried.
- Take a survey of whether students bring or buy their lunch on the day you volunteer – see how the survey compares the next week.
- Have a contest to see which students can identify each food group on their plate.
- Talk about some of their favorite recipes from home. Ask if students have ever helped to prepare the recipe, and if they know how their family knows the recipe.
- Look at each food item on the plate and identify where it could have come from. Too cold in Colorado to grow lettuce? How far away do you think it came from then?

## 7. Contacts

### **Laura Smith**

School Food Project Program Coordinator

Email: [Laura.A.Smith@bvsd.org](mailto:Laura.A.Smith@bvsd.org)

Office: 720-561-6005

Cell: 303-619-6609 (can receive text messages)

### **Amy Thompson**

School Food Project Program Assistant

Email: [Amy.Thompson@bvsd.org](mailto:Amy.Thompson@bvsd.org)

Cell: 303-564-8584 (can receive text messages)

### **Chef Ann Cooper**

Food Services Director

Email: [Ann.Cooper@bvsd.org](mailto:Ann.Cooper@bvsd.org)

**School Food Project Main Office Number: (720) 561-5042**

## 8. More Information

Visit the School Food Project online at [bvsd.org/food](http://bvsd.org/food) to get daily meal information, nutrition and program information and to find out the latest SFP news and information.

Like/Follow SFP on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.

- <https://www.facebook.com/theschoolfoodproject/>
- <https://twitter.com/SchoolFoodProj>
- <https://instagram.com/schoolfoodproject/>
- Snapchat: @bvsdschoolfood

**Thank you for taking the time to look over this Volunteer Packet!**

For any questions, please email or call  
Laura at [laura.a.smith@bvsd.org](mailto:laura.a.smith@bvsd.org) or 720-561-6005.