

Food and Nutrition

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Children
Participate in
Nutrition
Education
Projects

Buying programs tailored to meet the needs of three different States give schools more power in the market.

By Benedicto Montoya and Melanie Watts

WASHINGTON

The Cosmopolis School District is a small, 350-pupil, one-campus school district located in a community of about 1,600 residents in southwestern Washington State. Like many of the Nation's small school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program, Cosmopolis is considered a volume food purchaser in the local community. But it doesn't make much of an impact in the regional marketplace, or does it? In fact, Cosmopolis, with its \$6,000 annual food budget, does carry a punch in the marketplace—and it's a wallop.

What gives this small school district such clout is membership in a cooperative purchasing organization called the King County Director's Association Purchasing Department. Membership in this nonprofit organization offers its members not only the experience of professional purchasing agents, but lower prices through quantity purchasing from a list of more than 4,500 items—150 of them food items. These are non-perishable foods, which do not need refrigeration.

While the King County Director's Association Purchasing Department's headquarters are in Seattle, the cooperative is neither a King County organization nor limited to county operation. Membership is open to all public schools in the State of Washington. KCDA presently serves 185 of the State's 312 public school districts, representing more than 1,800 schools.

According to David Morriss, food purchasing agent for KCDA, the organization was begun in the early

1940's when State legislation was passed allowing school districts to purchase cooperatively. A group of King County school directors organized KCDA as an independent, nonprofit organization concerned with the purchase of school supplies. It is affiliated with King County to the extent that the county provides KCDA with its limited working capital through interest-bearing warrants.

Over the years the organization has grown beyond the boundaries of King County and beyond the mandate to purchase only school supplies. About 4 years ago KCDA set up a food purchasing department and now food and lunch room supplies account for about 25 percent of the annual dollar volume.

Member districts utilize the services of KCDA in whatever way they feel is best. Some buy only one item, like school bus tires, while others use the full range of services. Membership in the organization does not cost anything, nor does it require specific levels of participation.

"Costs are incurred when a district uses our service," explained Mr. Morriss. "Then the district is charged an administrative expense based on the items ordered, the quantity and KCDA handling costs."

Mr. Morriss said that KCDA has never determined how much member schools saved by purchasing through the cooperative.

"The service that KCDA has provided over the years," he said, "has apparently proven to the majority of participating school districts in the State that they can buy most things better through KCDA."

Concurring with Mr. Morriss' assessment of savings is Cosmopolis

Superintendent David Woodruff. "Savings have got to be considerable," he said, "otherwise my cook, who has been with us for 20 years, wouldn't even bother with it."

Parochial schools, day care centers, and various other institutions have asked to join KCDA, but the cooperative is limited by the State charter to purchasing only for public schools.

The majority of members are small and medium-size school districts, which probably benefit most from the organization, explained Mr. Morriss. "Larger districts have always had the ability to buy in quantity," he said.

However, there are advantages in affiliation with KCDA even for the large school districts. The Highline School District, located near Seattle, is one of the largest in the State with 50 schools and 24,000 students. Highline has its own purchasing department and storage facilities but fully utilizes and supports KCDA.

According to Larry Mjelde, assistant director of purchasing and food service for the district, participation in KCDA allows the district to keep its purchasing department small, and also keeps warehousing requirements down.

"Even if KCDA purchases something at the same price as our purchasing department could buy it for, the district would still be ahead," he pointed out.

Mr. Mjelde believes that KCDA is a stabilizing factor in the regional food market. Because of the volume of food KCDA purchases, food distributors compete for the association's business, and that keeps prices low for the schools.

Legally, KCDA cannot do any ad-

vance food buying to take advantage of surpluses or other market situations. "From a practical point of view," Mr. Morriss said, "it would be a very hard way to do business. Costs would go up dramatically because we would have to warehouse items for long periods. Additionally, because our working capital is derived from interest-bearing warrants, it would be very expensive."

KCDA does, however, take advantage of seasonal peaks. For example, they have timed their bids on canned fruits and vegetables to hit the peak of the California packing season.

Mr. Morriss pointed out that the last couple of years have been difficult ones for estimating prices. The estimates, he explained, are formulated in December for merchandise going out for bid in May with delivery in July or August. There was a time when companies would guarantee the price on an item for the school year. Now less than 5 percent of KCDA's items are on annual contracts. These contracts allowed KCDA to spread orders out a little more over the school year, saving on warehousing. "Now, Mr. Morriss said, "we are buying everything at once."

The mechanics of purchasing food are simple. Once a year, KCDA sends members a catalog with estimated prices and order forms for the following school year. School districts can then order any of the 4,500 items offered, and request items not listed in the catalog. KCDA combines the individual school districts' orders, and sends them out for quantity bids.

Over the years KCDA has developed an extensive list of bidders which they notify when they open bidding. The association also advertises in the Daily Journal of Commerce.

"For the most part," Mr. Morriss said, "we don't deal directly with the

large processing companies. We would like to, but they are very conscious of their distributor setups and don't want to hurt those relationships. A few large companies will bid directly but mostly we deal with the distributors."

KCDA adheres as rigidly as possible to awarding bids to the lowest bidders. However, Mr. Morriss explained, there are specifications and quality standards that have to be taken into consideration.

Before a bid is awarded, an advisory committee composed of school food service directors from member districts meets with the purchasing agent to sample the items submitted for bid.

Quality as well as price determines who gets the bid.

KCDA has a shipping department but does not operate a fleet of delivery trucks. This would involve increased costs to the districts. Generally, school districts pick up their orders from the 80,000 square foot warehouse in Seattle, though KCDA tries to arrange direct deliveries to the schools whenever possible. However, direct deliveries require a certain amount of bulk and weight to be practical.

Participating school districts can receive their orders either all at once in an annual shipment, or in several shipments at various times during the school year. Some districts use a combination of the two systems, enabling them to receive goods over the 9-month school year.

"This is especially beneficial to those schools with limited storage space," Mr. Morriss said. "Even some of our largest school districts, with very good warehousing space, defer some of their merchandise.

"KCDA is in the business of serving their members as best they can," he added. "Not having a profit incentive means that we have to predicate our

theories on something else, and that's saving the school districts money."

NORTH DAKOTA

The concept of cooperative buying is not new to North Dakota schools. For 8 years, 14 of the State's largest school districts have used this system for buying nearly everything needed for a school's operation, from furniture to paper products. But until last fall, the co-op didn't include a food buying program.

Last August, USDA alerted schools that grain products and oils would probably not be in surplus during the current school year, and therefore, these items would not be available for donation to schools in unlimited quantities as in previous years. North Dakota's school lunch people immediately began to consider alternative ways to buy these staples at reasonable prices without sacrificing quality. And the cooperative buying approach, which had proven successful in other areas, seemed the best solution.

The school districts which participate in the co-op are members of the North Dakota School Study Council, an organization of superintendents who meet regularly to discuss education. The co-op idea grew out of one of these meetings.

Harvey Schilling, school food service director for the Bismarck district, organized the food co-op. He enlisted the help of school business officials in each district who handled cooperative purchasing in other areas. Eight of the council's 14 districts agreed to participate in the first bid session in January.

Mr. Schilling, as bid representative,

CO-OPS

compiled the product specifications using USDA specifications, information from vendors and the *Almanac of the Canning, Freezing, Preserving Industries*, 1974.

"This is such an important part of the program," Mr. Schilling explains. "We wanted to insure high quality and knew that if the specs didn't read just right, we wouldn't get what we wanted."

Next, participating school districts sent food orders to Mr. Schilling who combined them and forwarded the total amounts, along with bid information, to prospective vendors.

"I contacted vendors the council had dealt with before," says the food service director, "so we were able to start off with companies that had worked within a cooperative system."

Four vendors participated in the first bid, although about 25 vendors expressed interest in participating in the second bid. The vendors submitted sealed bids accompanied by bid bonds and product samples.

