

KIWI CLASS LEADERS *A spotlight on inspiring and successful school food programs*

Camden Hills Regional High School

BY ANNE FICKLEN

Can you take a high-school lunch program that's \$75,000 in the red and not only make it break even but turn it into a model of school cooperation and healthy eating? Yes, if you're Susan Boivin at Camden Hills Regional High School, in Maine. When she was hired in 2004, Boivin found that the program serving the school's 750 students was firmly "heat and serve" and clearly underperforming.

She took a "no baby steps" approach—on her first day she removed the deep-fat fryer and never looked back. Boivin buys local produce as much as possible, spending her summers going to farmers and telling them what she needs so they can grow it for her, and she also buys eggs from local farms. Everything is healthy and fresh. Boivin uses recipes from Jamie Oliver, Craig Claiborne,

Julia Child, the *Boston Globe* and the web. Favorite dishes are chicken marsala, Thai peanut shrimp, hot artichoke dip and bruschetta pizza with herbs grown in the school greenhouse. Boivin's next step is for kids to have their own cups to use every day—no waste.

The cafeteria has become a haven for students, with their art and writing on the walls, a composting section run by the global-science class and handmade bowls and plates courtesy of a joint project with art and science teachers. Kids created a T-shirt that read "I love the lunch ladies at Camden Hills High School"; one failing student even stayed in school thanks to lunch—he told his guidance counselor that in the cafeteria people cared about him.

Camden Hills' process works—the school got a perfect score from the state

on its food program, and the kids adore lunch. In fact, four seniors have asked Boivin to apply for jobs at their respective colleges—they can't stand the idea of leaving their school lunches behind!

To create that kind of love at your school, whether you work at a school or are just a concerned parent, try these tips.

- 1 Put up a suggestion board. Let kids—and teachers—know they have input.
- 2 Take off your blinders—consider all ideas no matter how different. Maybe you *can* start a compost center, host a lunchtime poetry slam or have vegan entrees every day.
- 3 Get into the kitchen. Volunteer to train staff—teach them how to make a whole grain-batter bread or a baked-chicken recipe so they can ditch those nasty chicken fingers.



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Many news stories talk about what's wrong with school food programs—here at KIWI, we like to talk about what's right. So, we're celebrating the schools and school systems that have made a commitment to serving students healthy foods. If this sounds like your school, we invite you to nominate it for our prestigious annual award. We'll be recognizing healthy school food programs in three categories:

- ♦ Preschool
- ♦ Public School/School System K–12
- ♦ Private School/School System K–12

To enter, visit www.kiwimagonline.com. Entries must be received by September 30, 2007. Visit our website for rules and details.

The three Grand Prize winners will receive \$3,500 each and a feature story in KIWI Magazine about the school and its meal program.

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