



CHEF ANN COOPER BIOGRAPHY

Renegade Lunch Lady; Partner, Lunch Lessons, LLC; Director, Nutrition Services, Boulder Valley School District; and Founder, [Chef Ann Foundation](#) (CAF), [The Lunch Box](#), and [Salad Bars to Schools](#)



Chef Ann Cooper is a celebrated author, chef, educator, and enduring advocate for better food for all children.

In a nation where children are born with shorter estimated life expectancies than their parents because of diet-related illness, Ann is a relentless voice of reform by focusing on the links between school food and children's health and wellness.

A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, N.Y., Ann has been a chef for more than 40 years, including positions with Holland America Cruises, Radisson Hotels, and Telluride Ski Resort before serving as Executive Chef at the renowned Putney Inn in Vermont. She has been featured in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *Newsweek*, and *Time Magazine* and has appeared on NPR's *Living on Earth*, ABC's *Nightline*, CNN, PBS' *To The Contrary*, the CBS *Morning Show*, and many other media outlets. Ann has shared her knowledge and experience by speaking at the Smithsonian

Institute, the National Restaurant Association, the Heifer Foundation, Chefs Collaborative, the International Association of Culinary Professionals and numerous conferences. She has been honored by SLOW Food USA, selected as a Kellogg Food and Society Policy Fellow, and awarded an honorary doctorate from SUNY Cobleskill for her work on sustainable agriculture. In 2016, Ann was named "One of the Top 50 Food Activists" by the Academy of Culinary Nutrition.

Ann is the author of four books: *Lunch Lessons: Changing the Way We Feed Our Children* (2006), *In Mother's Kitchen: Celebrated Women Chefs Share Beloved Family Recipes* (2005), *Bitter Harvest: A Chef's Perspective on the Hidden Dangers in the Foods We Eat and What You Can do About It* (2000) and *A Woman's Place is in the Kitchen: The Evolution of Women Chefs* (1998). She is past president of The American Culinary Federation of Central Vermont, and past president and board member of Women's Chefs and Restaurateurs. She also served on the U.S.

Department of Agriculture National Organic Standards Board, a Congressional appointment, and was an Executive Committee member of Chefs Collaborative - all in an effort to raise awareness about the value of healthful, seasonal, organic, and regional foods.

Ann's research for and writing of, "*A Bitter Harvest*," provided a true epiphany for this always curious and proactive chef. She could no longer ignore the environmental and health facts when it came to producing food in this country. Ann's career shifted from primarily cooking to a path of cooking, writing, and public speaking – all advocacy work for a healthier food system. Ann focuses on using her skills and background to create a nationwide, sustainable model for K-12 schools to transition any processed food-based meal program to a whole foods environment where food is procured regionally and prepared from scratch. In 2009, Ann founded Food Family Farming Foundation (F3) as a nonprofit focusing on solutions to the school food crisis. On the foundation's fifth anniversary, F3 transitioned to the CAF, in honor of the woman who did not give up and did not give in.

Today, CAF carries out Ann's vision by actively supporting school districts nationwide with the tools, training, resources and funding needed to help schools create healthier food and redefine lunchroom environments. Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2019, CAF programs have reached more than 10,000 schools and more than 3 million students across the U.S.

Chef Ann is happily working overtime as a Chef, Nutrition Services Director, Consultant, Author, Public Speaker, and Advocate because she sees a need for change and has the gifts to help. She envisions a time soon when being a chef working to feed children fresh, delicious, and nourishing food will no longer be considered "renegade."

ANN COOPER BIOGRAPHY (CONDENSED VERSION):

Chef Ann Cooper is a celebrated author, chef, educator and enduring advocate for better food for all children. A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, Ann has been a chef for more than 40 years, with nearly 20 of those years in school food. She currently serves as the director of nutrition services for the Boulder Valley School District. Known as the, "Renegade Lunch Lady," Ann has been honored by The National Resources Defense Council, selected as a Kellogg Food and Society Policy Fellow, and awarded an honorary doctorate from SUNY Cobleskill for her work on sustainable agriculture. In 2009, Ann founded the nonprofit [Chef Ann Foundation](#) (CAF) to focus on solutions to the school food crisis. Today, CAF carries out Ann's vision by actively supporting school districts nationwide with the tools, training, resources and funding needed to help schools create healthier food and redefine lunchroom environments. Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2019, CAF programs have reached more than 10,000 schools and more than 3 million students across the U.S.

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