"Bid bonds were to insure against companies failing to deliver on time or come up with a specified product," explains Mr. Schilling. "But our co-op is strong enough now that we don't feel we'll require this again."

Mr. Schilling examined all product samples to see if they met specifications before he and five school business officials opened the first bids.

"In the future, we hope to involve school food service personnel in this testing," Mr. Schilling says. "And if we suspect any product, the State has agreed to test it for us."

Mr. Schilling required vendors to include two estimates in their first bids—one that provided for deliveries to each school district and another for one central delivery.

"We wanted to see what the difference in cost would be," says the food service director. "Delivery to each school district isn't that much

more, and it's certainly more convenient, so we decided to go that route."

After the bids were awarded, school districts completed purchase orders and sent them to Mr. Schilling who forwarded them to the vendors.

"I did this to make sure everyone was on schedule," he explains. "Once the bids are awarded, school districts are responsible for paying the vendors. Vendors make the delivery to the district warehouse, and the district must pay the bill within 10 days of delivery."

Did the co-op venture save the schools money?

"Yes," answers Mr. Schilling emphatically. "Schools pricing flour earlier were quoted figures as high as \$17 a hundredweight. But we got it for \$11.09. And we saved 28 cents on each 30-pound box of margarine."

Mr. Schilling also points out that with the co-op system, salesmen make fewer calls for the same volume of sales. This reduces the vendors' expense and pleases the school food service workers, too.

Marie Kreitingner, cook manager at a Bismarck elementary school explains that she no longer has to spend time with salesmen.

"They used to come every week, sometimes more often," she says. "And I'd have to stop what I was doing, even if I didn't need anything, to talk to them. Besides, the co-op can buy things cheaper than we can."

Mr. Schilling included several small school districts in Bismarck's order for the first bid.

"These smaller schools are the ones that really benefit from the volume purchasing that brings the price down," he explains. "So I order for them, let them pay me back and store it for them until they can use it."

Sufficient storage space, Mr. Schilling contends, is the main drawback

for small districts entering into a co-operative purchasing program. But in the Bismarck district, storage does not present a problem for individual schools. Cafeteria managers receive weekly deliveries of the co-op items from the district warehouse.

In the future the co-op may have three separate bids, one for canned foods and two more for other items.

"We'll bid on what the most schools want," says Mr. Schilling. "If a cook or manager has a product preference, we want her at the bid letting to express her opinion and defend her choice, but since we are a co-op, we all must be satisfied with what is best for the group."

UTAH

In Utah, excitement about the state-wide cooperative purchasing program is strong.

The program began last August when Lila Huntsman, commodity clerk for the State, suggested using surplus money in an established fund for cooperative purchasing. She was thinking of the Davis Commodity Fund, which pays to truck USDA-donated foods from Salt Lake City to each district's warehouse. The fund is supported by participating public and private schools which pay 5 percent of the commodities' fair value to the fund each year.

"We usually have money left at the end of the year which we return to the schools," explains Cluff Snow, school food services director for the Utah State Board of Education.

But, with the permission of Superintendent of Public Instruction Walter D. Talbot and the State Board of Education, the \$100,000 remaining at the end of last year was retained for

use by the food co-op.

"No schools have complained about this arrangement, since the co-op is available to everyone who wants to use it," says Ms. Huntsman.

And during the first 6 months the co-op was operating, about 20 of the 40 Utah school districts took advantage of the service.

Imogene Hamilton, a school food services specialist on the State staff, was put in charge of preparing product specifications. She started with USDA specifications, and simplified them, using the Standards of Identity and Standards for Grades along with information from the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food and Drug Administration.

"We even asked vendors what specifications they would require for a certain product," says Ms. Hamilton. "They looked at what we had and explained that many of our instructions were automatically understood by all vendors."

Next Ms. Huntsman wrote a letter to district supervisors, inviting them to participate in the first cooperative purchase in September. Those who were interested returned an order blank, indicating how much of each item they wanted.

Vendors who had supplied products for the National School Lunch Program were notified of the bid letting and submitted sealed bids to the State office.

No sample products were required for the first bid but the co-op plans to ask for samples in the future.

Once the bids were awarded, Ms. Huntsman called district supervisors to tell them the bid price.

"At this point, the supervisors can choose to go with the co-op or go it alone," says Ms. Huntsman. "They aren't committed until after the phone call."

Since vendors are required to submit two bids, one for minimum order

and another for maximum order, schools can back out at the last minute without affecting the co-op's final bid order.

"So far, we have gotten the same prices for a minimum order of a product that we have for a maximum order," says Ms. Huntsman. "I was really surprised, and we have only had one district back out at the time of the phone call. The rest have gone with the co-op."

Purchases have been made between the minimum and maximum amount on all bid products except flour, which was increased after the bidding session with no effect on the final price.

Several times, districts have gotten better prices than the co-op because vendors are trying to compete with bid prices.

"We've created competition that wasn't there before," smiles Gladys Gardner, food services specialist, "and the schools are benefiting from it."

The co-op delivery system is the same used for USDA-donated foods. A train car carries the goods to Salt Lake City, where the State's yardman checks each shipment for order accuracy and damage. Through an arrangement with vendors, damaged goods are deducted from the final bill.

The second bid letting in December originally included three deliveries—January, February and March. Ms. Huntsman felt this approach would alleviate storage problems at district warehouses. But due to the fluctuating market, vendors wouldn't quote one price for all 3 months. So one delivery was made in March.

Trucks deliver the goods to district warehouses across the State, but each district is responsible for delivery to individual schools.

Ms. Huntsman pays all the bills from the Davis Commodity Fund,

then collects from each district its share of the total bill and freight costs to the warehouse.

"The only time the money got tight was right after the delivery of a million pounds of flour," recalls Ms. Huntsman. "Our oil was due soon and some of the schools hadn't paid their bills. So I got on the phone and reminded them. We made it just in time."

Mr. Snow feels that the amount of money in the fund will have to be increased before the co-op program can expand. But the schools are encouraging expansion.

Louise Williams, school food service supervisor for Jordan district, the third largest in Utah, would like to see the co-op buy everything for the lunch program.

"This would sure take a load off me," says Ms. Williams, whose district includes 38 schools.

Like most other Utah supervisors, Ms. Williams puts everything up for bid. And whenever she wants anything other than the cheapest product, she has to justify her purchase to the district school board. But even more than the convenience a co-op offers, her main reason for wanting co-op expansion involves product quality.

"I know State's specifications are high and the purchasers won't buy anything but the best," she says. "I wouldn't have to worry about food quality any more."

What about savings?

According to Ms. Williams, the co-op saved her district over \$9,000 on the 300,000 pounds of flour she has purchased.

Next year's bidding will depend on what schools want and what kind of funds are available according to Ms. Huntsman. But participants feel this year's experience proves the co-op is practical as well as economical. ☆

The Five-State Nutrition Education Project

A team teaching success

By Christine McGovern

This story is a follow-up to "Nutrition Education, a Team Approach to the Puzzle," an article which appeared in the October 1974 issue and discussed the project's background and method of team training.

It was St. Patrick's Day, and the classroom was a field of shamrock headdresses. Lori Murchison's first graders at J.B. Young Elementary in Jackson, Tennessee, were devoting the whole day to St. Pat.

Children designated as "scrapers" and "choppers" worked steadily over carrots and potatoes as the beginnings of Irish stew bubbled in a big iron pot.

With the help of her teaching teammate, school food service manager Nancy Edwards, Ms. Murchison was giving her students a practical lesson in food preparation. Through classroom experiences like this, Ms. Murchison explained, the children are learning things that will help them develop good eating habits.

Ms. Edwards and Ms. Murchison were putting into practice some of the ideas they explored last summer in a special week-long training course at Memphis State University. The course was part of the Five-State Nutrition Education Project, a 2-year pilot program administered by departments of education in Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi and funded by the Food and Nutrition Service.

