

Food and Nutrition

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PRIVATE SCHOOLS MAKE
SCHOOL LUNCH WORK

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food and nutrition



In Arkansas: Kids Catch Nutrition

By Ronald J. Rhodes

FISHING IS ALL PART of the classroom routine for many elementary students in Arkansas.

They're fishing for more than fish, though. Their good catch is sound nutrition—part of a pilot nutrition education study being conducted by the State Department of Education's school food service division.

This study is one of the six projects sponsored by the Food and Nutrition Service to test ways to increase the effectiveness of the child nutrition programs.

The Arkansas project is aimed

at assessing current nutrition education efforts in the local school districts and determining ways to include nutrition education in the present curriculum.

A test run took place in five schools last spring to determine how such a program would be accepted by the students. Then in the fall, the project was placed in 15 schools throughout the State.

"We tried to select outstanding teachers for the project," pointed out Ernestine McLeod, the State nutritionist who is coordinating the program. "But we also tried to get a representative sampling of different

teaching approaches in each of our five supervisory areas."

The teachers tie nutrition education into their regular studies, using as a basis a 2-week course in nutrition education, which Ms. McLeod taught last summer at the University of Arkansas. The course covered basic nutrition, with special emphasis on the USDA Type A meal served by all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. Ms. McLeod also offered a number of games, puzzles, and other materials to use in integrating nutrition with different school subjects. Teachers received 3 hours of college



Arkansas students add their favorites to a chart of foods from around the world.

credit for the special course.

A special part of the course was a lunch prepared by food service managers from across the State, who were meeting at the University for an in-service training program.

"I arranged for them to have lunch together," explained Ms. McLeod, "since much of the nutrition course revolved around the Type A lunch. And visiting with the food service people helped the teachers get a better idea of what goes into the preparation and service of food at school each day."

All of this set the stage for the project to get underway when school opened in September.

Teachers incorporated material discussed during the summer course with ideas of their own and began teaching nutrition education.

Students in Linda Varnell's fourth grade class in Marianna learned to "fish" for a well balanced meal. Using a fishing pole and line, they caught paper cut-outs of food to complete a nourishing meal. They discussed the four food groups and analyzed their school lunch each day.

They also joined the "one bite" and "two bite" clubs, trying foods they had never tasted or did not

like. To become a full fledged member of the "one bite" club, students had to take at least one bite of a new food—and to join the ranks of the "two bite" club, they had to take two bites.

At Hot Springs, the students of team teachers Carolyn Courtney and Marge Grisham had a food fair and invited students from other schools to attend. At the fair the children played Yummy Rummy, a nutrition game played with cards. They worked nutrition puzzles, played nutrition bingo, and tried a new bean bag game where the player has to place a food in its correct nutritional group. To conduct the games, the students had to learn about nutrition.

In Forrest City's ungraded Learning Center, Anna Mae Mobley works with 125 students each day. Since she handles all subject matter, she teaches nutrition education in a variety of ways. Students use the information on cereal boxes to determine the amount of different vitamins and minerals in the cereal. Language arts students frequently use fruits and vegetables for spelling words and making new sentences.

In a Fayetteville elementary school, fifth grade teacher Peg

Pennington taught her students nutrition—and then let them teach third graders. "The rapport was amazing," she said. "The fifth graders related to the third graders much better than a teacher could."

Results of the project were even better than hoped. At Marianna several of the fourth grade students in the project had brought their lunches at the start of the school year. Now all eat the school lunch every day. Many of the students previously refused to drink milk. Now milk participation in the fourth grade is 100 percent.

"One of my biggest thrills came when we were planning the class Christmas party," said Ms. Varnell. "The children asked for a dip with carrots, radishes and cauliflower, in addition to traditional punch and cookies."

Ms. Mobley says the nutrition information has been especially valuable to her children, since in many of the homes both parents work and the children prepare much of the food they eat.

In the El Dorado school system, where one of the projects was conducted, teachers were so impressed with the effect on the students that they requested, and got, an extension course in nutrition education from the University of Arkansas. The course is underway in Magnolia this semester.

