

# TONKA FRESH

## A Monthly Newsletter from Minnetonka Nutrition Services November 2025

Welcome to Tonka Fresh, the official newsletter of Minnetonka Nutrition Services! The school year is in full swing, and the Minnetonka Nutrition Services Team is busier than ever working to continue providing students with nutritious and tasty meals each day.

Read this month's newsletter to learn more about the upcoming engagement with middle school students and how this fall has been a record start to the year for our program.

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### *Sharing A Message from Hennepin County*

#### **Hennepin County WIC Remains Open, Serving Residents**

WIC is a program for pregnant women, new mothers, babies and children 5 and younger. It helps people pay for food (including special formula), offers nutrition advice and helps with breastfeeding. Nutrition education and counseling are important to public health, and WIC helps families make positive nutrition and health decisions. WIC has funding to help families put more fresh and healthy food on the table.

To learn more, apply for WIC or schedule an appointment, call 612-348-6100 or visit [Hennepin.us/WIC](https://hennepin.us/WIC). Translated WIC information is available in Spanish and Somali, as well.

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#### **Middle School Student Voice: How Focus Groups Will Guide Future Menu Development**



This fall, middle school principals selected student leaders who will get the chance to provide feedback on school meals with the upcoming Nutrition Services Middle School Focus Groups. These student leaders will support our district Nutrition Services Team by providing feedback on school meals, answering specific questions about currently offered menu items, and even help to determine new products to add to the menus.

Middle school student voice is crucial to our program, as these students have been in school long enough to know the ins and outs of school meals, yet still have a number of years left to enjoy school meals with their expanding palates. Additionally, middle schoolers

are excited to know their input will help shape meal participation in the future. The information shared at these focus groups teaches middle school students the reasoning behind certain menu decisions that are made, specifically the USDA guidelines that are followed in the menu-design process. Nobody knows what students like more than students themselves, and their creativity is sure to make lasting changes to the menus!

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### **Local Spotlight: Breadsmith Provides a Staple Treat For Minnetonka High Schoolers**

For those that have been to Minnetonka High School, or attended a recent Minnetonka graduation ceremony, you know that chocolate chip banana bread is famous among high school students. You may have even heard questions like, “Can I get a slice?”, “Can I get a slab?”, or “End piece please!”, while walking past the cafeteria. Sold in the Dock and Cove a la carte lines, the tasty chocolate chip banana bread is a top selling item each day amongst high school students. This well-known treat is made by our long-standing local partner, Breadsmith. Breadsmith, located right in Minnetonka, delivers 60 fresh-baked loaves of banana bread each morning that are hand-sliced and individually wrapped, just in time for the a la carte lines to open for lunch.



The best part of this chocolate chip banana bread is that Breadsmith adjusted their recipe for Minnetonka Nutrition Services to meet Smart Snacks in Schools guidelines. Our special version is made with whole grain flour and extra bananas to make it a nutrient-dense treat to fuel high school students throughout their day. Whether it’s a mid-morning pick-me-up, or a sweet treat after lunch, students around the high school can be seen with banana bread each day.

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### **Record-Breaking Participation: Starting the School Year with New Menu Items**



Our most exciting update yet for Minnetonka Nutrition Services is the record-breaking meal participation seen so far this school year across the district! Compared to last September, school lunch participation has increased by an average of 345 students daily. The most drastic change has been seen at the high school, where participation has been historically lower than other buildings. Earlier this month, the high school kitchen served a whopping 3,095 entrees on Pizzaioli day, which is the highest school meal participation ever seen across all Minnetonka schools.

Increased student participation can be partially attributed to new menu items, which are introduced monthly across the district. The

Minnetonka Nutrition Services Team strives to keep meals fresh and exciting for students so they are then encouraged to continue trying new things, or even shake up old favorites! So far this year some of the new menu items have been: homemade yogurt parfaits at the elementary schools, The Great Scrambler: a build-your-own scrambled egg bowl, at the middle schools, and bone-in chicken wings at the high school. There have also been new items added as additional options to existing menus such as Chicken Mole to Nacho Day, and the addition of Impossible Burger meatless patties and pickles to Hamburger Day. Students can continue to look forward to new items being featured regularly all year long!

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Did you miss a previous month's edition? Check out all [past newsletters](#) on the Nutrition Services Department website.

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### **Stay Connected! Follow @TonkaFresh on Instagram**

Want to see more behind the scenes and what goes into serving the Minnetonka School District? Connect with Minnetonka Nutrition Services on Instagram [@TonkaFresh!](#)

Learn more by visiting the updated Minnetonka Nutrition Services website:

[minnetonkaschools.org/nutrition](http://minnetonkaschools.org/nutrition)