May 2019 Newsletter

The 2018-19 school year is almost over, so I'd like to take a moment to congratulate all our MHS graduates, and thank our outstanding Child Nutrition Service staff for another great school year. It's a great time to be a Rougher!!!

**Summer Food Service Program**

The Summer Food Service Program was started by USDA as a pilot program in 1968 to study the effectiveness of providing meals for children when school was not in session. The first full year, 1969, showed participation of approximately 99,000 children at 1,200 sites. Once the program was put into effect nationwide, the program has shown a steady increase in participation. Over 1.5 million meals were served last year in Oklahoma, and Muskogee Schools Child Nutrition Services will again be part of the Summer Food Service Program, Meals will be served Monday through Thursday, beginning June 3, at the following locations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice Robertson Middle School</td>
<td>402 N. S Street</td>
<td>Breakfast 7:30 - 8:00&lt;br&gt;Lunch 11:30 - 12:00</td>
<td>June 3 - June 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp Bennett</td>
<td>40th &amp; Park Ave.</td>
<td>Lunch 10:45 - 11:45&lt;br&gt;No meals June 13</td>
<td>June 3 - July 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honor Heights Park</td>
<td>1400 Honor Heights Dr.</td>
<td>Lunch 11:00 - 11:30</td>
<td>June 3 - July 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irving Elementary</td>
<td>1100 N. J St.</td>
<td>Breakfast 7:30 - 8:00&lt;br&gt;Lunch 11:15 - 12:00</td>
<td>June 3 - June 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskogee High School</td>
<td>3200 E. Shawnee</td>
<td>Breakfast 7:30 - 8:00&lt;br&gt;Lunch 11:00 - 12:15</td>
<td>June 3 - July 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskogee Public Library</td>
<td>801 W. Okmulgee</td>
<td>Lunch 11:30 - 12:45</td>
<td>June 3 - July 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Transformation</td>
<td>2130 W. Okmulgee</td>
<td>Lunch 12:00 - 12:30</td>
<td>June 3 - July 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robison Park</td>
<td>August &amp; Gulick Streets</td>
<td>Lunch 12:00 - 12:30</td>
<td>June 3 - July 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spaulding Park</td>
<td>E. Okmulgee &amp; S. G St</td>
<td>Lunch 12:45 - 1:15</td>
<td>June 3 - July 18</td>
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This Institution is an Equal Opportunity Provider.

These locations will also be published in the Muskogee Phoenix and updated as needed on the school's social media pages. Our Nutrition Education Coordinator, Brandi Stevenson, will also host
some fun summer activities for kids of all ages at various locations, so make sure to check our Facebook page or Muskogee Schools website for updates!!

**Technique of the Month**

This month, we're going to learn about the wonderful world of mixed salads and dressings. With the abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables available from the Farmer's Market and grocery stores, you can make a fantastic lunch or dinner that the whole family will enjoy.

Don't limit yourself by thinking a salad is only lettuce mixed with a few veggies, drenched in bottled salad dressings. Salads can be served as an appetizer, the main course, a side dish, or even a dessert. There are no fixed rules when preparing a salad, nearly anything goes!!

**Appearance is Everything**

Look at the pictures below; which of these green salads would you most enjoy?

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Salad on the left - iceberg lettuce with a few monochromatic toppings, plain vinaigrette dressing. Probably tastes very good, but pretty “meh”.
Salad on the right - bursting with bright colors, looks fresh and inviting.
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The most important rule to remember about salads is how to prepare and hold your ingredients to ensure the freshest, most nutritious ingredients. Select lettuces or other greens that are fresh, no browned edges or leaves or rotten spots. Moisture and air are necessary to keep greens crisp. Wash leaves and shake excess moisture from the leaves before storage. Don't seal tightly in plastic bags in the refrigerator, as lack of air circulation will wilt and spoil your greens much faster. Keep loosely covered and don't crowd too much into a single container. If greens start to lose a little crispness, they can be refreshed before serving by a short soak in ice water.