"The noticeable decline in plate waste in all of the pilot schools is one of the most significant developments in our project," said Ms. McLeod. "Elementary schools in the State of Arkansas have maintained a high participation record in the National School Lunch Program—so participation is not our big problem. But the increased acceptance of the food by the students is really a step forward."

Mrs. McLeod feels that nutrition education as a part of the school curriculum is long overdue.

"After all," she says, "food affects all aspects of a child's growth and development. A balanced diet helps a child reach his optimum level of development." ☆

New Program meets special needs of Women, Infants & Children

By Jan Marie Connelly



A young woman holds her small son as she fills out an application to participate in the Special Supplemental Food Program. The program provides food or vouchers for food to help meet the special nutritional needs of women and children.

DEBBIE IS 17. She and her husband live in Arjay, Ky. They have a year-old son, and Debbie is 7 months pregnant. Her husband can't find work, and she can't work.

Sherry and her husband live in Prestonsburg, Ky. They have four little girls—including Karen Lynn, who was born November 3. Two months premature, Karen Lynn spent her first 3 months in the hospital.

On a cold morning in January, Debbie and Sherry became the first participants in a new pilot program, which will provide special nutritional help to approximately 316,000 mothers and expectant mothers, infants, and young children.

More than 50 people were on hand at the Maternity and Infant Care Center in Pineville, Ky., to witness the opening of the first project area in the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children.

As Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter explained to State and local officials and participants at the center, Pineville is one of 216 project areas in 45 States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands that will operate WIC programs. In 19 of these areas there will be a full medical evaluation to measure the project's nutritional impact.

"The WIC program is an important step toward improving the health of our mothers and children," Secretary Yeutter told the group at Pineville. More than 1,300 residents are expected to be served in the four-county area, which includes Bell, Floyd, Harlan, and Letcher counties.

Dr. Emmanuel Rader, a clinician for the Bell County Maternity and Infants Project, told the new WIC participants that the program is

aimed at the most critical periods in their children's development.

"Adequate and proper nutrition during pregnancy and the early years of life is absolutely essential for the full development of physical and mental capabilities," he said.

Under the program, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service makes cash grants to health departments or comparable State agencies to provide supplemental foods to pregnant or lactating women, infants and children up to 4 years old. FNS is also authorized to make grants to Indian tribes and to the Indian Health Service.

Participating agencies can distribute food at health clinics, issue food vouchers redeemable at retail stores for specified items, or use variations of these two basic food delivery systems.

The supplemental foods provided to participants supply 60 to 100 percent of the women's needs for protein, calcium, iron, vitamins A and C, and 100 percent of the infants' and children's needs for most of these nutrients. The foods include:

☆ *For infants:* Iron-fortified infant formula and iron-fortified cereal, and fruit juice which is high in vitamin C.

☆ *For mothers and children up to 4 years old:* whole fluid milk, or other approved dairy products, iron-fortified cereal, fruit or vegetable juice containing vitamin C, and eggs.

Pregnant or lactating women, infants, and young children are eligible to participate in WIC if:

☆ They reside in an approved project area, and are eligible for free or reduced cost medical treatment from a participating clinic or health agency; and

☆ They are determined by competent professional personnel of the local agency to be in need of supplemental food.

In selecting the 216 project areas to operate WIC programs, the Food and Nutrition Service gave highest priority to those areas with the greatest need. Consideration was given to income and nutritional risk levels in the area; the adequacy of medical facilities and staffing; availability of other programs serving women, infants and children; and a number of related factors.

All projects will submit available medical and nutritional data for the evaluation of the program. However, the full medical evaluation will be conducted at 19 select areas, which are expected to serve approximately 10,000 women, 10,000 infants, and 15,000 children. The diverse locations of these areas will insure participation of people with a variety of racial, ethnic, and regional backgrounds.

Researchers from the University of North Carolina, under contract with FNS, will conduct the medical evaluation of the program and train staff members of the 19 clinics in data collecting and testing procedures. They will collect such information as height, weight, hematocrit and hemoglobin determinations.

