



# Lynn Public Schools

## Nutrition & Health Tidbits

APRIL 2016

### April Food Focus: Garden Vegetables

April is National Garden Month! There are a variety of vegetables that we can grow in a garden including: green beans, cucumbers, squash, spinach, tomatoes and corn. Vegetable gardens are a great way to bring fresh produce straight to your kitchen, while getting the whole family involved and active. If you don't have the space for a backyard garden, try small pots or even pallets to grow your own garden!

#### GROCERY STORE TIP:

Garden vegetables can be easily found throughout your local grocery store. The produce aisle carries a variety of these vegetables year round, but you can also stock up on canned green beans and tomatoes, or frozen cauliflower, spinach, and peppers as a cost-effective resource. Don't forget to check out your local farmers market and CSAs to find great local, and in-season produce

#### COOKING WITH GARDEN VEGETABLES:

Mix up the look of your plate at mealtime—Make garden vegetables the center of attention, while keeping your meat and whole grains as the side dish. We all know potatoes are a true garden vegetable favorite, but change things up by making carrot fries, zucchini chips, garlic green beans, or even dipping some fresh snap peas in a yogurt dip!

#### HEALTH BENEFITS:

All the colorful fruits and vegetables grown in our gardens provides us with an important nutrient, beta carotene, which our bodies turn into vitamin A. Vitamin A is important for good health, especially eye sight. Plus, the produce you grow in your own garden is found to be higher in nutrients versus the produce that has traveled several thousand miles to get to your grocery store.

#### FUN FACT:

Did you know that there are over 4,000 varieties of tomatoes that come in all sorts of sizes, shapes and colors? In addition, did you know that "green" beans can actually be green, yellow, purple or even speckled?!



## Engaging Our Students Through School Meals

The Lynn Youth Health Alliance (LYHA) represents a group of student leaders from Lynn Classical and English High Schools, who are passionate about taking the initiative to help improve the health of their community. Just one of those initiatives includes taking the extra steps to learn more about their school meals, as well as letting their voices be heard. Students took the time to meet with the food service department's dietitian, Kelsey Massis, who



answered a handful of their questions ranging from: where school food comes from, who is responsible for ordering and cooking the food, food quality, calorie content and nutrition requirements. As leaders of the student population, students in the LYHA will now be taking the answers and information gathered during this meeting to try and organize a student-lead focus group. This focus group will provide the opportunity for students to voice their opinions when it comes to what they like on their school menus, what they wish they could change, school meal environment, and opportunities for student involvement. After all, one of the most important ways to continue improving the food we offer in schools is through student education and buy-in. The food service team is looking forward to hearing from our students. We have made huge leaps towards incorporating more fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins on the menu, but these options only really matters if the students are actually eating the meals themselves. Stay tuned for the results and outcomes of this upcoming focus group!

## April is Earth Month!

April is Earth Month, which gives us all the opportunity to make those small changes that can leave an impact on our planet in a big way. Here are just some ways you and your family can contribute to a good cause:

1. **Eat what's in season**—by purchasing and eating foods that are in season, you are helping to reduce extra energy and resources that is otherwise needed to get that out-of-season product to your table.
2. **Support your local farmers market or community supported agriculture (CSA)**—cut down on the distance your food travels to your plate by buying fruits, vegetables, legumes, eggs, meat, fish and dairy produced in your local community.
3. **Plant a plant or tree at home, at school or in your community garden**—you can help contribute towards producing your own food!
4. **Eat more whole foods and limit processed foods**—Picture this: Think about all the excess processing that it takes to manufacture that candy bar found in the grocery aisle. Now, do you think the high fructose corn syrup found in that candy bar really looks like an ear of corn? Next time you're at the store, remember this visualization by selecting foods and ingredients that you can recognize in their natural form, or what it reads on the food label. This can help contribute towards reducing your carbon footprint.

# Cilantro Lime Roasted Vegetables



Serving Size: 8

## Ingredients:

- 2 cups zucchini, julienne sliced
- 1 cup carrots, julienne sliced
- 1 cup green bell peppers, sliced
- 1/2 cup red bell peppers, sliced
- 3/4 cup red onion, sliced
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 tsp chopped cilantro
- 3/4 tsp lime juice
- 1/8 tsp cumin
- 1/8 tsp chili powder
- 1 1/3 TBSP plain yogurt

## Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Wash all produce. Cut vegetables as specified.
3. Place vegetables on a greased sheet pan.
4. Combine cilantro, lime juice, spices and yogurt in a bowl and mix thoroughly.
5. Pour dressing over vegetables, and let marinate for 30 minutes.
6. Place in oven at 400 degrees F for 15 -20 minutes, or until vegetables are tender
7. Serve and enjoy!

## April Food Focus

Do you have a garden at your school or at home? Here are some creative ways to spend 30 seconds to a minute celebrating garden month with your classroom, friends or family to help stay active:

- Squat down and pull carrots from the ground
- Reach for oranges on a tree
- Bend down and pick strawberries
- Push a wheelbarrow



### Contact Us!

Kevin Richardson

Food Service Director

781-477-7220 x 3227

[Richardsonk@lynnschools.org](mailto:Richardsonk@lynnschools.org)

Kelsey Massis

Registered Dietitian

339-205-8381

[Kelsey.massis@compass-usa.com](mailto:Kelsey.massis@compass-usa.com)

## National Nutrition Month Highlights

Our Lynn school community did a great job last month celebrating National Nutrition Month! Below are some highlights of what various classrooms and schools did to show their support for nutrition and good health:

- Ms. Trunfio's 2nd grade classroom at Ingalls learned how their body is like a bank, and how good nutrition comes from depositing healthy foods into our bodies! Students were able to create their own salad bowls to show what healthy foods they love to eat in their salad.
- Ms. Taylor's kindergarten classroom at Cobbett had the chance to learn about some of the important nutrition benefits found in a variety of their Healthy Brain Break snacks, such as carrots and oranges.
- Ms. Ogles' 7th grade science classroom at Breed had the chance to sample some fresh broccoli florets as they learned about the health benefits of broccoli and other cruciferous vegetables.
- Drewicz Elementary School will be participating in a school-wide banking on Nutrition Challenge at the beginning of May, where classrooms will compete against one another to see which classroom can eat the greatest number of whole grains, fruits, vegetables and lean protein sources during breakfast time. Drewicz is setting the perfect example that it is never too late to celebrate good health and nutrition!

