

VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 3 • NOVEMBER 2022

# CAFE CONNECTIONS

CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## EMPLOYEES CELEBRATING YEARS OF SERVICE TODAY!

Congratulations to **7 team members** of the Child Nutrition Services Department for their service here at the Laveen Elementary School District. Thank you for making our department proud and nourishing our students each and every day!

### 15 years with LESD:

Andrea Sanchez - Paseo Pointe  
Maria Smith-Amaya - EFGA

### 5 years with LESD:

Maria De La Torre - Rogers Ranch  
Nora Ibarra - EFGA  
Veronica Rodriguez - Vista del Sur

### 10 years with LESD:

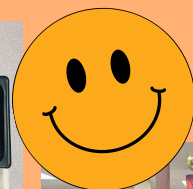
Christopher Madrid - Laveen  
Andrea Montes - Desert Meadows



## NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK WAS GROOVY!!



We had such a blast celebrating **National School Lunch Week** during the week of October 3-7! It's a great time to celebrate and reflect on the importance of providing healthy and delicious school lunches for students. Our theme this year was **Peace, Love and School Lunch**, so of course we went all out with heart-shaped chicken nuggets, sunshine crackers, potato smiles and groovy green beans. We offered free lunches to students throughout the week and decorated our cafeterias with tie dye and disco balls! Our team made sure that our students had a stellar time at lunch each day. We served over **27,000 lunches** over the course of the week!



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



## BUTTERNUT SQUASH MAC & CHEESE



Recipe adapted from  
*Skinny Taste*:  
<https://www.skinnytaste.com/butternut-squash-mac-and-cheese/>

Photo: *SkinnyTaste.com*

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb cubed Butternut Squash
- 10 oz Whole Wheat Elbow Pasta
- 1 1/2 cups Low Sodium Vegetable Broth
- 1/2 tsp Onion Powder
- 1/2 tsp Garlic Powder
- 1/4 cup Panko Breadcrumbs
- 2 tbsp Freshly Grated Parmesan Cheese
- 1 tbsp Unsalted Butter

- 1 medium Shallot (minced)
- 1/4 cup All-Purpose Flour
- 2 cups Non-Fat or Low-Fat Milk
- 1/2 cup shredded Gruyere Cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar Cheese
- Olive Oil Spray
- Salt and Pepper
- Chopped Chives (optional, for garnish)



### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375°F and spray a 9" x 11" glass baking dish with oil and set aside.
2. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and then add cubed butternut squash; cook until tender, ~5-6 minutes.
3. Once you can pierce the squash with a fork easily, remove butternut squash by using a slotted spoon and leave water in pot. Add cooked squash to a blender.
4. Cook pasta in boiling water as noted on package; drain and place back in the pot.
5. In the blender with the squash, add 1/2 cup vegetable broth, onion powder, garlic powder, 1 tsp salt and black pepper. Blend until smooth and creamy.
6. Make bread crumb mixture -- combine breadcrumbs, parmesan cheese, 1/4 tsp salt, and pepper in a bowl.
7. Melt butter in a medium sauce pot over *medium heat* and then add minced shallots, sautéing for ~2 minutes. Sprinkle flour over shallots and cook for one more minute.
8. Add the remaining 1 cup of vegetable broth and milk; whisk to combine. Bring sauce to a boil, then reduce heat to *medium-low* and cook for 5 minutes, whisking frequently.
9. Remove pot from heat and whisk in cheese, pureed squash, 1 1/2 tsp salt and pepper.
10. Add sauce to noodles, gently mixing to combine and then move pasta and sauce mixture to the prepared baking dish.
11. Sprinkle with breadcrumb mixture and bake for 25 minutes. Switch oven to high broil and broil for 2-3 minutes or until crumbs are starting to brown. Serve and enjoy!

## INTERESTED IN WORKING AT ONE OF OUR SCHOOLS IN THE CAFETERIA? APPLY NOW!

We are currently accepting applications for part-time cafeteria worker positions. These positions are a great way for you to work while your children are in school!

Job duties include preparing a variety of foods, serving students healthy and delicious meals, cleaning and maintaining kitchen equipment and spaces, and working alongside a great team of hardworking individuals. If this is something that you would be interested in, please visit

**[www.laveenschools.org](http://www.laveenschools.org)** to apply online or contact us at **(602) 237-9100**.



## FROM OUR DIRECTOR



In Good Health,  
Jennifer

Fall is in the air and there is a sense of excitement as we enter the holiday season. Reflecting on the past month, I am so happy with how National School Lunch Week turned out. It had been a couple of years since we celebrated, so it was exciting to see the outcomes. Our team did a great job of generating excitement around our fantastic school lunches by decorating their cafeterias, dressing up in groovy outfits and serving up fun, themed lunches. These efforts, along with us offering free lunches all week long, resulted in serving 27,301 lunches - a 7% increase from the week prior! In other exciting news, I am happy to welcome back Chef Kent Getzin, our partner chef through the Life Time Foundation. He will be here for a full week of in-person training to refamiliarize our team with some culinary skills and preparation of some scratch cooking as we re-adjust and re-focus on our clean label initiative. We will be learning how to prepare a cinnamon bread pudding recipe that we will be testing with students. Follow us on our social media for a behind-the-scenes look and stay tuned for what's to come as a result of Chef's visit. Finally, I would like to recognize our staff who reached their 5, 10 and 15 years of service. We can't do what we do without the dedication of these hardworking individuals.