

## News Release

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## Contact

Jessica Christopher  
press@chefannfoundation.org  
610-945-8615

# Short Film Showcases Impact of Partnership Between Chef Ann Foundation and Brownsville Independent School District

*District worked to replace ultraprocessed foods with fresher, healthier meals made from scratch and use ingredients from local farms*

**Brownsville, TX** – [Unearthing the Future](#), a new branded content series presented by [The Lexicon of Food](#) and produced for series participants by [BBC StoryWorks Commercial Productions](#), shines a spotlight on the people and ideas working to drive progress across the global food system.

The online series includes a story produced for the [Chef Ann Foundation](#) – “[Transforming School Food](#)” – which highlights how the school-food-reform nonprofit worked in partnership with [Brownsville Independent School District](#) in Texas to serve students fresher and healthier meals cooked from scratch.

This has involved training the district’s school food service staff to equip them with new culinary skills and adding 15 new scratch-cooked recipes to the district’s menu, including recipes that are culturally responsive to the district’s student demographics. The district also began sourcing more ingredients from local farms.

**“Healthy meals help children achieve academic success,” said Director of Food and Nutrition Services Jackie Cruz. “I’m proud of contributing to students’ health. And now that we’ve seen what we could do, this is just the beginning.”**

Today, [the majority of children’s diets are made up of ultraprocessed foods](#). With nearly 30 million K-12 students eating school meals, the quality of these meals has a direct impact on generations of children and the adults they become. According to the latest [USDA Farm to School Census](#), the

majority of school food authorities estimate the proportion of meals made from scratch is fewer than 25%.

Despite a range of obstacles, including funding constraints and outdated facilities, many school food professionals across the country are taking it upon themselves to transition their districts away from “heat-and-serve” operations, which rely on ultraprocessed foods, to scratch-cooking-focused operations.

**“We hope what Brownsville Independent School District is doing to improve its meals inspires districts everywhere, in every state,” said Chef Ann Foundation CEO Mara Fleishman. “They are an example of what’s possible when we put the health and wellbeing of kids at the center of school food.”**

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#### About [Chef Ann Foundation](#)

Chef Ann Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working to ensure that school food professionals have the resources, funding, and support they need to provide fresh, delicious, scratch-cooked meals that support the health of children and our planet. To date, the organization has reached more than 16,000 schools and 4.4 million kids in all 50 states with healthy school food programming.

#### About [The Lexicon of Food](#)

The Lexicon gives people the language to pay closer attention to what they buy and how they move through the world, anchored in a shared responsibility for creating a better planet. The Lexicon of Food is a not-for-profit organization that has been mobilizing changemakers across the food system for 20 years to do more good rather than simply do less bad.

#### About [BBC StoryWorks](#)

BBC StoryWorks Commercial Productions is the commercial creative content studio of BBC Studios, with teams on the ground in New York, London, Dubai, New Delhi, Beijing, Singapore and Sydney, ensuring access to a global network of creative excellence as well as expert regional knowledge. It works with clients to develop and deliver commercial branded content campaigns.