"For the first time ever," Secretary Yeutter explained at the opening in Bell County, Ky., "we will measure the projects' nutritional impact on the children and their mothers."

☆

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Two Special Programs

Staff at the Bell County Center greet new WIC participants and explain how the program operates. As part of the medical evaluation of the program, Dr. Emmanuel Rader (left) examines 1-year-old Robert Marlin as the child's mother looks on.



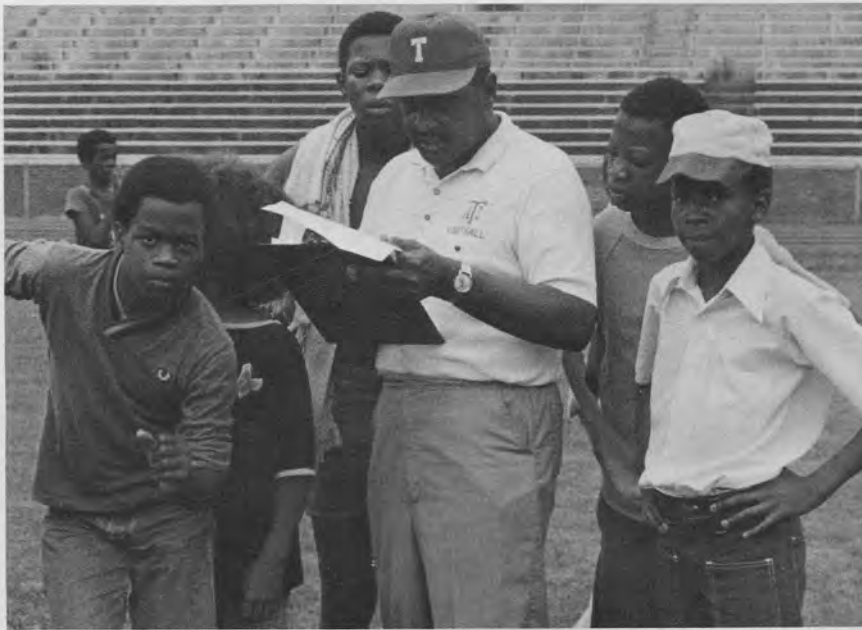
Summer in

By Linda Klein

THE CROWD WATCHED intently as the young athlete sprinted toward the high jump. As he reached the bar, he leaped, and for a brief moment, seemed suspended in air. Every muscle strained to lift his legs and body just a little bit higher. To the excitement of the crowd, he cleared the top.

The scene was Tennessee State University at Nashville, well known for its athletic achievements. But this high-jumper wasn't a college student yet. Nor were about 300 other young athletes in training around the campus.

They were needy children, ages 10 to 18, from the surrounding area in north Nashville, who were there taking part in the university's 7-week summer recreation and food service program.



Nashville youth get a special track lesson from staff at Tennessee State University.



Youngsters participating in the Memphis summer program enjoy lunch under the trees.

PACKING A PICNIC can be a lot of fun. But packing picnic lunches for over 17,500 youngsters a day, 5 days a week, is no picnic—unless you know what you're doing. It takes a lot of know-how.

Perhaps that's why the Memphis Park Commission turned to Memphis City's school food service in 1970, when the commission first started serving lunches to needy youngsters taking part in its summer recreation programs. After all, who would know more about feeding kids?

Last summer was the school system's fourth summer preparing lunches for the feeding program, which participates in the Special Summer Food Service Program.

Director of school food service for Memphis City Schools, Ted McCloud, said the school system took on the extra responsibility for two main reasons. It recognized the importance of feeding these children and welcomed the opportunity to provide some of its employees with year-round employment.

Last summer, the school system

Tennessee: Two Special Programs

Last summer was the fifth year the university took part in the National Summer Youth Sports Program sponsored by the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

The university contributed over 20 percent of the cost of the program in facilities, equipment and administrative salaries. Additional funds came from State and Federal sources.