A unique aspect of the project is the team approach to nutrition education. During the summer sessions, teachers and school food service managers participated in a variety of exercises to learn to work together

to teach nutrition to elementary school children. The exercises encouraged them to combine their talents—the teachers' knowledge of teaching techniques, and the managers' skills in food preparation and food science.

By the end of the training sessions, the teacher-manager "teams" had formulated nutrition education plans for their individual schools. And this year they've been using these "back-home" action plans to coordinate classroom lessons and cafeteria demonstrations.

For example, at J.B. Young, Ms. Murchison taught a lesson on bread and cereal and Ms. Edwards showed students how to make biscuits in the cafeteria kitchen.

"You should have seen the children," smiled Ms. Murchison. "One little boy was covered from head to foot with flour."

But they did a good job, Ms. Edwards pointed out, and they learned what goes into making biscuits.

One goal of the project is to make children aware of the foods they eat both in and out of school. The children are taught that the school lunch program provides them with approximately a third of the nutrients they need each day. But they also learn they must eat a good morning and evening meal to meet the rest of their nutritional requirements. Through the total classroom experience, awareness of the body's nutritional needs becomes a part of the child's life.

The plan is different in each participating school in the five States. For example, one language arts teacher in Alabama had her children



First graders at J.B. Young Elementary School in Jackson, Tennessee, got an introduction to food preparation as they celebrated St. Patrick's Day. With the help of their teacher Lori Murchison (above) and school food service director Nancy Edwards, the children prepared a lunch of Irish stew right in their classroom. The lunch was part of a full day of nutrition education activities, including a lesson in writing (right).



We are
Patrick's
moving fan

Teachers and food service managers work together to teach nutrition to elementary students.

write recipes for their favorite foods.

Almost all the teachers and managers who have participated in the project call it "fun." In three follow-up sessions since the initial teacher-manager training, participants talked about what they accomplished.

Most managers found that as the children's awareness of nutrition increased, participation in the lunch program increased. And teachers discovered children were willing to try foods like spinach and broccoli that they once refused.

At Hawkins Mill School in Memphis, manager Hilda Yancey and teacher Hattie Mangum conducted height and weight studies on two groups of children—one group ate breakfast, the other did not. "The children who consistently ate breakfast and school lunch gained weight," reported Ms. Mangum. "And parents were glad to see thin children gaining weight."

Part of the nutrition education process is awareness of food, and part is awareness of what food does for the human body. Using a magnet, the students guided food through the digestive tract of a model, and learned what nutrients the body took from each food. Now children in the program can name the four food groups and tell how much of each food item they need for good nutrition.

Some parents have been surprised to find their formerly "picky" children asking for more vegetables instead of sweets. This is due, in part, to the children's new outlook on nutrition, and the tasting parties organized by school lunch managers.

Tasting parties can relate to a les-

son the children are studying or the food served in the cafeteria, or they can acquaint children with new types of food. While studying Switzerland, a group of students at Hawkins Mill Elementary in Jackson, Tennessee, sampled Swiss fondue at a tasting party. And in a class studying the effects of heat exchange, students had a tasting party with raw and cooked vegetables. In other classes, children have learned how to bring a sick "nutrition doll" back to good health by giving it the proper nutrients.

Nearly all the children have toured their school cafeteria kitchen with the manager for the first time. They've been amazed by the large cans of food. Their biggest interest, however, was in economics.

"They ask me, 'How much does it cost to make my lunch?'" said Irene Tipton, cafeteria manager at Frazier Elementary. "So I guess they get a little math, too."

Clara Ruth Doran, director of the Five-State Project, is pleased with the enthusiastic response of the students and school staff in the local schools.

"Teachers report that other classroom teachers and managers are asking 'How can we get in on this?'" she pointed out.

Whatever plan each school used to incorporate nutrition education into the school curriculum, the project demonstrated the importance of teamwork between the teacher and food service manager.

"It is the blending of the talent and creativity of two professionals that makes it all work," Ms. Doran noted.



At Hawkins Mill School in Memphis, third grade teacher Hattie Mangum combined nutrition education and art activities with a social studies lesson on the Netherlands. Students made Dutch hats, had a tasting party organized by food service director Hilda Yancey, and set up a grocery store. Ms. Mangum (above) held up each food in the store and asked the children to explain why they thought it belonged in a well-balanced diet.



QUALITY

A management evaluation tool States are using to take corrective action to improve the food stamp program

By Melanie Watts

The quality control system is based on two samples of non-assistance households. One sample is used to determine if households currently participating in the food stamp program are eligible for the program, if they are receiving the correct stamp allotment, and if they are paying the correct amount for the stamps.

The second sample is used to review reasons why the State agency took "negative action" against a household, that is, denied or discontinued program benefits.

This article deals only with the first type of quality control sample.

Hattie Hall drives a lot of miles every year, asking complete strangers a lot of personal questions. It's a part of her job she says she wouldn't trade for anything.

Ms. Hall is a food stamp quality control reviewer for the Texas State Department of Public Welfare. Quality control determines if a sample of food stamp recipients are truly eligible for the program, if they are receiving the correct allotment of stamps, and if they are paying the correct amount.

Quality control is an evaluation system administered by FNS and operated by the States in accordance with uniform national policies and procedures. Through this system, each State regularly reviews a statistically valid sample of participating non-public assistance households. Households interviewed may include persons receiving public assistance grants. However, to be part of the quality control sampling, a household must include at least one food stamp recipient who does not receive public assistance.

In Texas, about 1,200 cases must be reviewed every 6 months by the 35-member food stamp quality control staff. There are five quality control field offices across the State—Fort Worth, Sulphur Springs, Houston, Pharr and San Antonio—each with a supervisor and six reviewers. Some reviewers are located in satellite offices, like Ms. Hall who is with

the Fort Worth office but works out of Wichita Falls.

"Computers determine the sample using random method of selection," says Dave Peirce, who supervises the Texas food stamp quality control program.

About 200 households are selected each month for interviews. However, the staff normally reviews more than the required number of households. Some cases must be dropped from the sample when interviewers find recipients are uncooperative, or discover that a recipient has moved out of State.

"We don't drop many cases," explains Mr. Peirce. "The clients we interview are usually very cooperative and helpful."

Once the household selections are made, cases are assigned to the appropriate quality control field office. Each reviewer could work anywhere in the State but generally travels an assigned territory. Ms. Hall works from Fort Worth to the Panhandle, a distance of about 335 miles. She drives 2,000 miles each month and completes about eight cases.

The quality control worker first visits the certification office where the recipient applied for food stamps. After getting as much information as possible from the original case file, the reviewer visits the recipient's home. Because many Texas certification offices serve large areas, this can mean traveling to another town.

CONTROL

As a rule, recipients do not receive advance notice of the quality control interview, although applicants are told of the possibility of a visit during the certification process.

Recipient reaction to the visits varies. Many recipients are a little leery at first about the visit, so the reviewer must be diplomatic. Ms. Hall finds elderly people generally are glad for the company.

During each interview, quality control reviewers check three things: the household's eligibility, the amount of food stamps the household is allotted, and how much it must pay for its stamps.

"All elements of eligibility must be discussed during the interview," explains Ms. Hall. "Verifying each element involves looking at pay slips, receipts and check stubs. We need proof of the household's income and expenses."

These interviews can vary from 20 minutes to 2 hours, depending on such things as recipient cooperation and available documentary evidence.

"I don't like making more than one home visit," says Ms. Hall. "Several visits could appear to be harassment."

Interviewers work with collateral contacts whenever the household can't supply sufficient documentary evidence. This means verifying eligibility through a third party—a doctor, neighbor, banker or employer.

"These contacts are most helpful

when they learn what we are doing," smiles Ms. Hall. "Many of these people look at food stamps as a 'give-away program' but see quality control as a controlling factor. The quality control review also assures that the clients receive all benefits to which they may be entitled."

