

# LeConte Garden and Cooking Program

The new school year began at Le Conte with students sharing their thoughts on what good food means to them. Using a range of vocabulary, students described good food as “juicy, spicy, sweet, organic, healthy, sour, green, crunchy,” and a few shared that good food “makes me daydream” and “tastes like a rainbow!” To remind students throughout the year, the sentences were recorded onto a visual poster, greeting students everyday as they entered LeConte’s cooking room.

In September, we started off by making bruschetta with a rainbow of heirloom tomatoes and fresh basil from the garden. The kids were delighted to see that Nutrition Services featured their much loved recipe in the cafeteria, offering the delicious bruschetta during lunchtime.

In the heat of late fall, pomegranates and pears led to stories about Persephone, Dia de Los Muertos and Halloween. We discussed the benefits of eating sweets in moderation during holidays and celebrations. Students shared strategies for coping with the large amounts of candy from Halloween and came up with ideas, such as spreading the sugar out over many months or leaving it for the Halloween fairies who trade candy for gifts. Very creative!

This spring, Chef Brenna and I will be teaching a series of five evening cooking classes for parents on Tuesdays, starting **March 3**, from 5-7pm. Last year the classes were great fun and very informative. Also coming up, the garden and cooking program will be hosting this spring’s March Nutrition Month Annual Long Root 400 relay race on the yard, featuring a relay with long root vegetables! The race is scheduled for **Thursday, March 26th**. Pass the carrots, please!

Bon Appetit!

Chef Kathy Russell, Cooking Instructor

Chef Brenna Turman, Cooking Instructor

Farmer Ben Goff, Garden Instructor

Sasha Tyshler, Americorps Garden



Alejandra, Ibrahim, and Carlos distribute tastings during January citrus month.



Brianna enjoying every bite of her pomelo!



Chef Brenna discusses vitamin content in citrus fruit with LeConte students.



Oscar shows off a giant beet from the garden.



# NUTRITION NEWS



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**Nutrition News** is a publication of the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) Network for a Healthy California Program.



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Funded by the USDA's Food Stamp Program through the Network for a Healthy California. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious food for a better diet. For information on the Food Stamp Program, call: 1-888-328-3483

## Celebrating March Nutrition Month!

**H**appy March Nutrition Month! In 2007, BUSD's Board of Education proclaimed March as Nutrition Month, recognizing the important link between nutrition, health, and a child's ability to be fully engaged in the learning process. To celebrate March Nutrition Month, BUSD's Network for a Healthy California garden and cooking program will be hosting school-wide events featuring fun and engaging nutrition education activities for students and their families. Check out the back page to find out about what's happening at your school.

Now in our eighth year of service, the Network garden and cooking program continues to strengthen the health and wellness of BUSD students by teaching children about the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity and empowering students to grow, harvest, and cook their own seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables.

This past fall, the University of California Center for Weight and Health completed an evaluation of BUSD's Network-funded program and found that students at Network schools had a higher preference for fruits and vegetables and ate more vegetables during lunch time than students at schools without Network garden and cooking classes. Another finding

concluded that student who ate the school lunch consumed three times as many vegetables than those bringing their lunch to school. This is great news! BUSD's healthy school lunches and the Network garden and cooking program are not only providing access to fruits and vegetables but also teaching students how to make healthy choices every day.



This March, think about ways that you can celebrate healthy eating with your family. Read on to meet BUSD's Executive Chef, Bonnie Christensen, and learn about the benefits of eating whole grains. As always, we thank you for your support and look forward to seeing you out at the school sites!

Melanie Okamoto  
BUSD Network Program Supervisor

## Message from Bonnie Christensen, Executive Chef



**I**t is very exciting to be here at Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) producing wonderful meals that your children partake in each day. I have been with the district for two years now and am amazed at how far we have all come in implementing the District's Wellness Policy. This has taken tremendous effort from all the departments at BUSD, for without the support and continuing education on the importance of fresh, sustainable, and nutritious food, Nutrition Services' efforts would simply not be enough! And without the support of you, the families of Berkeley, we would not have the drive or the funds to make this all possible. These good results come from you, the community's insistence that our children - ALL children - must have healthy, nutritious meals to grow, learn and thrive.

