

Winter 2008

# healthy schools

a publication of the Healthy Schools Campaign



*Students enjoy recess at Blaine Elementary School in Chicago*

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clean environment  
healthy children  
better education



## School Health Issues—Beyond the School Grounds

By Rochelle Davis  
*Founding Executive Director,  
Healthy Schools Campaign*

Where does the school yard end and the community begin? More and more, we see that distinction blur as schools and communities work together to solve problems and provide the

best possible learning environments for students. Schools are hugely influenced by the world outside the classroom, and that world is shaped by trends within the world of education.

In this issue, we reflect on a few of the ways that school health issues are influenced by forces in our society as a whole, and how schools play a role in shaping that society.

Our discussion of staff wellness initiatives at school examines a trend, long popular in the corporate world, that is making its way into schools with positive results for teachers, staff and students. In an article on green renovation, we look at the ways that a trend toward preserving valuable architecture with green updates—much like historic homes rehabbed with energy-saving technology—is creating healthy learning environments and teaching important lessons about sustainability.

At the same time, we see how schools are changing the ways companies do business: in response to interest from student wellness advocates and concerned families, the food service companies in our article on page 6 are pioneering ways to make more nutritious food affordable and appealing to students.

The movement toward green cleaning in schools, as seen in the words of our green clean award winners on page 5, is changing the marketplace to increase availability of high-quality green cleaning products while bringing down prices.

Our world is constantly changing and small shifts in society, from policy decisions to marketplace trends, influence the ways we think about and act on school health issues. Every few days, HSC staff discuss these changes and hot topics in the news as they relate to school health at the HSC blog, online at [www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/blog](http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/blog). I hope you'll make it a habit to check out these discussions and leave comments about your own perspective.

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## ABOUT THE HEALTHY SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN

### OUR MISSION

HSC advocates for policies and practices that allow all students, teachers and staff to learn and work in a healthy school environment.

### OUR HISTORY

Since its launch in 2002, the Healthy Schools Campaign has grown to become a leading authority on healthy school environments and an increasingly powerful political voice for people who care about our environment, our children and education.

### OUR PARTNERS

We work with a broad network of individuals and organizations that

includes parents, teachers, school administrators, students, public health and education advocates, policymakers and community leaders.

### OUR WORK

Recognizing the connection between a clean environment, healthy children and better education, we address the problems of asthma and obesity by promoting school-based programs, practices and policies, such as green cleaning, healthy school design, healthy school food choices and nutrition education.

To learn more about the Healthy Schools Campaign, visit our Web site at [www.healthyschoolscampaign.org](http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org) or call 888-HSC-1810.



## Cooking Contest Winners Write Recipe for Wellness

*Students, teachers, food service staff make student-designed school lunch a reality*

“My goal is to help people expand their taste experiences, try things that are good for you,” said high school culinary student Kenisha Wicker as she watched her peers at Chicago Vocational Career Academy enjoy a healthy, savory lunch of red beans and rice with smothered cabbage and candied carrots.

The tasty and very healthy school meal was designed by Wicker’s classmates and won first place in the healthy cooking contest that took center stage at Cooking up Change, HSC’s annual benefit.

Then, it was served in high school cafeterias throughout the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) system.

“To know that our food is going to be in every CPS school is one of the greatest accomplishments that our school could ever gain,” said Kevin Williams, a member of the team that designed the winning meal.

HSC founding executive director Rochelle Davis explained that the tasty lunch represented significant victory not only for the talented students but for nearly everyone involved in the planning and production of school food.

“Everyone is proud to be part of the team that made this meal possible,” she said. “And HSC is proud to bring this group together.”

Dieticians with Chartwells-Thompson, the company that provides food service in CPS schools, worked to scale the recipe and arrange ingredient orders so that the meal could be served around the city. The lunch meets the “Balanced Choices” guidelines that Chartwells uses to set a high standard of health and nutrition for school meals, and meets the stringent cost requirements that Chicago food service directors face.

CVCA principal Marie Chambers-Miles went through the cafeteria line to get lunch

when the winning meal was served, and culinary teacher David Fuller worked with students to serve the lunch to dignitaries from around the city. School food advocates and proud parents arrived at school to eat lunch with the student chefs. And the judges who named CVCA the winner, including chefs and local celebrities, sent their congratulations.