In addition to good public relations work, quality control reviewers also dispel many misconceptions about the food stamp program.

When they complete the reviews, the quality control interviewers send the results to the certification office, which, in turn, notifies the recipient of any negative findings and any necessary action.

In checking a household's eligibility and making sure recipients are paying the correct amount for the appropriate allotment of stamps, quality control interviewers look for errors made by recipients or the State agency. For example, recipients may fail to report changes in household income or deductions, they may withhold or misrepresent information, or make mistakes in calculation. The State agency may make errors in computation or transcription, fail to apply policy correctly or to take action when necessary.

In Texas, the ineligibility rate is currently around 7.3 percent. Mr. Peirce estimates that one percent of that figure is procedural errors.

"Our error rate is improving each reporting period," claims Mr. Peirce.

"Better certification techniques—like better interviews and better recording of information—are making our job a lot easier."

The FNS regional staff monitors each State by reviewing a sample of previously reviewed cases and analyzing the quality control operation.

"Quality control is just now coming into its own," Ms. Hall feels. "We're all just beginning to realize what an excellent management tool it is."

And Mr. Peirce agrees, noting the effect quality control has already had on the food stamp program—more in-depth certification interviews, more verification of income and medical costs, and more field staff.

Texas plans to use quality control findings to identify households with circumstances and composition that increase the chance for error. This information, in the hands of certification workers, could prevent many errors.

The Texas quality control staff meets at least once a year for a review and refresher course. Additional meetings may be called any time there are major policy changes.

Hattie Hall's job is a tough one that requires a great deal of diplomacy and physical stamina. But she wouldn't want to change jobs with anyone.

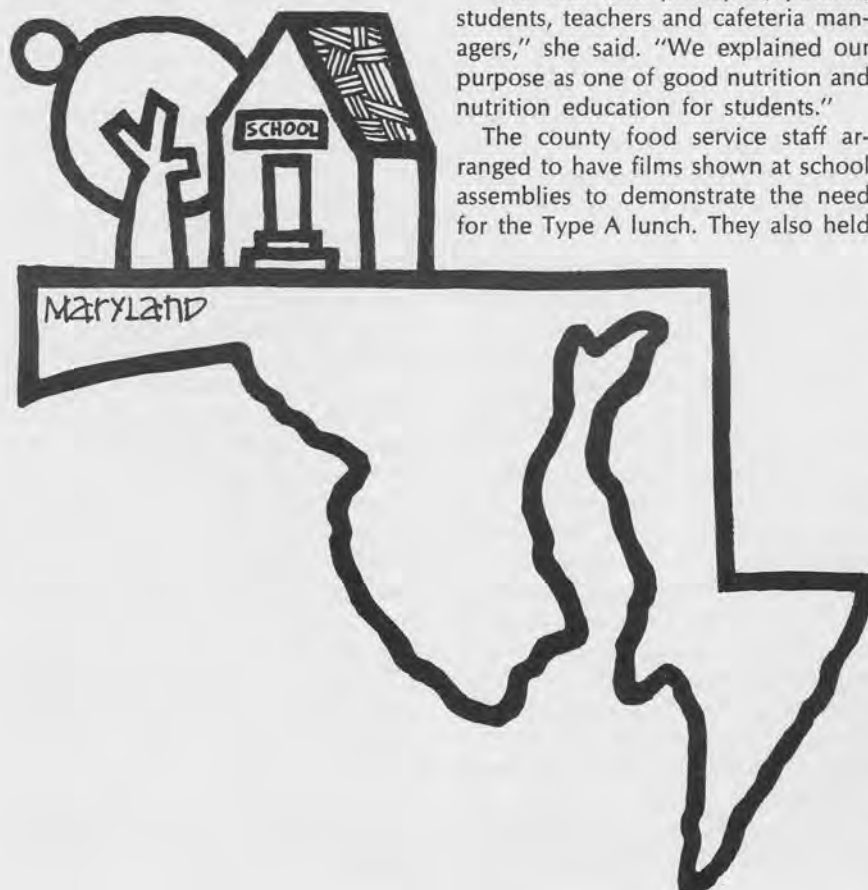
As she explains it, "What we're doing is making a better program for the people who need it." ☆

Maryland School Boosts Type A Participation

When Dr. Thomas W. Lewis was coaching high school football teams in Pennsylvania, he stressed the need for a good diet to his athletes.

Now, as principal at Colonel E. Brook Lee Junior High School in Silver Spring, Maryland, he is once again emphasizing nutrition to his students.

Lee is one of several schools in the Montgomery County School District that have taken an active interest in a special nationwide project sponsored by FNS to encourage more students to eat Type A meals.



Dr. Lewis explained the district schools' approach to increasing participation.

"We've simply cut down on a la carte items and offered more choices in Type A lunches," he said.

According to Joanne Styer, director of the county school food service, results prove the experiment was successful.

Schools that limited a la carte items showed a gain of 17 percent in student participation in the Type A lunch program. Schools that maintained a la carte items rose only 6 percent in the number of Type A lunches sold.

Ms. Styer explained that the removal of a la carte items, particularly packaged goods, involved a lot of planning and discussion.

"We met with principals, parents, students, teachers and cafeteria managers," she said. "We explained our purpose as one of good nutrition and nutrition education for students."

The county food service staff arranged to have films shown at school assemblies to demonstrate the need for the Type A lunch. They also held

workshops for cafeteria managers, and encouraged them to plan their own menus and work with students in designing lunch programs.

In the past year, county-wide participation in the Type A lunch program increased by more than 5,000 meals per day, Ms. Styer said. And students greeted the change with less resistance than expected.

"We didn't have much of a problem with eliminating a la carte items," the school food service director said. "The kids have accepted the fact that they aren't going to get those things."

At the Lee School, food service area supervisor Gloria Johnson and cafeteria manager Lillian Biggs expressed their satisfaction with the experiment.

"It took a lot of work," said Ms. Johnson, who, along with other area supervisors, took part in the district's planning for the new program. "But the results have made the effort worthwhile."

Ms. Biggs, who offers students a few a la carte selections of baked goods made in her school kitchen, was at first surprised at student reaction when a lot of their favorite "empty calorie" items were taken away.

"I was amazed. They didn't complain," she said.

Ms. Styer emphasized the importance of the cooperation of school administrators in making the program work in district schools.

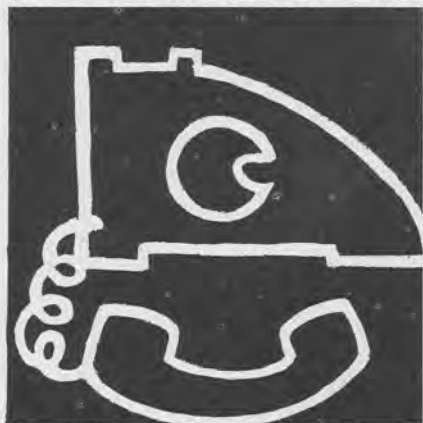
"If we didn't get the support from the principals," she said, "the project would have been much more difficult."

And some school officials who know the meaning of good nutrition are easy to spot. One is a tall man with the look of a former football player who can usually be seen making his way through the serving line at Lee Junior High. ☆

FOOD STAMP OUTREACH IN UTAH— a continuing effort

The number of non-welfare families receiving food stamps in Utah has doubled since an intensive 4-month outreach campaign aimed at this group started last November.

The campaign was a combined effort of the Utah Department of Social Services Assistance Payments Administration, the State Department of Community Affairs, the Community Action Agency, Issues Information Service, the Salt Lake Chapter



of NAACP, SOCIO—a coalition of organizations for Spanish-speaking people—the Retail Grocers Association, and SPAN—a senior citizens group.

Officials in the Department of Social Services felt lack of information and reluctance to sign up were the main reasons for low participation among potentially eligible individuals who receive no other public assistance. And they asked the organizers of the campaign to come up with some ideas for increasing food stamp enrollment.