Under the program, the children took part every day in sports and educational activities. In addition, when the children arrived on campus at 3:30 each afternoon, they received a free hot meal at a university dining room under the National Summer Youth Sports Program. The Special Summer Food

Service Program for Children paid for a portion of the meals.

As Howard C. Gentry, athletic director at Tennessee State and administrator of the project says, "Many of these children get their only balanced meal here. When they get up in the morning, they hit the streets."

After the children eat lunch, they take part in educational activities. Then they participate in elective sports, such as track, basketball, softball, volleyball, football and tumbling, and before they leave for home, they have a free swim.

"The uniqueness of this program is that coaches, physical education teachers, athletes and physical education majors make up the staff, and the kids use the athletic facilities on the campus," Gentry explains.

What does a child get out of a university-sponsored program like this one? Gentry answers, "We provide the children with identification. They identify with Tennessee State University."

"It's programs like this that have done much to keep children active in a manner that's instructive rather than destructive," he points out. "What better way can kids expand their energy than in sports where they're guarded against hurting themselves and others?"

"It provides an opportunity for a child to be on a college campus, to use the facilities, equipment and staff of the university."

"In turn," Gentry adds, "It gives the university staff a chance to get into the community and see what the problems are." ☆

employed about 60 cafeteria staff members, 35 neighborhood youth corps workers and 22 coaches, who delivered the lunches to the 108 recreation sites.

"Over \$379,000 this past year was brought into the community as a result of the summer feeding program," McCloud says.

USDA funded 80 percent of the cost of the program, and local "in-kind" contributions—labor, food service facilities, and trucks—made up the remaining 20 percent.

McCloud and his staff have made a number of changes in the summer feeding program since it first began. For instance, after the feeding program's first year, the city provided funds to hire six supervisors—two for meal preparation, two for delivery, and two for on-site feeding.

"When we added these people to supervise the program, it improved immensely," says McCloud.

Marion Williams and Roland Powell, who have supervised the program's food preparation for the past three summers, point out other innovations.

First, to make sure that the chil-

dren ate everything in the carefully planned lunches, the staff developed a special 5-day cycle of menus made up of foods that were especially popular with the children. They started including vegetables in the sandwiches, since the children were more likely to eat vegetables served that way. And since most of the children liked chocolate milk, they began alternating it with plain milk.

All of the lunches were based on the nutritional requirements set by the Food and Nutrition Service for all programs participating in the Special Food Service Program. The meals provided each child with about one-third of his daily nutritional requirement and included: protein-rich foods, fruits and/or vegetables, bread and butter or fortified margarine, and milk.

Each afternoon the cafeteria staff prepared the fruits and vegetables for the following day. The next morning, they had plenty of time to assemble the lunches.

It was this method of assembly—begun on a trial basis in 1972—that made the Memphis program unique.

A combination conveyor belt and

packing carousel was used in each of the six cafeterias preparing the lunches. As disposable trays, lined with napkins, moved down the conveyor belt, cafeteria workers added the various lunch components—a sandwich, cookies and fruit.

The conveyor belt led to a shrink tunnel, which sealed the lunches in clear plastic wrap. And this, in turn, led to a packing carousel, where a cafeteria worker counted the lunches and placed them in cardboard boxes for delivery.

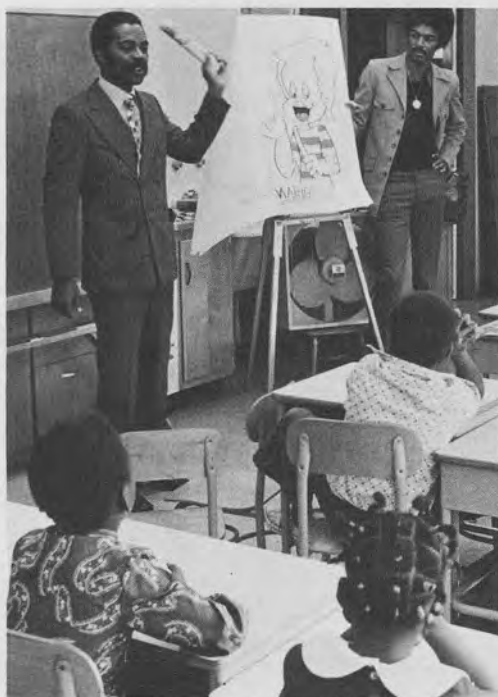
Refrigerated trucks delivered the lunches, along with cartons of milk, to the various sites, where they were served promptly.