There is a big picture that is often difficult to see when we are focused on the immediate. My position as Executive Chef has allowed me to spend time observing, working with and talking to the different participants in the district's lunch program.

As you know, children often need to taste something over and over again, for years even, before they become comfortable eating, or even LIKING it. How do we get kids to eat *(continued on pg 3)*



## Parent Nutrition Classes Back by Popular Demand

Have you ever tried to get an eight year old to eat their greens? Do you want to bond with your child over healthy eating and learn to cook together as a family? If you answered “yes!” to these questions, then our parent nutrition class is for you!

Back by popular demand, this spring parents at Le Conte, Rosa Parks, Malcolm X and Longfellow will learn, cook, and eat together through a five week parent nutrition class. Parents will gain useful cooking and shopping tips to prepare nutritious meals with their family. Last year’s classes at Le Conte taught by Chefs Brenna Ritch and Kathy Russell included recipes such as an Indian garbanzo bean stew, Citrus Avocado Salad, and Three Sisters Stew.

Ron Adams, class participant and grandparent of Le Conte 3rd grader Najeé McDonald, stated, “It was a wonderful experience, a lot of fun! I learned about healthy eating, and how important fruits and vegetables are. [Since taking the class], Najeé and I select the right things at the store, and leave the soda on the shelf! We’re eating more fruits and making oatmeal for breakfast instead of stopping at McDonald’s for an Egg McMuffin.”

Chef Brenna reflected on last year’s class, “Each parent had a different story of how they had tried to get their kids to eat new things, and by the end of the class they all had new stories of making the recipes at home and loving them. They still come up to me and rave about the citrus salad!”



Third grader Najeé McDonald, shares knife skills with class participant Annette Shurn.

This is a great opportunity to connect with your child’s school and other parents, while learning new healthy recipes for your family. See class dates below and we hope to see you there!

**Rosa Parks Elementary:** Thursdays, 2/26-3/26, 5:30-7:30pm  
**Le Conte Elementary:** Tuesdays, 3/3-3/31, 5-7pm  
**Malcolm X Elementary:** Thursdays, 4/16-5/14, 5:30-7:30pm  
**Longfellow Middle School:** Tuesdays, 4/21-5/19, 5:30-7:30pm

Brenna Ritch  
Le Conte Cooking Instructor

## Students Cook with Whole Grains

This past December, *Network* cooking classes prepared Vegetable Fried Rice with brown rice and fresh veggies in celebration of December’s Harvest of the Month, while many garden classes popped amaranth as a nutritious snack. Other whole grain recipes included brown rice sushi, and injera the spongy Ethiopian flatbread made from teff.

### What Makes a Whole Grain Whole?

A whole grain contains all the essential parts of the entire grain seed: 1) the bran, 2) the germ, and 3) the endosperm (see image to the right). Enriched (“white”) flour contains only the endosperm, while whole grain flour contains naturally-occurring nutrients such as protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals that are found only in the bran and germ.

### Why Are Whole Grains Good For Me?

Whole grains help reduce the risk of bowel disorders, cancer, heart disease, high cholesterol, stroke, high blood pressure, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.

### How Do I Know It’s Whole Grain?

When you read the label on bread or other grain product, look for “whole” on the ingredient list, for example, “whole wheat” or “whole oats”. Watch out for phrases that may not mean whole grain such as: “100% wheat”, “multigrain”, “7-grain” or “stone ground”.

Some whole grain examples include: amaranth, barley, brown and colored rice, buckwheat, bulgur, corn and whole cornmeal, millet, oatmeal and whole oats, popcorn, quinoa, sorghum, spelt, teff, whole rye, whole or cracked wheat, wheat berries, and wild rice. Try our Brown Rice Salad recipe on the next page!

Sources: [www.wholegrainscouncil.org](http://www.wholegrainscouncil.org), [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)

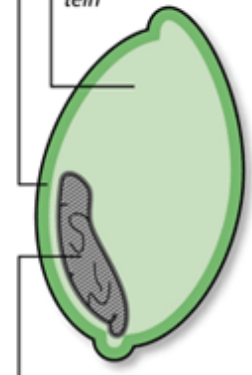
### Whole grain kernel

#### Bran

“Outer shell” protects seed  
Fiber, B vitamins, trace minerals

#### Endosperm

Provides energy  
Carbohydrates, protein



#### Germ

Nourishment for the seed  
Antioxidants, vitamin E, B-vitamins

## What's in Season this Spring?

Take a look at what's in season this spring. Some fruits and vegetables come in earlier in the season, some later, and some are available all year round. Visiting your local farmers' market is a great way to taste the best of the season, and a fun outing for you and your kids!