Perhaps most important, Davis said, “this contest gave the students a voice in the food they’re served at school, which is vital because it affects their health so directly.”

Among the biggest fans of the student-designed meal were the cafeteria staff serving it at CVCA.

“We put our heart and soul into making this meal today,” said Carolyn Thomas as she prepared to serve lunch to another line of students waiting outside the cafeteria.

“A lot of us here, we really believe in the power of good healthy food and we eat healthy ourselves. If more kids were taught more about what’s in food and what it does to you, we’d have lower rates of heart disease today. These kids did a super job—the meal is healthy and it’s really delicious.”

The winning meal—and the team of student chefs—shone as the focus of Cooking up Change.

“It’s really wonderful for guests to see what kids are experiencing,” said Cooking up Change Co-Chair Melissa Graham of Purple Asparagus and Monogramme Events & Catering. “It’s fantastic because the mission is such a strong part of this event.” ■

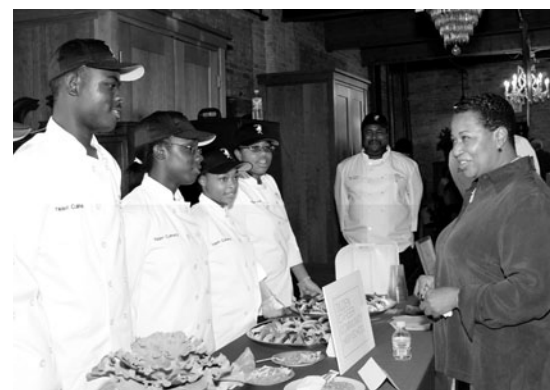
*Save the date for this year's Cooking up Change on **Oct. 23, 2008**. Learn more about the benefit and the healthy cooking contest online at [CookingUpChange.org](http://CookingUpChange.org)*



*Chris Ely of Presenting Sponsor Applegate Farms awards the first place trophy in the “school lunch” category of the healthy cooking contest to the CVCA team.*



*Culinary students at CVCA meet in the cafeteria the day their meal is served in all Chicago public high schools.*



*Tilden Career Academy students present their healthy creations to cooking contest judge Carol Mosely Braun, the first African-American woman elected to the U.S. Senate.*

# Old School, Green School

by Kari Lydersen

Students at Roosevelt High School in Seattle often said their school looked like a dark, dreary prison. Now, the 1922 building is full of light and environmentally friendly features. Rather than tearing down Roosevelt, the Seattle School Board took advantage of a statewide initiative for green schools and renovated the high school with “healthy, high-performing” upgrades while preserving its historic character.

Many new schools across the country are built “green,” with energy efficient windows, walls and climate control systems, rooftop gardens, recycled materials, water recapture systems, solar power and other attributes.

Meanwhile the preservation of stately old schools built decades before “green” became a catchphrase has become an environmentally friendly, sustainable trend of its own. Many of these historic schools are being renovated to include energy-saving features and healthy elements—such as daylighting and improved acoustics—that provide a comfortable environment for learning.

The very nature of renovating existing schools rather than building new ones creates numerous benefits in terms of environmental and social sustainability.

“There are really two aspects to the green issue in school renovation,” said Royce Yeater, Midwest director for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “One is the buildings themselves and the energy they represent. To waste that resource [the building] in favor of a new building is to consume significantly more new resources—natural resources, energy, the human and financial cost. And the waste stream is enhanced when you demolish a building. Secondly, when new schools are constructed they often become elements of sprawl. You consume more land, create more paving and consume more units of energy in buses and cars.”



Yeater added that the closure of urban schools exacerbates disinvestment in many inner-city communities, creating an indirect social cost—“urban deterioration instead of urban vitality.”

The National Trust has developed a set of principles called the Historic Neighborhood Schools Initiative to guide architects and school officials in sustainable school preservation. The principles focus on making use of existing resources while involving the community school facilities planning. They also encourage locating schools within neighborhoods so that the school can act as a community anchor.

These principles and other guidance documents help counter what many in the field see as a bias in favor of new construction.

“The greenest building is one that’s already standing,” said Mike Waldinger of the American Institute of Architects Illinois (AIA). “But the funding situation makes it easier to discard a building and move on than to make some good renovations to an existing building. That’s something we’d like to see our legislators take a good hard look at. We don’t want to discourage new

building when it’s appropriate, but buildings have a useful lifespan that is longer than people realize.”