Over the years, Memphis school food service has improved its packing and delivery system for the summer feeding program, along with its supervision. But McCloud cites one other important factor in the program's success.

"I think our program's reached this level because each year we've evaluated it in joint meetings with the Park Commission. There's close cooperation between the two agencies." ☆

Food Facts and Fun with Butter and Boop

By Joe Dunphy



Louis Slaughter and Ed Carr, writer and artist of the comic strip, give a "chalk talk" about nutrition at the Amidon School in Washington, D.C. These fourth graders are well acquainted with Butter and his friends—especially JoJo, whose bad eating habits get him into trouble.

A LITTLE KID NAMED Butter and his dog, Boop, have come a long way in the past 5 years. From a couple of names thrown out at a "bull session" of a fledgling business enterprise, the team is now a part of an American institution—the newspaper's comic section.

The adventures of Butter and Boop in the ghetto of Anytown, U.S.A., bring smiles to thousands of people who read the newspapers that carry the strip. Probably none smile broader than Louis Slaughter and Ed Carr, writer and artist of the daily comic.

Since 1969, Slaughter and Carr have masterminded the adventures of Butter, the unofficial leader of a contingent of neighborhood mop-pets. And along with their success in the newspapers, Butter and his friends have become part of an award-winning nutrition education comic book.

"Food Facts and Fun with Butter and Boop," was produced by the artist's company, Black Light, Inc.,

in a joint venture with the Grocery Manufacturers of America and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

From the time the comic book came off the press, it was a hit. GMA and USDA offices were swamped with requests.

Teachers found the book an invaluable instructional aid. Children enjoyed reading about the Butter and Boop gang, but they were also caught up in the comic's main theme: youngsters, like Butter, who eat nutritionally balanced meals can excel both at school and at play. One of Butter's friends, JoJo, who either doesn't eat or eats too much of the wrong foods, can't seem to get it together either in class or in sports.

"What's the secret to bein' a good athlete, Butter?" Tammy, another comic strip regular, asks in the nutrition book.

"Anyone who eats grits, greens, lean meat, fruits, and vegetables the way I do can be a good athlete," Butter responds. "A good diet can

put more 'soul' in your stroll and more glide in your stride."

A mark of the comic book's effectiveness was winning the Family Circle Magazine's Gold Leaf Award for exemplary teaching materials in the field of nutrition. A judging panel of 12 home economics teachers evaluated and rated candidates for the award submitted by 58 manufacturers and associations. In addition, a nationwide mail survey sought nominations for nutrition education materials from teachers.

But even while the comic book went into a second printing, Slaughter and Carr admitted they didn't see the real success of the venture until they visited several schools in Kansas City, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia in October as part of the observance of National School Lunch Week.

"It was amazing," said Carr, 25, a native of Topeka, Kansas. "I couldn't believe the way those kids responded to our questions. They had all the answers."

Slaughter agreed. "It was really gratifying to see that the objective of our work was accomplished," he said. "Those kids knew about nutrition and good eating habits."

During School Lunch Week, the Kansas City cartoonists toured classrooms in the three cities, using the Butter and Boop characters in a series of "chalk talks."

"Now, your body is like a car and food is like gas," Slaughter told fourth graders at the Amidon School in Washington as Carr put the finishing touches on a sketch. "If a car doesn't have gas, it can't go. And if your body doesn't have food, it can't go either."

Several children at the school, including 9-year-old Frank Bryant, got a special treat from the talented visitors. Carr did sketches of the smiling youngsters after the formal presentation was made.

After the tour, Slaughter and Carr discussed their experience with But-

ter and Boop and their successful venture with the comic book. Both agreed the comic strip did not get the immediate response that was afforded the nutrition publication.