Below is a recipe featuring whole grains. You can add or substitute the veggies with other seasonal vegetables including: asparagus, avocado, chard, collard greens, kale, beets, broccoli, carrots, peas, and radish just to name a few!



## Whole Grain Salad Recipe Michael Bauce, Thousand Oaks Cooking Instructor

### Ingredients:

4 cups brown rice, cooked  
½ cup chickpeas, cooked  
2 carrots  
2 ribs celery  
½ cup broccoli  
½ cup parsley or cilantro  
¼ cup roasted almonds  
¼ cup sesame oil  
¼ cup rice vinegar  
1 teaspoon tamari soy sauce  
1 clove garlic  
½ teaspoon dried basil



### Preparation

Dice carrots and celery, and break broccoli florets into small pieces. Steam carrots, celery and broccoli and set aside. Mince parsley or cilantro. Crush almonds, and mix with veggies, brown rice, and chickpeas. Whisk sesame oil, vinegar, soy sauce, garlic and basil and add to rice mixture. Mix well and enjoy!

Makes 8 servings.

Nutrition Information per Serving:

Calories: 227, Carbohydrate: 30g, Protein: 5g, Total Fat: 10g, Saturated Fat: 1g, Cholesterol: 0mg, Sodium: 111mg, Dietary Fiber: 4g

### A Message from the Executive Chef (continued from page 1)

nutritious foods that they have never tried before? Offering a new food on the lunch line does not get your child to TRY it. And yet your kids are eating three times more vegetables than the children who do not participate in the *Network for a Healthy California* program. What is at work here?

When you take a child out to a garden and show them the living soil - allow them to touch, smell, and taste the plants that grow out of it - their wonder and curiosity takes over. Children learn through all their senses, they experience the natural world openly and without prejudice. As they learn about the planting of seeds, and growing and harvesting food, they are then brought into the kitchen where they experience a second phase.

Here, the garden and cooking instructors allow the children to clean, prepare, and cook these foods. The smells cover their hands, waft through the air, and enter their imagination triggering their *mmm* appetite! Did you know that your children LOVE to eat pizza with brussels sprout leaves? They do because it isn't just about consumption; it is the **WHOLE** experience, the entire process. They learn to appreciate what they are eating on a level far deeper than their stomachs. They understand - whether they can articulate it or not - that they are part of the larger natural world around them and that eating is about nourishing. Your children learn to have an affect on their surroundings and that eating is empowering and nourishing, so what and how we eat matters.

These are lessons that last a life time. Your children will take what they have learned here and pass it on to their own children. We are seeing great results, and with your continued support and participation, we will see even more. This program, like your children, is a work in progress. We are continually working hard to make our food better, to speed up the lines, to create menus that your children will love. With the continued participation of the community I know we will become even better.

## Parent Feedback on Our Program

***"I absolutely love both the cooking and gardening classes because it has offered me an additional way to connect with my daughter. I have also learned about healthy foods that taste wonderful!"***

***"My son is trying and liking fruits and vegetables I never thought he would try and he is getting us (at home) to make new recipes. Thank you for this program!"***

***"[My daughter] is eating a bigger variety of vegetables because I'm cooking them thanks to this cooking class. Before I didn't know how to cook kale or chard, but now we eat them every week."***

*— Parent responses during focus groups held at LeConte and John Muir*

## Special Thanks!

BUSD's *Network Program* would like to thank those who have helped make our program successful: *Network for a Healthy California*, Center for Ecoliteracy, Chez Panisse Foundation, Berkeley Farmers' Market farmers and staff, Berkeley Bowl, Berkeley Community Gardening Collaborative, Berkeley Public Education Foundation, Berkeley Public Health Department, Ecology Center, Edible Schoolyard, Carole Ono, Louise Rosenkrantz, UC Berkeley Center for Weight and Health, and all the 2008-09 interns and volunteers!