Healthy Schools Campaign partners with AIA – Illinois in ongoing efforts to advocate for policy that makes green renovation an affordable option for schools.

The Clinton Climate Initiative, part of former president Bill Clinton’s foundation, provides access to funding for green school renovations as part of a nationwide program to reduce carbon emissions.

In a speech at the Green Build International Conference & Expo in Chicago in Nov. 2007, Clinton said that “greening our schools and universities can reduce energy costs by billions of dollars a year, reduce emissions by millions of metric tons, dramatically improve the health and productivity of students and teachers, and teach the next generation about sustainability and climate change. All new construction, all of it, should be green, and existing schools should be retrofitted to save energy.”

“It’s great that everyone’s excited about this for new construction, but we don’t have a

lot of new construction,” said U.S. Green Building Council schools sector manager Rachel Gutter. “Where we can create the most impact is through existing schools.”

Marilyn Brockman, an architect with Bassetti Architects and a member of the American Institute of Architects, which has been heavily involved in facilitating green school construction and renovation, said, “Old buildings that were originally constructed to high standards and that have been reasonably maintained easily adapt to green design practices. Usually the buildings require new mechanical and electrical systems, insulation and roof repairs. At the time of renovation there is every reason to replace these with better-performing systems. Most well-loved older buildings are already configured with lots of daylight and operable windows, so if the original building plan can be respected during a renovation these valuable characteristics can be preserved.”

Gutter noted that a truly dilapidated or structurally unsound school may not be saved by green renovation, but for a school in decent shape, green renovation can cut down on energy costs and improve student and teacher health and quality of life.

“These schools older than 40 years might have been well-constructed, but they are way bigger than they need to be and guzzling energy, not much ventilation, windows leaking,” Gutter said. “Those are good candidates for green retrofits.”

Green renovations, like green new construction, may cost more up front, but the costs can usually be recouped through energy savings. And it is hard to put a price on the psychological and cultural benefits.

“Because many old schools were built with the idea of reflecting a respect for education, these buildings usually are beautiful and well-constructed,” said Brockman. “Investing in their renewal means continuing the viability of a neighborhood, as well as more obvious green attitudes such as preserving land use and reducing building construction waste. Renovated schools may not look green in the current architectural vernacular, but they potentially contribute more in terms of true sustainable value.” ■

## Meet the HSC Board: Dianne Campbell

When Dianne Campbell contacted Healthy Schools Campaign in 2004, she had a clear goal:

“We wanted to bring good, healthy food to our students,” she said. “For kids to be well-nourished is a good thing when you’re looking for higher academic achievement. When we realized how important good food is to our students, then there was really no holding back.”

Campbell became involved through her work bringing good food to the flagship South Loop campus of Perspectives Charter Schools, now recognized nationally for making very healthy, very tasty food a key element of the school experience at all four of its campuses. She connected with HSC, she said, through a “shared sense that this is important work.”

Now, Campbell serves as the president-elect for HSC’s Board of Directors and as co-chair of the new development committee. Since joining the Board, she’s been a leader in supporting strategic planning and growth for the organization. She even helped name Cooking up Change, HSC’s annual benefit.

Campbell described HSC as an “entrepreneurial organization” well-positioned for the future and ready to offer leadership on school health issues around the country.

“It’s clear that our work in Illinois is drawing attention from around the U.S.” she said. “I like the idea of our work having local impact and national significance.”

It’s a significance, she said, that will only continue to grow as more people become aware of the challenges posed by childhood obesity and asthma, and the important role of schools in finding solutions.

“There seems to be a movement afoot and a greater commitment than ever for students to have good food and fitness available at schools,” she said. “You only have to read the headlines on disease to see how important this work is.” ■



*Dianne Campbell with Chef Carlos Fernandez in the kitchen at Perspectives Charter Schools’ flagship South Loop campus.*



*A healthy, fresh, cooked-from-scratch school lunch at Perspectives Charter Schools*

# School Wellness for the Grown-ups

by Kari Lydersen

Schools across the country are seeing an increased focus on wellness for students: healthier school lunches, more physical education, fewer sugary snacks. Wellness advocates point out the importance of providing consistent messages to students and creating a “culture of wellness” where all adults in a school environment model the healthy behaviors espoused to students.

Now, teachers and school staff—who can be tired, stressed and prone to unhealthy habits exacerbated by the often exhausting and hectic nature of their work—are also enjoying the benefits of school wellness programs.