"We started out slow," Slaughter said. "It takes a long time to develop a strip. But we've been around for 5 years now. That's a pretty good sign of staying power."

A lot of talent, hard work, money and just plain luck go into a successful strip, the writer explained.

"Anyone who starts out with a cartoon strip is crazy or well heeled," Slaughter said. But for Black Light, a third possibility existed.

The initial organization of the company began with Gordon Beahan, president of a leading manufacturing company of laundry starch.

According to Slaughter, Beahan was watching Saturday morning TV cartoons with his children when he questioned whether black children could relate to the predominately white cartoon characters. He decided to seek alternatives.

The company funded a summer project to develop black cartoon characters for TV, and from this, Black Light, Inc., emerged in 1968.

"A basic concept in the organization is to produce black things," said Slaughter, a graduate of Central Missouri State College. The firm is involved in such things as developing a black doll and educational children's books.

The year after Black Light was formed, Butter and Boop first appeared in the Nashville, Tenn., area.

The strip, itself, was the conglomeration of ideas by several members of the Black Light staff, Slaughter said. The names of the lead characters have no important significance.

"We were just sitting around the office one day trying to come up with some ideas," he said. "Ed (Carr) threw out the names and everyone went for them."

All the characters in the strip were designed to have their own identity,

the writer explained.

"When we developed the characters, we tried to give each of them a recognizable personality by writing individual character sketches," Slaughter said. "They are always the same characters to me. We try to keep them consistent and not let them step out of character."

Butter, of course, is the "main man." His role is that of a leader, cynic, organizer and practical jokester. His main asset is that he is able to cope with the problems of growing up in the ghetto.

Boop is Butter's faithful and wise old hound. He speaks only to the reader and mostly with cynicism directed at the mistakes of his young, human friends.

JoJo never does anything right. He is the natural fall guy. His failures, however, only serve to spark other misadventures.

Tammy and Angela serve as both hero worshippers and devil's advocates. They are best of friends with Butter and JoJo but do not pass up any opportunities to get in their female barbs at the boys' shortcomings.

Businessman Beahan was also an important factor in the development of the "Food Facts and Fun" comic book. The starch company president steered representatives from the Grocery Manufacturers of America, who were looking to do a nutrition education publication, toward Black Light.

"After we agreed to do the book," Slaughter said, "it took about 18 months before it went to final print. We met with association officials, USDA representatives, and many others to discuss the format. Then we spent some time studying the whole area of nutrition, particularly its relationship to children."

When their studies were completed, it was time for the test. And Black Light got an "A+" by any standards. ☆

PRIVATE SCHOOLS MAKE SCHOOL LUNCH WORK

St. Michael's makes a deal

By Benedicto Montoya

It's overcoat and galoshes weather in Carmichael, Calif. But the students of St. Michael's Episcopal School, a private, church-operated elementary school, choose to disregard the ominously darkening sky as they flop down in the few dry spots in the small schoolyard to eat their lunches. About a quarter of

the students are eating the hot meal offered by the school and are carefully balancing lunch trays on their laps as they dig into the steaming food.

In Sacramento, Calif., the students of Billy Mitchell Elementary School, a public school, are sitting down to a hot lunch in the school cafeteria. The meal is identical to the one being eaten by the private school students in Carmichael, right down to the amount of seasoning in the enchiladas. Coincidence? No! Co-operation.

Actually, the two schools are only a block apart, and the food the stu-

dents are eating was prepared in the same pots in the Billy Mitchell kitchen. Through a unique arrangement with the San Juan School District, St. Michael's Episcopal School has contracted to have the public school provide complete National School Lunch Program Type A lunches at cost. And the arrangement is benefiting both schools.

The advantages to St. Michael's and its students are obvious. The students are offered nutritious hot lunches at a reasonable cost. And the school gets the benefits of participating in the National School Lunch Program without having to



St. Michael's students gather for lunch in the schoolyard, as the school staff and volunteer mothers finish serving. The meals are prepared at a nearby public school.



prepare the meals in their kitchen.