"Enthusiasm is contagious working in a group this large," says Laura Greenwood, food stamp outreach technician for the Department of Social Services. "Ideas for good projects are just endless."

The group installed a statewide toll-free hotline, and volunteers, including Governor Calvin Rampton's wife, answered inquiries from nearly 200 callers a day. Packets of informa-

tion were mailed to each caller along with food stamp applications, when they were requested.

"Mailing applications to the callers makes it more convenient for them, and it saves time at the certification office," reports Ms. Greenwood.

The next campaign effort was aimed at extending certification office hours and initiating an appointment system. Now these offices are open 11 hours a day, 5 days a week. And applicants can make appointments as far as 2 weeks in advance.

"People are taking advantage of these extra 2 office hours," says Ms. Greenwood. "And this extension was particularly helpful with the coal workers' strike this winter that contributed to an increase in the State's unemployment from 5 to 8 percent."

Another idea was to reach potential eligibles when they are most concerned about their food budgets—



at the grocery store. So, flyers explaining the food stamp program and where to apply were stuffed in over 350,000 grocery bags.

The outreach campaign officially ended February 28, although the hotline will remain in use as long as it is needed. Now a program is under way to help educate the new recipients on how best to use their food stamps.

The Utah Extension Service, in cooperation with the Department of Social Services, is working on this

project through its Senior Nutrition Aide Program. Volunteers stage regular seminars for the elderly and discuss such things as shopping with food stamps and cooking tips.

"These sessions are very well received," reports Ms. Greenwood. "And the recipients say they have



learned many helpful things." Future plans call for expansion of recipient education to include groups other than just the elderly.

"We are anxious to use the extension service in our outreach effort as much as possible," she adds. "Their system of communications and organization of personnel already exist in the areas we want to reach."



Outreach is an ongoing project in Utah. Officially, this special campaign is over. But efforts are still continuing to reach those people who are potentially eligible for food stamps. ☆

FEED THE CHILDREN

Seminar participants discuss ways to expand the school lunch program



Many concerned citizen groups and community organizations have spent long hours designing ways to encourage public and private schools to set up school feeding programs for children.

One recent endeavor was a seminar held at the University of Hartford in Hartford, Connecticut. The city's mayor, George Athanson, hosted the day-long conference which was sponsored by the Mayor's Task Force on Feed the Children in conjunction with the State Department of Education.

Mayor Athanson said his idea for the meeting of State, public and private leaders was precipitated by the numerous accounts of world-wide food problems.

"We have all become concerned about solutions to hunger and malnutrition in other parts of the world," he said. "Meanwhile, children in Connecticut go hungry despite the existence of Federal-State programs designed to feed them."

More than 200 people attended the seminar, which was developed for an audience of key decision-making

people working in child nutrition programs throughout Connecticut. Among the participants were school administrators, school board members, nutritionists, public health officials, cafeteria managers and supervisors, and representatives from various community organizations throughout the State.

Much of the program centered on the far-reaching effects of the child nutrition programs.

Dr. Kirvin Knox, chairman of the nutritional services department of the University of Connecticut, talked

about the long-term effects of nutrition on a child's life.

"Though children may need math only 9 months a year, they need nutrition every day," the professor told seminar participants. "Child nutrition programs in schools should be very high on our priority list."

Another speaker, Marilyn Katz, attorney with the Fairfield County Legal Services, discussed some problems encountered by groups in instituting and implementing child nutrition programs. The program included a discussion of the types of funds available for child nutrition programs and a step-by-step analysis of the application process.

State education commissioner Mark Shedd stressed the importance of nutrition to the learning process.

"We must work like blazes," he said, "until we can say with some confidence that no child is failing because he's hungry or undernourished."

Dr. Shedd said it was "terribly important" to get feeding programs in the State's schools.

"There are 211 public schools not in the lunch or breakfast programs," he said. "Included in these schools are a substantial number of needy children."

Under the direction of Dr. Shedd, the State department of education is actively working to reach these no-program schools. Ann Tolman, director of the department's school food service operation, heads the outreach effort. Through Ms. Tolman's office, the State has been able to identify all public and private schools which are not currently operating school feeding programs.

"Now," the Connecticut school food service director said, "it is just a matter of finding the time to contact them in order to find out if they are

interested in joining the program."

Despite Ms. Tolman's desire to incorporate all the schools into the lunch program, she noted the size of her staff precludes an extensive outreach effort.

In addition to their other duties, the State's school food service staff of three makes the original contacts with the no-program schools. The next time-consuming step involves follow-up visits to interested schools, Ms. Tolman said. And the staff spends many hours explaining program rules and regulations to administrators before a school can join the National School Lunch Program.

Mayor Athanson said one of the purposes of the seminar was to help outreach work by getting school administrators actively interested in joining the lunch program.

"The Federal government has money for the school lunch program available," the Mayor pointed out, "but communities eligible for funds under these programs aren't applying for the funds."

Mayor Athanson said he hopes the end result of the seminar will be the adoption of a state-wide plan that will bring the lunch program to all children in Connecticut.

"That is one of the main reasons for the seminar," Mayor Athanson pointed out, "to get the right people together and work toward a common goal."

The seminar was broken down into four workshops which met in the morning and touched on various aspects of child nutrition programs. In the afternoon session, reports were presented from individual workshops.

Ms. Nancye Perry, former State school lunch director and now manager of food services and nutrition education for the Hartford public school system, put together and con-

ducted the workshop on school feeding systems.

She showed the various food delivery systems that are being used in Connecticut schools. Participants in this session also discussed problems of financing, public acceptance and nutrition education.

Ms. Perry has solid experience in all the areas discussed in her workshop. She directs the food services for 14 elementary and 5 secondary schools in Hartford that have an average daily participation of 12,800 children. Nine of the schools have self-contained kitchens, the remaining 10 are satellites.

Ms. Perry said that 89 percent of the lunches are served free.

There are 13 schools in the city that do not provide food service, but the Director said she felt confident they can be incorporated in the program.

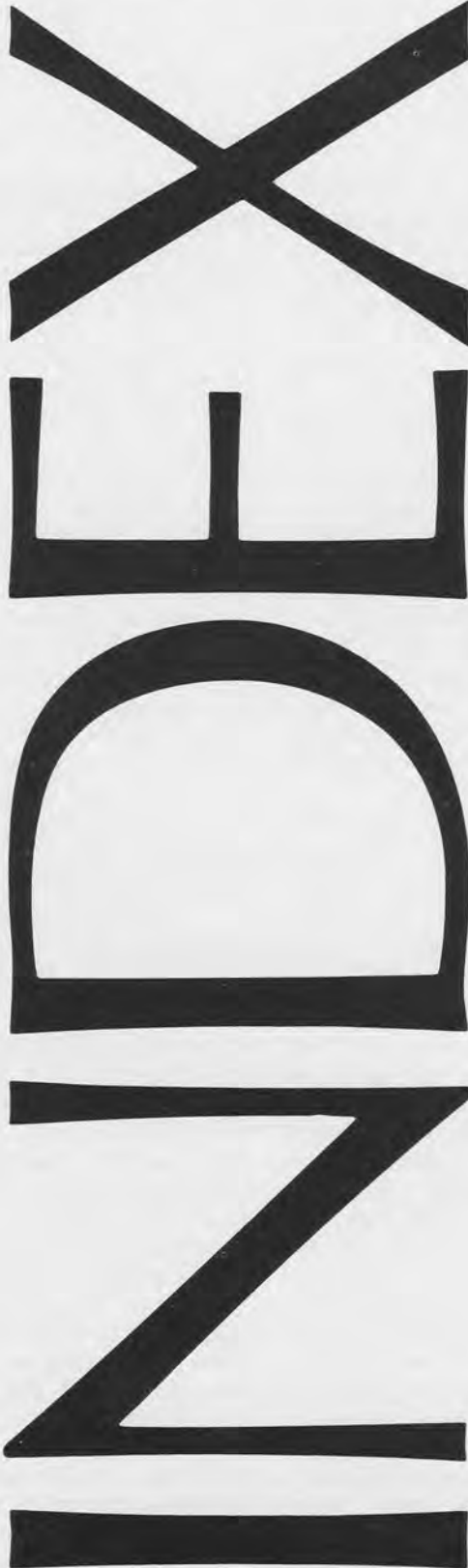
Alice Welsh, school lunch director of the Suffield public schools, summed up the feelings of many of the participants.