A growing number of schools are mirroring a trend in the corporate world by instituting wellness programs to coax their staff into healthier lifestyles as a way to improve their job performance and satisfaction, cut sick days and medical costs and serve as a positive example for students.

“Teachers, nurses and social workers in schools are in a helping profession where there’s a tendency to look after everyone but themselves,” says physiologist Martin Collis, author of the book “Walking, Weight and Wellness,” which includes a chapter on schools. “If they’re going to stay the course they have to practice what we call selfish altruism—they have to better look after themselves so they can look after everyone else.”

Collis has helped schools design programs where teachers wear a pedometer to measure how far they walk per day. They can involve their students with health or math lesson plans built around the pedometers.

The contract signed by the Chicago Teachers Union and the Chicago Board of Education in Oct. 2007 includes numerous provisions for staff wellness, including lifestyle coaching, free health assessments and reduced-price health club memberships.

Schools have also taken it upon themselves to institute fun and creative wellness incentives.

Lincolnwood Elementary School in



Evanston, Ill. held a competition where staff were divided into teams and earned points for healthy behaviors such as drinking a glass of water, exercising for 30 minutes, meditating, eating 25 grams of fiber or stretching. Lincolnwood staff also competed in an annual “Turkey Trot” 5K run.

“It was fun, we gave ourselves names, the winning team got a prize,” said Lincolnwood principal Beth Sagett-Flores. “It helps create a conversation around the building. If you feel good about yourself and feel healthy you’ll do a better job.”

The Virginia Department of Education has instituted a similar program statewide, with weekly prizes donated by local businesses. Exercising half an hour five days a week earns participants a “gold award.”

A guide issued recently by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) designates school employee wellness as one of eight components of school health in the 21st century.

“To continue to improve the quality and academic achievement of our students, we must also improve the quality of life, health and productivity of our school employees,” says the guide, which notes that four percent of all working citizens in the U.S. are employed by school systems as teachers, counselors, food service workers, bus drivers or other positions.

Like businesses, school districts pick up the cost of health care, absenteeism, disability and lost productivity of employees.

“Employee wellness programs can directly affect each of these employee-related costs; for that reason alone, the programs should be considered,” the guide says.

Collis said public education systems still lag far behind the corporate world in recognizing the importance of staff wellness incentives, but successful examples from around the country show the promise of such programs.

After a 10-week staff health-promotion program in the Dallas Independent School District, 44 percent of teachers said they changed their overall lifestyle, 18 percent quit smoking and 26 percent who were initially sedentary became regular exercisers.

Staff wellness programs in Washoe County School District in Nevada, which encouraged reducing TV time, flossing, exercising, getting enough sleep and other behaviors, resulted in a \$2.5 million savings for the district over two years, according to a cost-benefit analysis.

“If you’re active, you perform better across the spectrum,” said Collis. “We’re vigorous animals, we do well when we move around a lot.” ■

# Meet the Winners of the Green Cleaning Award

HSC extends our most enthusiastic congratulations to the winners of the first annual Green Cleaning in Schools Awards! We co-sponsored the awards program with American School & University magazine and the Green Cleaning Network, and we couldn't be more proud of the award recipients and the excellent programs they represent. The winning schools are featured in a special issue of American School & University.

HSC Founding Executive Director Rochelle Davis and Environmental Health Specialist Claris Olson served on the judging panel for the competition, along with Steve Ashkin, author of HSC's *Quick & Easy Guide to Green Cleaning in Schools*. The criteria for judging the competition were based on the "five simple steps to a healthy school environment" outlined in the *Quick & Easy Guide*. You can read profiles of the winning schools and check out the special issue of American School & University online at [www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/gcaward](http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/gcaward).



**Sean Arnold**  
*Hernando County School District*  
Brooksville, Fla.

How did you first get started with green cleaning?  
When we got started, my goal was to standardize practices throughout the district—to make it easier for custodians and at the same time make it healthy and safer for both the custodians and the children.

How does green cleaning fit with your overall indoor air quality plan?  
The more we use green cleaning, the fewer indoor air quality problems we have. That's especially important here in Florida, where we use air conditioning most of the year.

What are the most important benefits?  
I used to get complaints from custodians of headaches, nosebleeds, other types of problems when they were cleaning. Now I don't get a single complaint.