The private school has found that the small church kitchen is more than adequate to handle the food which arrives hot and in bulk from the Billy Mitchell kitchen. By using disposable trays and utensils, St. Michael's can easily operate and maintain a food service program.

For the public school, the benefits are not as obvious, but just as attractive. According to Maude Larson, elementary school food service supervisor for the San Juan district, the lunch program at Billy Mitchell had been adversely affected by a recent decline in the school's enrollment.

"In order for a kitchen in our district to be self-supporting, it must produce 19 meals per hour of labor," she explains. "And Billy Mitchell was not meeting this goal. Even now, with the additional 25 to 50 meals, the Billy Mitchell kitchen operates with a deficit. However, there is better, more efficient utilization of personnel and equipment."

Ms. Larson points out that district-wide the operation of the lunch program is self-supporting. Although some schools are below the goal of 19 meals per hour of labor, others exceed that goal. "It averages out,"

says the food service supervisor.

There are 54 elementary schools in the district, serving approximately 12,000 lunches per day. The 13 schools which do not operate kitchens serve meals that are prepared and delivered by other schools.

The elementary school food service supervisor points out that it is no problem for the Billy Mitchell kitchen to prepare the additional meals for St. Michael's.

"It's just a matter of putting more food in the pot," she says.

Until the lunch program began operating at St. Michael's in the fall of 1973, all of the children brought sack lunches. Once a week—on Wednesdays—they could order a "semi-hot" lunch at school. JoAnn Cox, principal of St. Michael's, explains: "We would take orders from the kids for hamburgers, tacos, or some other quick foods from one of the nearby takeout restaurants. Parents would volunteer to pick up the food and supplement the meal with jello, salad, or cookies."

Ms. Cox adds that the problem was not that the students did not have lunch. "None of our kids," she says, "were going without lunch. Everyone was bringing something to school. However, I was convinced

that there must be a better way."

Ms. Cox became interested in the National School Lunch Program when a letter from the Western Regional Office of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service in San Francisco reminded her that private schools are eligible for participation.

After investigating a number of possibilities—including caterers and food service companies—she went to the San Juan Unified School District and met with Ms. Larson and the district supervisor for food services, Joseph Berry.

"I asked what could be done," she says, "and we sat down and worked out the details. The arrangement Mr. Berry offered was the easiest way I could see to provide our school with hot lunches."

The operation of the program is simple. The St. Michael's students are given weekly menus from Billy Mitchell, and they indicate which meals they will be eating. St. Michael's then notifies Thelma Miller, cook at the public school, and she prepares the additional meals on those days.

Ms. Cox explains that when the program first began, several mothers went to the Billy Mitchell kitchen, picked up the food, and delivered



it to the church kitchen. Then, with the help of a couple of the older students, they prepared the trays and served the children.

However, because other things sometimes conflicted with the mothers' schedules, the school custodian took over the lunchtime chores in January. By arranging to pick up the meals, St. Michael's is able to save the few cents per meal that it would cost the San Juan School District to deliver them.

At St. Michael's, participation in the hot lunch program varies with the menu offering. On days when fish sticks, hamburgers, or other favorites are offered, participation has gone over 50 percent, even though none of the students qualify for meals at free or reduced price.

The staff of St. Michael's and the volunteer mothers have nothing but praise for the way they have been received by the personnel at Billy Mitchell and the San Juan School District. "They have gone out of their way to be helpful," Ms. Cox says.

And the personnel of the San Juan Unified School District say that the agreement with the private school is working so well that they are willing to talk with others about a similar arrangement. ☆

St. James builds a kitchen

By Dewey Wood

When Father Andrew Chupela came to St. James, the Greater Parish in Apollo, Pa., in 1970, the elementary school had a lunch program confined to a very small kitchen and dining area.

Anne Costrini, the school's lunch manager since 1954, worked her daily "hot miracles" for some 150 students on an eight-burner gas range, using a kettle, a potato peeler, and a mixer.

