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CHEF ANN FOUNDATION MARKS 10 YEARS OF HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD REFORM

Organization celebrates reaching 10,000 schools and more than 3 million students, and announces key 2019 initiatives to kick off the next 10 years of providing children with access to fresh, healthy scratch-cooked meals in schools

BOULDER, Colo. – May 16, 2019 – [Chef Ann Foundation](#) (CAF) has been on the forefront of bringing healthy food into schools across the country since 2009. In the 10 years since the foundation was created, CAF programs have reached more than 10,000 schools and impacted more than three million children’s school lunches. CAF has successfully implemented programs and grants that bring awareness and change to school food. Today, the organization announced the expansion of several initiatives in 2019 that will continue to help provide school food professionals, parents and nutrition advocates with the tools, training, resources and funding they need to reinvent the school lunchroom experience. These initiatives include expansion of the School Food Institute (SFI) with three new modules; a second annual Natural Products Real School Food Challenge; and a new CAF Membership Program wherein CAF supporters can commit to support school food change.

“I could not be more proud of the programming that our team has implemented over the past 10 years to help children across the U.S. get daily access to fresh, healthy food,” said Chef Ann Cooper. “Our work, however, remains far from done knowing 70 percent of the 30 million students eating school lunches everyday qualify for free or reduced (F/R) priced meals. For these students, school meals might be their only access to healthier food. Our mission remains focused on providing tried and tested tools, resources and grants for school food change, and we challenge districts, parents and other food advocates to join this important movement supporting our next generation.”

Here’s a look at CAF’s key achievements over the last ten years:

- 3,098,681 children’s school lunches have been impacted by CAF programming
- Nearly 100,000 children received lunchroom nutrition education through Project Produce
- 80,591 tools, including training videos, recipes, menus and management spreadsheets, downloaded from [The Lunch Box](#)
- 55,393 students impacted by CAF’s [Get Schools Cooking](#) program
- 10,307 schools reached through CAF programming and grants
- 5,619 salad bars in schools
- 861 [School Food Institute](#) course seats filled

It's been a highly impactful 10 years, and the CAF team continues to implement programming in the hopes that school meals made from scratch will no longer be considered, 'renegade.' As CAF looks ahead to 2019 and beyond, we are excited to announce key initiatives that provide schools and the larger community the opportunity to support the CAF mission. These initiatives include:

- **[School Food Institute \(SFI\)](#)**. Launched in the fall of 2017, SFI is an online educational series of 11 courses that teach school foodservice professionals and childhood nutrition advocates across the U.S. how to transition to a scratch-cooked model. Made possible in part thanks to a generous donation from the Colorado Health Foundation, SFI was created to increase accessibility to healthier school food by providing the in-depth training, operational skills and strategic vision, SFI is the only online school food professional development series focused on scratch cooking, that allows food service staff to earn continuing education credit hours with training that meets USDA professional standards. SFI now includes three new courses, including a Plant Forward course that shares how schools can incorporate more plant-based foods into their USDA compliant meals; a Sustainable Lunchrooms course focused on reducing the environmental impact of both front and back of the house food service programs; and an Ingredients for Healthier Kids course co-taught by Chef Cooper and recognized pediatrician, Julia Nordgren MD, who share seven key food areas schools can help reduce/eliminate from students' diets, including sugar, antibiotics/hormones, preservatives and more. SFI recognizes those who are truly committed through its **[Certificate Program](#)**. An SFI Certificate gives professionals a competitive edge in the school food service industry and equips them with the knowledge, skills, and strategic vision to operate top-notch school meal programs and to make real change to support the health of our children.
- **[The Lunch Box](#)**. One of CAF's original programs, The Lunch Box is an online resource with free step-by-step resources, tools and recipes to help school food service teams as they transition their programs from processed foods to scratch cooking with fresh ingredients. In 2019, CAF is working with key stakeholders to look at new recipes, resources and technology to prepare for a relaunch of this free portal in early 2020.
- **[Real School Food Challenge](#)**. The Real School Food Challenge provides good food advocates a fun opportunity to raise awareness and funding for healthy school food programs across the U.S. In each Real School Food Challenge, competitors are asked to create dishes that adhere to USDA guidelines, and cost under \$1.25 per serving, the average budget for a school lunch in the U.S. CAF is excited to share that 2019 will include the execution of several Challenges, including a second annual Natural Products Industry Challenge to take place in Boulder, Colo., this fall.
- **[10th Anniversary Membership Program](#)**. The first-ever membership program from CAF, the 10th Anniversary Membership Program provides donors who commit to a minimum donation of \$25 a month, and for a 12-month commitment, with special benefits for supporting long-term change to children's' health. Each donor who makes this minimum commitment will receive an exclusive culinary gift set curated by Chef Cooper that centers around a recipe for Peruvian Chili Lime Chickpeas Salads. Additionally, members will receive members-only access to a Chef Ann-hosted webinar on the state of the nation regarding school food, exclusive emails and materials with updates on our programs, events and accomplishments.

"I was first inspired to support school food reform efforts after having lunch with my daughter at school one day and experiencing shock at what was served to our children," shared Mara Fleishman, CEO of CAF. "As a parent to three children, I am inspired daily to lead our team in finding ways to help schools, parents and other food advocates providing our children with access to made from scratch meals. The initiatives shared today build perfectly on our

successes over the last 10 years, and provide a variety of ways for people to join us on our crusade to reform school food.”

About Chef Ann Foundation

[Chef Ann Foundation](#) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 2009 by Ann Cooper, an internationally recognized chef, author, educator, public speaker, and advocate of healthy food for all children, with the mission, “to provide school communities with the tools, training, resources, and funding that enables them to create healthier food and redefine lunchroom environments.” To date, the organization has reached more than 10,000 schools and 3 million kids with their healthy school programming.

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