What advice can you offer someone starting a green cleaning program at school?  
Don't try to do it all on your own—get a team together. We have a product committee with representatives from different schools. It really increases buy-in to have people saying, "I know this is a good idea because I tried it myself."

**Frank Sever**  
*Mayfield City School District*  
Mayfield Heights, Ohio

What feedback have you received since implementing your green cleaning plan?  
It was a tough sell at first—people like to smell what they think is clean, fragrances like pine. But we made an effort to educate people about what we were doing. Now, people see why we decided to take this road several years ago. There's a lot more acceptance now. One custodian even told me, "My home has gone green."

What are the most important benefits?  
It's the connection to student achievement and attendance. Green cleaning also increases awareness of the environment and promotes a growing understanding of health and environmental responsibility. Now, our custodians try to be creative and find ways not to harm the environment, not to pose a risk to the kids.

How do you see the future of green cleaning?  
It's the way to go. Green cleaning is going to be a way of life, it's going to be a wave across the country soon. The safer we can make the air in schools, the better for our kids, the better for our country.

# Answering the Call for Healthy

by Kari Lydersen

Sometime around junior high, school lunch becomes uncool. At least, that's the experience of teachers and lunchroom staff at schools around the country who see teens going off campus for lunch, bringing unhealthy snacks or just skipping the meal altogether.

They also observe that the key to making school lunches cool again may be an unexpected but fortuitous one—healthier meals. Staff at companies providing food service to schools say that students, especially girls, are becoming more health conscious and are receptive to the healthy school lunches that parents, wellness committees and school food activists are requesting. In some cases, students themselves are requesting fresh, healthy lunch fare.

Now, providers' challenge is to provide increasingly nutritious offerings while connecting with students' desire for variety and choice. And that, said Jennifer Malchow, a regional dietician who works to implement Chartwells' Balanced Choices program, involves an element of education as well as variety. The menu "educates students about how to compose a healthy meal," she said. "They choose their entrée and sides so they're getting all the vitamins, minerals, the fiber



they need. But who's going to teach them what to pick? Balanced Choices does that."

Chartwells, which serves 550 school districts, launched the Balanced Choices program in 2005. The healthier menu involves using zero trans fats; lowering sodium and fat; adding fiber; and "sneaking in veggies," in the words of Chartwells nutrition director Margie Saidel and Chartwells menu director Anita Shaffer.

Chartwells collaborated with Healthy Schools Campaign to serve a student-designed healthy school meal in high schools throughout the Chicago Public Schools sys-

tem in Jan. 2008 as part of a commitment to providing healthy food that students find appealing. (See story on page 1.)

"Most students 'eat with their eyes' first when they come to the cafeteria—our better-for-you selections must look appealing," Shaffer and Saidel said. "Food presentation with a 'just like at home' or a 'just like when I eat out' retail look is very important. We've discovered for many students appealing means familiar, fresh and fun."

Since school district wellness policies became mandatory in 2006, increasing numbers of districts have raised the health standards they set for school food. Many school districts hire food service companies to provide the food served at school. Over the past few years, these companies have been making changes not only to meet higher nutrition requirements but also to convince students to actually eat the healthy food they're offered.

Major school food providers including ARAMARK, Chartwells and Sodexo, Inc. say they have rolled out new options and programs in response to growing interest in healthy eating.

"Years ago, school lunch meant a basic 'square meal,'" said Cathy Schlosberg, vice president of marketing and strategic development for ARAMARK Education. "Today, most students are familiar with mall food courts, quick serve restaurants and a variety of



*Students at McAuliffe Elementary School in Chicago try out the new salad bar in their school cafeteria. The salad bar is part of a pilot program by Chartwells.*

# School Food

regional and ethnic cuisines. With this in mind, we focus on providing nutritious and great tasting foods that will resonate with the students, similar to the meals they receive in these retail environments.”

Schlosberg said that the Chartwells menu strategy is “supported by recipes that appeal to the taste preferences of these various age groups, meet or exceed USDA requirements and incorporate foods that are socially responsible and support local economies, where possible.”

Tyson Foods, which provides chicken, beef and cheese products to 96 out of the largest 100 school districts in the country, has spent a year “kid-testing” a number of new healthfully prepared dishes including whole grain chicken nuggets, “never-fried” chicken patties and quesadillas with whole grain tortillas that look and taste like familiar white flour tortillas.