Both Father Chupela and Ms. Costrini had similar ideas about the surplus floor space that came with a new wing added to the school in

1958. They saw the desperate need for expansion of the school's dining facilities: existing kitchen equipment was fast wearing out, and the addition of a "baking department" would drastically cut operating costs. Both recognized that lunch menus needed to be more creative.

But they also recognized that equipment costs money. And money has not been abundant in the 158-year-old town, 30 miles east of Pittsburgh, since the numerous steel mills and coal mines moved out of the area many years ago.

But Father Chupela was determined to have a kitchen. And just a few months after he came to the school, he decided to make a move.

The priest attended a private school workshop in Greensburg, Pa., sponsored by the Food and Nutrition Service's Northeast Regional Office. There he learned of the Nonfood Assistance Program, which provides Federal funds to help needy schools set up, maintain, or expand food services. Through the program, schools can receive reimbursement for up to 75 percent of the total price of equipment, including installation charges.

The following week Father Chupela took the idea of a new kitchen to the Parish Council and explained how nonfood assistance works. The council members enthusiastically gave the go-ahead.

The first step was to prepare a section of the building in anticipation of Federal approval of NFA funds needed to carry out the school's plans. Father Chupela solicited members of his parish to help with plumbing, wiring, painting and all other construction problems that could keep costs down. The response was overwhelming. By June 1972, the facilities were ready with a professional plumbing job the only cash cost to the parish.

During the preliminary construction period, Father Chupela contacted Arthur Schaffer, director of the Pittsburgh Diocesan Purchasing Commission. Schaffer provided an architect to draw up plans for the necessary equipment and determine where it could be placed to achieve maximum efficiency.

When the blueprints and equipment specifications were ready, Father Chupela sent the school's nonfood assistance application, complete with photographs, to the Northeast Regional Office to be considered for approval.

Father Chupela admitted he was not optimistic about getting a quick response.

"I had heard a few things about how you get bogged down when you get involved with any government program," he said. But the priest's fears were soon dispelled.

Ten days after he submitted his application, Father Chupela received approval for 75 percent funding of his \$24,000 project. This meant that St. James was eligible for \$18,000 in nonfood assistance funds.

But what about the other \$6,000?

"The government gave us 75 percent and the corn parties gave us the other 25 percent," Father Chupela said.

Corn parties?

"You know," the priest smiled, "BINGO."

With the application for NFA funds approved, Father Chupela set out to order equipment. Finally, in January 1973, he resubmitted his nonfood assistance application attesting that the equipment and other approved items had been delivered and were working properly.

Again, he was surprised to get the \$18,000 reimbursement 10 days after the application went to the Regional Office.

Ms. Costrini was equally pleased with the new facilities which were ready to serve the school's 213 youngsters in April 1973.

As a "baker par excellence," Ms. Costrini gets to take advantage of all the new equipment. "All bread products—cakes, doughnuts, cookies, pizza crust, hotdog rolls, and loaf bread—are made right in my kitchen in the convection oven," the lunch manager explained.

The result of the work of Father Chupela, Ms. Costrini and the parishioners can be seen daily in the reaction of the youngsters to the new lunch program.

Lunch is served from noon until 1 p.m. Hungry youngsters eagerly

line up in the serving area as soon as the noon bell rings.

On a day in January the lunch was spaghetti and meatballs, lettuce salad with oil and vinegar dressing, canned pear halves, milk, and freshly baked rolls and butter.

Some 165 youngsters ate the hot spaghetti and meatballs lunch. A total of 67 children had free lunches, and the others paid 40 cents.

"The warm atmosphere in the

lunchroom carries over into the classroom," pointed out Sister Marie Veronica, a teaching nun who also supervises the lunch hour.

The new facilities at the school, she explained, have brought higher attendance rates and increased the children's attention during the school day.

"The low absenteeism is largely due to the hot lunch program and the good food they get here." ☆

Father Andrew Chupela looks over the new kitchen as the food service staff gets ready to serve lunch. Spaghetti and meatballs is a favorite of St. James students.



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