"All schools should offer school lunch since it is a basic part of education," she said. "You know, like books."

Participants at the workshop believed the well-structured group activity was most effective in alerting local leaders to the vital role that school lunch and child nutrition education play in the everyday lives of school children.

"While it may be true that even with these sessions educators and school boards may not be breaking down the doors of the State Department of Education to implement a lunch or breakfast program," one official said, "it does prove that responsible citizens have taken the time to express a collective concern." ☆

This index includes articles which appeared in FOOD AND NUTRITION in 1973 and 1974. The 1971-72 index was included in the April 1975 issue.



A

- A Coordinated Approach to Child Nutrition Dec. 1973
- A Look at High Schools: What Makes Lunch Sell? Oct. 1973
- A Volunteer Tells Her Story Feb. 1973
- Accounting Made Easy Aug. 1973
- Agricultural Research Service
 - Catching the Ethnic Flavor June 1973
 - Family Recipes: Authenticity is the Test Dec. 1974
 - Lunch Recipes Get "Kid-Tested" Aug. 1974
- Alabama
 - Nursery Helps Food Stamp Clients Oct. 1973
 - State Specialists Coordinate Nutrition Education Projects Apr. 1974
- Arizona
 - Canyon del Oro Turns Sack Lunches into Type A Meals Dec. 1974
 - WIC in Arizona: Food Help for Mothers and Children Aug. 1974
- Arkansas
 - In Arkansas: Kids Catch Nutrition Apr. 1974
 - State Specialists Coordinate Nutrition Education Projects Apr. 1974
 - Teachers Learn How to Teach Nutrition Aug. 1974
- ASFS
 - Secretary Butz Talks About School Lunch Dec. 1974
- Assistance Programs (Temporary)
 - Emergency Help for Texas Families Dec. 1974
- Automating Food Stamp Redemption June 1973

B

- Box Lunches Reach Nutrition Dropouts Feb. 1973
- Butz, Earl L.
 - Secretary Butz Talks About School Lunch Dec. 1974
- Buying Systems
 - Co-op Buying for Schools: Two Approaches Dec. 1974

C

- Cafeteria Plus Color Equals Fun Aug. 1973
- California
 - California's Nutrition Education Project Tests
 - Ways to Reach Kids Aug. 1974
 - Drive to Serve Grows—Students Join Jaycees Aug. 1973
 - For That Ethnic Flavor Dec. 1973
 - In Any Language: School Lunch Equals Food Feb. 1973
 - Private Schools Make School Lunch Work—
 - St. Michael's Makes a Deal;
 - St. James Builds a Kitchen Apr. 1974
 - State Specialists Coordinate Nutrition Education Projects Apr. 1974
 - The Golden Jar: It's More Than a Place to Eat Aug. 1974
 - Three Lunch Programs Involve Students, Community—
 - Participation is 90% in Emmetsburg;
 - Program Meets Special Needs in Santa Cruz
 - Student Committee Boosts Interest in Casper June 1974
 - To the Federal Reserve, Food Stamps are Like Money .. Oct. 1974
- California's Nutrition Education Project Tests Ways to Reach Kids Aug. 1974
- Canyon del Oro Turns Sack Lunches into Type A Meals.. Dec. 1974
- Cashiers Learn How Food Stamps Work Oct. 1973
- Catching the Ethnic Flavor June 1973
- Child Nutrition
 - A Coordinated Approach to Child Nutrition Dec. 1973

A Look at High Schools: What Makes Lunch Sell	Oct. 1973
Accounting Made Easy	Aug. 1973
Box Lunches Reach Nutrition Dropouts	Feb. 1973
Cafeteria Plus Color Equals Fun	Aug. 1973
California's Nutrition Education Project Tests Ways to Reach Kids	Aug. 1974
Canyon del Oro Turns Sack Lunches into Type A Meals	Dec. 1974
Catching the Ethnic Flavor	June 1973
Communities Learn About School Lunch	Aug. 1974
Co-op Buying for Schools: Two Approaches	Dec. 1974
Cup-Cans Come to Idaho	Dec. 1973
Food Facts and Fun with Butter and Boop	Apr. 1974
Getting Teens to Eat Lunch: Two New Ways Try Trim-a-Pound; Buffet Makes the Difference ..	Feb. 1974
Help for Migrants Who Stayed Behind	June 1974
Here Come the Nutrients	Feb. 1973
Highlights of the Nutrition Survey	Feb. 1973
How Can We Strengthen School Food Service	Oct. 1973
In Any Language: School Lunch Equals Food	Feb. 1973
In Arkansas: Kids Catch Nutrition	Apr. 1974
Keeping Kosher with Chicken	Aug. 1973
Kids Scramble to Lunch	Aug. 1973
Louisiana 100% School Lunch	Feb. 1974
Lunch Gets the O.K. in Oklahoma	Oct. 1974
Lunch is Served in Seconds	June 1974
Lunch is the Teacher	June 1973
Lunch Recipes Get "Kid-Tested"	Aug. 1974
Nutrition Education, a Team Approach to the Puzzle	Oct. 1974
One School Grows Tomatoes	June 1974
Pennsylvania Women Join School Lunch Drive	Oct. 1974
Portable Mom Serves Lunch—University of Montana Caters Hot Meals to Missoula's Elementary Schools	Dec. 1974
Private Schools Make School Lunch Work— St. Michael's Makes a Deal; St. James Builds a Kitchen	Apr. 1974
Reaching the Migrant Child	Feb. 1974
School Feeding: New Orleans Style	June 1973
School Lunch Gets a Spanish Setting	Aug. 1974
School Lunch in High Point: A Community's Pride	Apr. 1973
Secretary Butz Talks About School Lunch	Dec. 1974
Special Food Service for Summer	Apr. 1973
State Specialists Coordinate Nutrition Education Projects	Apr. 1974
Summer at White Eagle	Oct. 1974
Summer in Tennessee: Two Special Programs	Apr. 1974
Teachers Learn How to Teach Nutrition	Aug. 1974
The Golden Jar: It's More Than a Place to Eat	Aug. 1974
The Lodge Goes Type A	Feb. 1973
Three Lunch Programs Involve Students, Community— Participation is 90% in Emmetsburg; Program Meets Special Needs in Santa Cruz; Student Committee Boosts Interest in Casper ..	June 1974
Third Graders Host a Banquet	June 1974
Two Ways to Make School Lunch Fun	Oct. 1973
Type A the Ethnic Way	Oct. 1973
Colorado	
Reaching the Migrant Child	Feb. 1974
Communities Learn About School Lunch	Aug. 1974
Computer Speeds Food Stamp Checkout	Dec. 1974
Co-op Buying for Schools: Two Approaches	Dec. 1974
County Builds Careers in Food Help	Dec. 1973
Cup Cans Come to Idaho	Dec. 1973

D

District of Columbia	
So Others Might Eat	Feb. 1974
Drive to Serve Grows—Students Join Jaycees; National Guard Volunteers	Aug. 1973