“Foods are not nutritious if students don’t eat them,” said Barbara Jirka, a marketing manager for Tyson. Hence, the company focuses on ensuring that healthy menu items are appealing to students.

Dan Koenen, district manager for Sodexo, said that the increased interest in healthy school menus is driving significant change in the school food service industry.

“It has completely changed in the past eight years,” he said. “Offerings are becoming more healthy, and choice is also a big issue, to respond to the concerns about obesity. So we’re offering food that kids want to eat while offering a variety of healthy foods.”

Sodexo currently provides food service to three charter schools in Chicago whose leaders worked with HSC to design specifications and procurement strategies that make it possible for them to serve fresh, healthy food for lunch every day. The charter school leaders—like many others in the country—cite healthy food as a critical component of an environment that supports student achievement.

“What you put in your body is extremely important, and we work very diligently with our clients to provide the kind of food they’re looking for,” Koenen said. ■

## Hot Topics on the Healthy Schools Blog

[www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/blog](http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/blog)

Healthy Schools Campaign staff experts and allies in the field discuss news stories, timely topics and personal experiences every week at the HSC Blog. Stop by and leave a question or comment. And while you’re there, enter your e-mail address for automatic delivery on days when a new entry has been posted. Here’s a look at some of our recent posts:

### Heart-Healthy Valentine’s Parties: What a Difference a Year Makes!

*by Jean Saunders, director of school wellness*

Happy Valentine’s Day! Thinking about the spoils from my son’s Valentine’s Day party last year (candy, candy, candy), I have to admit that I was dreading the sugar-induced aftermath that so often goes along with this annual celebration of friendship and love. Last year, I wrote about the conflicting messages we send kids when we encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles while hosting parties loaded with candy and heart-shaped frosted cookies. But what a difference a year makes! Our school wellness committee has been hard at work all year, and I think our message of good food and plentiful activity has made its way to the Valentine’s celebration. . .

**Read more at [www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/blog/101](http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/blog/101)**

### School Building Funding—Fifty Years After Little Rock

*by Claris Olson, environmental health specialist*

This week marks the 50th anniversary of federal troops’ arrival in Little Rock, Ark., to ensure equity in education for nine African-American students. Sadly, so many years later, huge disparities in public school construction funding still exist. The fact that such tremendous disparities persist is, in a word, shameful. This lack of adequate school construction funding has resulted in a situation where students in low income and minority communities spend their days in deteriorating buildings that adversely impact not only the students’ learning, but also their health and the health of the staff and teachers who work in their schools. Eliminating the disparities in school building quality should be an integral part of closing the achievement gap, and should be an explicit objective of state and federal educational law. . .

**Read more at [www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/blog/102](http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/blog/102)**

### Do New Parents Have to Miss Out on Exercise?

*by Mark Bishop, deputy director*

As a marathon runner and new dad of a 1-year-old boy, I could relate to this story in The New York Times about a University of Pittsburgh study that shows parenthood leads to less exercise. It’s a difficult struggle to find balance in a hectic life, and, when you have a baby, it can get that much harder. Setting aside time for exercise is often the first thing that takes a hit. I have my own strategies of working in my workouts while caring for my son. I am thankful that Henry loves our jogging stroller and I take frequent runs with him—and, as a side benefit, my wife gets some alone time. At HSC we advocate for improving nutrition and access to physical education and structured recess in schools. But we also understand that parents and families can play a major part by modeling healthy behavior, which can be as simple as taking the stairs or taking walks around the neighborhood. . .

**Read more at [www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/blog/103](http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/blog/103)**

# Q&A with Recess Advocate Dwyane Wade

Dwyane Wade, the Miami Heat's star guard and one of the NBA's most highly-regarded players, is reaching out to kids around the U.S. in his new role as the official spokesperson and "celebrity recess monitor" for Rescuing Recess, a campaign kicked off by the Cartoon Network to draw attention to the important benefits of physical activity. The father of two young children, Wade said that he hopes he can help adults realize the importance of recess so that today's children experience its social, cognitive and physical benefits—along with having fun and developing a love of sports. One goal of Rescuing Recess is to recruit a million volunteer hours from recess monitors around the country. To learn more or volunteer, visit [rescuingrecess.com](http://rescuingrecess.com).



