

TONKA FRESH

A Monthly Newsletter from Minnetonka Nutrition Services

December 2025

Welcome to Tonka Fresh, the official newsletter of Minnetonka Nutrition Services! This month we are continuing to work with middle school students to fine tune the lunch menus to their liking. Continue reading to learn more about their efforts, as well as one of our favorite local partners, and how Nutrition Services staff are engaging with students during meal services.

Middle School Student Voice: Getting to Know the Preferences of 6-8 Graders



The District Nutrition Services Team has been working with student leaders at Minnetonka Middle School East and West to fine tune the middle school lunch menus to their liking. Our team understands that when making updates to school meal menus, it is crucial to consider all age groups' unique nutritional needs and meal preferences.

Over the course of three weeks, students had the opportunity to learn the requirements for meal planning set forth by the USDA for school meals, provide input in creating new menus, and taste test new food products to determine whether they would be added to middle school menus. Students also learned about other aspects of meal planning including the cost considerations and the equipment demands each meal requires. It is truly a puzzle! Stay tuned for February to see what menu changes these creative leaders inspire!

Local Spotlight: Bongards Is The Go-To Choice For All Cheese Needs

As a USDA National School Breakfast and Lunch Program, we receive the funding for our program based on the number of meals we serve. This funding is separate from the District's funding. We are like our own business within the school district. In addition to this funding, we also receive funding to put towards food items that support American agriculture, and promote local food consumption. That's where Bongards Premium Cheese, our local spotlight of the



month, comes in. Headquartered in Chanhassen, MN, Bongards is the provider of our tasty cheese products. From the cheese sticks served at breakfast, to the shredded cheddar used to top Build-Your-Own-Nachos, our cheese is coming from this amazing farmer-owned company.

Bongards is a great partner for our program, not only because their products are tasty, but because of their commitment to providing nutritious, local cheese products. Their K-12 line of cheeses is designed specifically to meet the nutritional needs of K-12 students, including lower sodium and higher protein content. For students, this means a more nutrient-packed product, without compromising flavor.

Behind The Scenes: Highlighting The Amazing Nutrition Services Team



Did you know that kitchen staff arrive at the schools early each morning, before the sun even comes up, to begin receiving food deliveries and preparing the day's meals? The passion and care that Nutrition Services staff put into each meal leads to a great breakfast and lunch experience for Minnetonka students.

This year, Nutrition Services Staff have been using the motto "Lettuce Have A Great Year." This phrase has been the guiding principle for the team, shaping their leadership within the kitchens, engagement with

students, and the dedication they put into the meals. Students and building staff throughout the district may have noticed Nutrition Services staff participating in dress-up days, and other school-wide events such as Unity Day earlier this fall. By expanding beyond the kitchen and engaging in school camaraderie, the cafeteria becomes an extension of the classroom, allowing students to engage with and learn about nutritious foods and grow in their social interactions with other students and adults. We are so grateful for the hard-working team that provides Minnetonka students with tasty meals each day!

Pictured is Scenic Heights Nutrition Services staff dressed in orange to celebrate Unity Day.

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

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Learn more by visiting the updated Minnetonka Nutrition Services website:

minnetonkaschools.org/nutrition