E

Education	
A Coordinated Approach to Child Nutrition	Dec. 1973

A Volunteer Tells Her Story	Feb. 1973
California's Nutrition Education Project Tests Ways to Reach Kids	Aug. 1974
Cashiers Learn How Food Stamps Work	Oct. 1973
Communities Learn About School Lunch	Aug. 1974
County Builds Careers in Food Help	Dec. 1973
Food Facts and Fun with Butter and Boop	Apr. 1974
Food Stamps and the Grocer	Feb. 1974
Here Come the Nutrients	Feb. 1973
In Arkansas: Kids Catch Nutrition	Apr. 1974
Information Can be Preventive Medicine	Oct. 1974
Lunch is the Teacher	June 1973
Nutrition Education, a Team Approach to the Puzzle	Oct. 1974
Shopping Tips for Food Stamp Customers	Feb. 1974
Special Food Service for Summer	Apr. 1973
State Specialists Coordinate Nutrition Education Projects	Apr. 1974
Teachers Learn How to Teach Nutrition	Aug. 1974
Third Graders Host a Banquet	June 1974

Elderly

Drive to Serve Grows—Students Join Jaycees	Aug. 1973
Meals on Wheels Reach Baltimore's Elderly	Feb. 1973
Three Lunch Programs Involve Students, Community— Program Meets Special Needs in Santa Cruz	June 1974

Emergency Help for Texas Families	Dec. 1974
---	-----------

Extension Service

Help for Migrants Who Stayed Behind	June 1974
Shopping Tips for Food Stamp Customers	Feb. 1974

F

Family Recipes: Authenticity is the Test	Dec. 1974
--	-----------

Federal Reserve

To the Federal Reserve, Food Stamps are Like Money	Oct. 1974
---	-----------

Five State Nutrition Education Project	Oct. 1974
--	-----------

Nutrition Education, a Team Approach to the Puzzle	Oct. 1974
---	-----------

Food Facts and Fun with Butter and Boop	Apr. 1974
---	-----------

Food Distribution

A Volunteer Tells Her Story	Feb. 1973
Catching the Ethnic Flavor	June 1973
Drive to Serve Grows—Students Join Jaycees; National Guard Volunteers	Aug. 1973
How Food Stamps Aid Disaster Victims	June 1973
Ongoing Flood Relief	Aug. 1973
So Others Might Eat	Feb. 1974
Walker County Builds Its Food Distribution Program	Apr. 1973

Food for Health in Pierce County	Oct. 1974
--	-----------

Food Stamps

Automating Food Stamp Redemption	June 1973
Cashiers Learn How Food Stamps Work	Oct. 1973
Computer Speeds Food Stamp Checkout	Dec. 1974
County Builds Careers in Food Help	Dec. 1973
Emergency Help for Texas Families	Dec. 1974
Family Recipes: Authenticity is the Test	Dec. 1974
Food Stamps and the Grocer	Feb. 1974
Food Stamp Participation: A Profile	Dec. 1973
Food Stamp Security Begins with Printing	Aug. 1974
Food Stamp Team Speeds Certification	Dec. 1973
For That Ethnic Flavor	Dec. 1973
Grocers Help with Food Stamp Outreach	Apr. 1973
Help for Migrants Who Stayed Behind	June 1974
How Food Stamps Aid Disaster Victims	June 1973
Information Can be Preventive Medicine	Oct. 1974
Jersey City's Mobile Food Stamp Office	June 1974
Meals on Wheels Reach Baltimore's Elderly	Feb. 1973
North Carolina Reaches Out with Food Stamps	June 1974
Nursery Helps Food Stamp Clients	Oct. 1973
Ongoing Flood Relief	Aug. 1973
Service for Elderly Shoppers	Aug. 1974
Shopping Tips for Food Stamp Customers	Feb. 1974
Tangier Island Welcomes Food Stamps	Oct. 1974

To the Federal Reserve, Food Stamps are Like Money Oct. 1974
 Food Stamps and the Grocer Feb. 1974
 Food Stamp Participation: A Profile Dec. 1973
 Food Stamp Security Begins with Printing Aug. 1974
 Food Stamp Team Speeds Certification Dec. 1973
 For That Ethnic Flavor Dec. 1973

G

Garland Assistance Program
 Emergency Help for Texas Families Dec. 1974
 Georgia
 Getting Teens to Eat Lunch: Two New Ways—
 Try Trim-a-Pound; Buffet Makes the Difference Feb. 1974
 Information Can be Preventive Medicine Oct. 1974
 Walker County Builds Its Food Distribution
 Program Apr. 1973
 Getting Teens to Eat Lunch: Two New Ways—
 Try Trim-a-Pound; Buffet Makes the Difference Feb. 1974
 Grocers Help with Food Stamp Outreach Apr. 1973

H

Help for Migrants Who Stayed Behind June 1974
 Here Come the Nutrients Feb. 1973
 Highlights of the Nutrition Survey Feb. 1973
 How Can We Strengthen School Food Service Oct. 1973
 How Food Stamps Aid Disaster Victims June 1973

I

Idaho
 Cup-Cans Come to Idaho Dec. 1973
 Illinois
 Computer Speeds Food Stamp Checkout Dec. 1974
 In Any Language: School Lunch Equals Food Feb. 1973
 In Arkansas: Kids Catch Nutrition Apr. 1974
 Indians
 Summer at White Eagle Oct. 1974
 Information Can be Preventive Medicine Oct. 1974
 Innovative Approaches to Secondary School Nutrition
 The Golden Jar: It's More Than a Place to Eat Aug. 1974
 Iowa
 Three Lunch Programs Involve Students and
 Community—Participation is 90% in
 Emmetsburg; Program Meets Special Needs
 in Santa Cruz; Student Committee Boosts
 Interest in Casper June 1974

J

Jersey City's Mobile Food Stamp Office June 1974

K

Kansas
 Co-op Buying for Schools: Two Approaches Dec. 1974
 Kids Scramble to Lunch Aug. 1973
 Keeping Kosher with Chicken Aug. 1973
 Kids Scramble to Lunch Aug. 1973
 Kentucky
 New Program Meets Special Needs of Women, Infants
 and Children Apr. 1974

L

Louisiana
 Louisiana 100% School Lunch Feb. 1974
 School Feeding: New Orleans Style June 1973
 Louisiana 100% School Lunch Feb. 1974
 Lunch Gets the O.K. in Oklahoma Oct. 1974

Lunch is Served in Seconds June 1974
 Lunch is the Teacher June 1973
 Lunch Programs (see Child Nutrition)
 Canyon del Oro Turns Sack Lunches Into Type A
 Meals Dec. 1974
 Portable Mom Serves Lunch—University of Montana
 Caters Hot Meals to Missoula's Elementary
 Schools Dec. 1974
 Lunch Recipes Get "Kid-Tested" Aug. 1974

M

Mary Bridge Children's Center
 Food for Health in Pierce County Oct. 1974
 Maryland
 Help for Migrants Who Stayed Behind June 1974
 Meals on Wheels Reach Baltimore's Elderly Feb. 1973
 Massachusetts
 Drive to Serve Grows—National Guard Volunteers Aug. 1973
 Maternal and Infant Care Project (WIC)
 Information Can be Preventive Medicine Oct. 1974
 Meals on Wheels Reach Baltimore's Elderly Feb. 1973
 Medicine (Preventive)
 Information Can be Preventive Medicine Oct. 1974
 WIC in Arizona: Food Help for Mothers and
 Children Aug. 1974
 Michigan
 Co-op Buying for Schools: Two Approaches Dec. 1974
 Minnesota
 County Builds Careers in Food Help Dec. 1973
 Mississippi
 Nutrition Education, a Team Approach to the
 Puzzle Oct. 1974
 Montana
 Portable Mom Serves Lunch—University of
 Montana Caters Hot Meals to Missoula's
 Elementary Schools Dec. 1974