## What is it that recess does for kids?

What recess does for kids is indescribable. First of all, if you understand kids, you know that kids can only concentrate for so long. Recess gives them that time away where they can go out, have fun, be sociable, come back in and then get back to work. It gives them that break away where they can get their mind cleared, then go back to work.

## Is recess being cut? Is it endangered?

Well, recess is being cut and it is being endangered in schools, because some people feel they need to get all the work they can get in before school is out. But we need to realize that recess is very important. It was important to me when I was a kid, to get out there just to have fun and get away and be sociable, to make friends and learn more about really being a kid than just being in the classroom.

## What do parents and teachers need to know?

Kids need this break away to be sociable, have fun, learn sports. You know, they can play basketball outside. Back in the day, we played hopscotch, four square, jump rope. Whatever kids like to do, it's a time away when they can do that. It makes them feel like kids. It makes them want to come back to school and continue to learn because they know they're going to have that opportunity to have fun and be mingling with their friends.

*"I want to see the kids back out there, I want to see the kids on the playground, I want to see everybody active again."*

## How was recess important to you as a kid?

I was one of those kids who loved to go to school, but I also loved the time away from the classroom. I played so many sports at recess. I played football, we played kickball, we played volleyball, we played basketball. We played all the sports and it got us active, it got us away from just the things we do at home. It helped me get to this point where I am today and made me fall in love with the game of basketball. When you're growing up, recess is the only place you can play these sports. You can play any sports you want and not get judged or punished for it.

## Do you think recess is as important as other subjects?

I think it's very important, just as much as any other subject. It makes you want to go back in the classroom, makes you want to learn, makes you want to come back the next day because you know, "okay, at one-fifteen we're going to go outside." I want to see the kids back out there, I want to see the kids on the playground, I want to see everybody active again. What recess did for me was that it brought me to this place where, like I said, I was able to play many different sports with many different people from every different walk of life and I was able to get in relationships and get to know people. It's so much bigger than just going outside and having fun. It's being a kid but it's also that when you're being a kid, you're learning. Recess really taught me a lot of ways in life and I still use that now, to this day. ■

### HSC Connection

In February 2008, HSC launched the Principals for Healthy Schools project, providing support to Chicago Public Schools principals as they put programs in place to promote healthy eating and physical activity—including recess. Former principal Susan Kurland works with school leaders to develop strategies on incorporating recess and other wellness initiatives into the school experience.

To learn more, contact HSC at (312) 419-1810.

# Book Review

## The Art of Simple Food

*Notes, Lessons and Recipes from a Delicious Revolution*

by Alice Waters

review by Jean Saunders

After I finished reading Alice Waters' new book, *The Art of Simple Food: Notes, Lessons and Recipes from a Delicious Revolution*, I felt like I had just enjoyed a wonderful long conversation about food and cooking with a dear friend who shares my love of preparing food for others. Alice's straightforward writing coupled with wonderful illustrations by Patricia Curtan make this one of those cookbooks that people with a love of food and cooking can read like a novel.

I have never met Alice Waters, but that is certainly one of the things I dream about doing someday. Of course, if such a meeting were to take place, there would have to be food. What would I make for her? Well, I would start by taking the advice Alice offers in the introduction: I'd go out and look for "good tasting food to cook."

Certainly this is the central theme of this book and Alice Waters' approach to cooking. She writes, "the principles of good cooking are the same everywhere. These principles have less to do with recipes and techniques than they do with gathering good ingredients."

*The Art of Simple Food* is divided into two sections: lessons and foundation recipes, and recipes for everyday cooking. In each chapter, Alice reminds us about the importance of the ingredients—from shopping to storing and then to preparing them. Throughout the book, Alice stresses simple preparation methods so that in every recipe, preserving the flavor of the ingredients is the most critical element of the process.

"Taste each ingredient before you decide," she writes. "That is really the only rule you must follow."

Still, what food would I prepare for Alice? I think I would start with something from the garden, likely fresh lettuce and herbs. I'd follow her advice to carefully wash the lettuce, gently but thoroughly. I'd think about her warning, "don't combine too many ingredients into a single salad, it will have too many conflicting flavors." Oh, and of course I'd toss the salad with my hands, just like Alice does. Then, I'd toss those delicate greens with just enough of the simple vinaigrette I'd prepared (lemon juice, olive oil and a little salt), so that the leaves glistened.