N

Nebraska
 State Specialists Coordinate Nutrition Education
 Projects Apr. 1974
 Neighborhood Youth Corps
 Summer at White Eagle Oct. 1974
 New Program Meets Special Needs of Women, Infants
 and Children Apr. 1974
 New Jersey
 Cashiers Learn How Food Stamps Work Oct. 1973
 Communities Learn About School Lunch Aug. 1974
 Jersey City's Mobile Food Stamp Office June 1974
 Lunch Recipes Get "Kid-Tested" Aug. 1974
 New Mexico
 Box Lunches Reach Nutrition Dropouts Feb. 1973
 The Lodge Goes Type A Feb. 1973
 New York
 Keeping Kosher with Chicken Aug. 1973
 State Specialists Coordinate Nutrition Education
 Projects Apr. 1974
 Type A the Ethnic Way Oct. 1973
 Non Food Assistance
 Private Schools Make School Lunch Work—
 St. Michael's Makes a Deal;
 St. James Builds a Kitchen Apr. 1974
 North Carolina
 North Carolina Reaches Out with Food Stamps June 1974
 School Lunch in High Point: A Community's Pride Apr. 1973
 North Carolina Reaches Out with Food Stamps June 1974
 Nursery Helps Food Stamp Clients Oct. 1973
 Nutrition and Technical Services
 Catching the Ethnic Flavor June 1973
 Family Recipes; Authenticity is the Test Dec. 1974
 Nutrition Education (see Education)
 Nutrition Education, a Team Approach to the Puzzle Oct. 1974

O

Ohio
 Special Food Service for Summer Apr. 1973

Oklahoma

Food Stamp Team Speeds Certification	Dec. 1973
Lunch Gets the O.K. in Oklahoma	Oct. 1974
One School Grows Tomatoes	June 1974
Summer at White Eagle	Oct. 1974
One School Grows Tomatoes	June 1974
Ongoing Flood Relief	Aug. 1973
Oregon	
Cafeteria Plus Color Equals Fun	Aug. 1973
Special Food Service for Summer	Apr. 1973
Two Ways to Make School Lunch Fun	Oct. 1973

P

Pennsylvania

Family Recipes: Authenticity is the Test	Dec. 1974
Lunch is the Teacher	June 1973
Pennsylvania Women Join School Lunch Drive	Oct. 1974
Private Schools Make School Lunch Work— St. Michael's Makes a Deal; St. James Builds a Kitchen	Apr. 1974
State Specialists Coordinate Nutrition Education Projects	Apr. 1974
Pennsylvania Women Join School Lunch Drive	Oct. 1974
Portable Mom Serves Lunch—University of Montana Caters Hot Meals to Missoula's Elementary Schools ..	Dec. 1974
Printing	
Food Stamp Security Begins with Printing	Aug. 1974
Private Schools Make School Lunch Work—St. Michael's Makes a Deal; St. James Builds a Kitchen	Apr. 1974
Profiles (Program)	
Food Stamp Participation: A Profile	Dec. 1973
Puerto Rican	
Family Recipes: Authenticity is the Test	Dec. 1974

R

Reaching the Migrant Child	Feb. 1974
----------------------------------	-----------

Recipes

A Volunteer Tells Her Story	Feb. 1973
Catching the Ethnic Flavor	June 1973
Family Recipes: Authenticity is the Test	Dec. 1974
Lunch Recipes Get "Kid-Tested"	Aug. 1974

S

Satellite Feeding

Cup-Cans Come to Idaho	Dec. 1973
Special Food Service for Summer	Apr. 1973
Type A the Ethnic Way	Oct. 1973

School Feeding: New Orleans Style	June 1973
---	-----------

School Lunch Gets a Spanish Setting	Aug. 1974
---	-----------

School Lunch in High Point: A Community's Pride	Apr. 1973
--	-----------

Secretary Butz Talks About School Lunch	Dec. 1974
---	-----------

Security

Food Stamp Security Begins with Printing	Aug. 1974
To the Federal Reserve, Food Stamps are Like Money	Oct. 1974

Service for Elderly Shoppers	Aug. 1974
------------------------------------	-----------

Shopping Tips for Food Stamp Customers	Feb. 1974
--	-----------

So Others Might Eat	Feb. 1974
---------------------------	-----------

South Carolina

A Coordinated Approach to Child Nutrition	Dec. 1973
Special Food Service for Summer	Apr. 1973
Special Food Service Program	
Special Food Service for Summer	Apr. 1973
Special Supplemental Feeding Program for Women,	

Infants and Children (WIC)

Food for Health in Pierce County	Oct. 1974
WIC in Arizona, Food Help for Mothers and Children	Aug. 1974

Sports

Summer in Tennessee: Two Special Programs	Apr. 1974
---	-----------

State Specialists Coordinate Nutrition Education Projects	Apr. 1974
--	-----------

Summer at White Eagle	Oct. 1974
-----------------------------	-----------

Summer Feeding Program	
------------------------	--

Summer at White Eagle	Oct. 1974
-----------------------------	-----------

Summer in Tennessee: Two Special Programs	Apr. 1974
---	-----------

Supermarket Checkout	
----------------------	--

Computer Speeds Food Stamp Checkout	Dec. 1974
---	-----------

T

Tangier Island Welcomes Food Stamps	Oct. 1974
---	-----------

Teachers Learn How to Teach Nutrition	Aug. 1974
---	-----------

Tennessee	
-----------	--

Lunch is Served in Seconds	June 1974
----------------------------------	-----------

Ongoing Flood Relief	Aug. 1973
----------------------------	-----------

Service for Elderly Shoppers	Aug. 1974
------------------------------------	-----------

Summer in Tennessee: Two Special Programs	Apr. 1974
---	-----------

Ten-State Nutrition Survey	
----------------------------	--

Highlights of the Nutrition Survey	Feb. 1973
--	-----------

Texas	
-------	--

Emergency Help for Texas Families	Dec. 1974
---	-----------

Getting Teens to Eat Lunch: Two New Ways	
--	--

Try Trim-a-Pound; Buffet Makes the Difference..	Feb. 1974
---	-----------

Here Come the Nutrients	Feb. 1973
-------------------------------	-----------

The Golden Jar: It's More Than a Place to Eat	Aug. 1974
---	-----------

The Lodge Goes Type A	Feb. 1973
-----------------------------	-----------

Third Graders Host a Banquet	June 1974
------------------------------------	-----------

Three Lunch Programs Involve Students and Community— Participation is 90% in Emmetsburg;;	
--	--

Program Meets Special Needs in Santa Cruz;	
--	--

Student Committee Boosts Interest in Casper	June 1974
--	-----------

To the Federal Reserve, Food Stamps are Like Money ..	Oct. 1974
---	-----------

Two Ways to Make School Lunch Fun	Oct. 1973
---	-----------

Type A the Ethnic Way	Oct. 1973
-----------------------------	-----------

U

Utah

School Lunch Gets a Spanish Setting	Aug. 1974
---	-----------

Third Graders Host a Banquet	June 1974
------------------------------------	-----------

V

Virginia

Tangier Island Welcomes Food Stamps	Oct. 1974
---	-----------

W

Walker County Builds Its Food Distribution Program ..	Apr. 1973
---	-----------

Washington	
------------	--

Food for Health in Pierce County	Oct. 1974
--	-----------

WIC	
-----	--

New Program Meets Special Needs of Women, Infants and Children	Apr. 1974
---	-----------

WIC in Arizona: Food Help for Mothers and Children ..	Apr. 1974
---	-----------

Wyoming	
---------	--

Three Lunch Programs Involve Students, Community— Participation is 90% in Emmetsburg;	
--	--

Program Meets Special Needs in Santa Cruz;	
--	--

Student Committee Boosts Interest in Casper	June 1974
--	-----------

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RICHARD L. FELTNER
Assistant Secretary of Agriculture

EDWARD J. HEKMAN
Administrator
Food and Nutrition Service

JANICE A. KERN, Editor
KATHERINE G. THOMAS,
Assistant Editor
MARCIA B. EDDINS, Art Director

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contents

- 2** Co-op Buying in Three States
- 6** A Team Teaching Success
- 10** Food Stamp Quality Control
- 12** Boosting Type A Lunch Participation
- 13** Food Stamp Outreach in Utah
- 14** Feed the Children
- 16** 1973-74 Index