*The Art of Simple Food's* chapter on slow cooking would be the inspiration for the next course. Alice writes that, "nothing creates a sense of well-being like a barely simmering braise or stew cooking quietly on the stove or in the oven." I'm not sure I've heard of a better way to describe comfort food. I'd probably make this recipe for Chicken Legs Braised with Tomatoes, Onions and Garlic.

For dessert, hmmm...I'd probably make a cobbler. In Alice's words, "crisps and cobblers are humble desserts, not too sweet, and full of flavor." That would be a great finish to this dream visit.

Alice Waters has probably had more of an influence on the way we collectively and many of us individually think about food and cooking than almost any other chef in modern history. Many have suggested

### Chicken Legs Braised with Tomatoes, Onions and Garlic

Season, the day before if possible: 4 chicken legs  
With: Salt and fresh-ground black pepper  
Heat a heavy-bottomed pan over medium heat.  
Add: 2 tablespoons olive oil

Place the chicken legs into the pan skin side down and cook until crisp and brown, about 12 minutes. Turn and cook for another 4 minutes.

Remove the chicken and add: 2 onions, sliced thick  
Cook until translucent, about 5 minutes.  
Add and cook for 2 minutes:  
4 garlic cloves, sliced thick; 1 bay leaf; 1 sprig rosemary

Add and cook for 5 minutes, scraping up any brown bits from the bottom of the pan:  
4 tomatoes, diced coarse or 1 small (12-oz.) can organic whole tomatoes, diced (including juices)

Arrange the chicken in the pan, skin side up, and pour in any juices that have collected.

Pour in: 1 cup chicken broth

The liquid should reach halfway up the chicken; add more if needed. Bring to a boil and then turn down to a simmer. Cover and cook at a bare simmer in a 325 F oven for 45 min.

When done, pour the braising liquid into a small bowl and skim the fat. Discard the bay leaf and rosemary. Taste for salt and adjust as needed. Return to the pan and serve.

from *The Art of Simple Food* by Alice Waters, 2007

that Alice Waters has single-handedly created a culinary revolution in the United States. Inspired by the wonderful food she had experienced in Paris bistros as a student, Alice opened Chez Panisse in Berkeley, Calif. in the 1970s. Frustrated with the quality of the food she could buy from wholesalers or in stores, she sent someone down to the port to purchase fish directly from fishermen. Alice worked hard to develop an entire network of producers that could supply Chez Panisse with ingredients of the quality she remembered from France. Included in this dedication to quality is the belief that the best ingredients are those that are in season and grown by local farmers, without pesticides or herbicides.

In my travels, I've been lucky enough to meet some wonderfully talented and even famous chefs. Who knows if one day this will include Alice Waters? In the meantime, I'm quite content to refer *The Art of Simple Food* for cooking and gardening inspiration. ■



See inside for more  
**COOKING UP CHANGE**  
photos!

## RAISE YOUR HAND FOR HEALTHY SCHOOLS

The Healthy Schools Campaign needs your support. You have the power to help make healthy schools a reality by joining our effort to create healthy change at the local, regional and national levels. Here's how you can help:



- **Spread the Word:**

You understand the power of healthy schools to make a difference in children's lives. Tell your friends, neighbors, professional colleagues, administrators and other opinion-leaders about these important issues and connect them with our resources.

- **Stay Informed:** Our newsletter, website, e-mail alerts and other publications can help you stay up to date on what is happening in school environmental health and school food.

- **Take Action:** You have many opportunities to take action, from working with local decision-makers to improve your local community schools to expressing your support for state-level policies and legislation.

- **Donate:** The Healthy Schools Campaign is a nonprofit charitable organization funded by individual donations, grants from foundations and government support. Your contribution can make a real impact on our ability to continue to raise issues, raise standards and raise awareness about this critical problem.

For more information on the Healthy Schools Campaign and how you can get involved, call (312) 419-1810 or visit [www.healthyschoolscampaign.org](http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org).

Need to **update your mailing address**? Please call (312) 419-1810 or email [newsletters@healthyschoolscampaign.org](mailto:newsletters@healthyschoolscampaign.org).



*Rochelle Davis is recognized with the Chicago Tribune Good Eating Award by master of ceremonies Enrique Rodriguez.*



*A culinary student prepares for the healthy cooking contest.*



*Cooking up Change Co-Chair Melissa Graham presents the healthy cooking contest award in the appetizer category.*



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