**Fresh & Fabulous Combos**

I've come up with a list that you can use to create your own individual specialty salads. Just adjusting ingredients can change the same basic greens from an appetizer or side dish to a complete meal.

**Lettuce and Other Greens:** Iceberg, Romaine, Bibb, Butterhead, Loose Leaf, Crisphead, spinach, Arugula, Mesclun, Chinese cabbage, escarole, dandelion greens, radicchio, beet greens, microgreens, sprouts, watercress, edible flowers (pansies, violas, nasturtiums, etc.)

**Raw Vegetables:** Avocado, bean, alfalfa, other sprouts, asparagus, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, mushrooms, celery, bell peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, onions & scallions, radishes, fresh corn kernels, sliced Summer squash, shaved Brussels sprouts, sliced summer squash

**Cooked, Pickled & Canned Vegetables:** Artichoke hearts, asparagus, olives, pickled or roasted beets, pickled onions, roasted corn, bamboo shoots, bean sprouts, roasted winter squash or sweet potatoes, roasted red peppers, steamed fresh green beans, edamame, drained & rinsed canned beans and peas, pimientos, frozen green peas, roasted or steamed potatoes
**Starches:** Cooked pasta, cooked dried or canned beans, chickpeas (garbanzo beans), steamed quinoa, spelt, barley, farro, wheat berries, bulgur wheat, brown or wild rice

**Proteins:** cooked chicken, sliced or ground beef, turkey, ham, fish and shellfish, cured meats like salami, prosciutto or pepperoni, crispy tofu cubes, vegetarian “chicken” nuggets, bacon, hard cooked eggs, cottage cheese, hard or cured cheeses

**Fruits:** Apples, blueberries, blackberries/raspberries, cherries, dates, figs, grapes, orange segments, grapefruit segments, sliced or diced peaches, mango, sliced plums, kiwi, pineapple, strawberries, watermelon or cantaloupe, pomegranate seeds

**Garnishes:** cut or shredded cheese, croutons, chopped or sliced nuts, Chow Mein noodles, fried onion pieces, seeds, fresh herbs

Whatever you choose to do, arrange your salad artistically to make it more appealing. Try to layer the salad with greens as the base, and other ingredients placed on top, giving the presentation a little height. Unless you’re doing a marinated vegetable salad, don’t dress your salad until right before service time to prevent wilting. Use as many different textures and colors as possible to make your salad a thing of beauty, and let your kids help by doing age-appropriate tasks like washing produce, slicing or tearing items into serving pieces, arranging cut items on top of the salad, and even with making a simple homemade dressing!

**Dressed for Success**

One of the best parts of eating a salad is enjoying a complementary dressing that brings out the flavors of each item. The simplest is a vinaigrette, and you can adjust in infinite ways to personalize for your family's tastes.

**Vinaigrette** - a temporary emulsion of an acidic ingredient with an oil. Simply stated, mixing oil and vinegar with a little salt and pepper is the most basic dressing of all. However, not many of us are satisfied with this combo; we want something tasty and exciting on our salad!

My foolproof formula for a good vinaigrette follows this ratio: **One part acid & flavorings to 2 parts oil.** For instance, start with ½ cup of an acidic ingredient (any flavor vinegar, citrus juices, or a blending of all), add your desired seasonings such as salt, pepper, and herbs, and then add 1 cup of your chosen oil (vegetable, canola, sunflower, avocado, extra virgin or extra light olive, safflower, etc.).

You can also add a bit of an emulsifier - an ingredient that helps bind the oil & vinegar for a longer period of time, such as prepared mustard, honey, prepared sauces, grated cheese, sour cream, mayonnaise, peanut or almond butter, sugar, agave nectar, fruit or vegetable pulp. Now give it a whirl in the blender, food processor, or shake it vigorously in a Mason jar. Voila!! Salad dressing!!!

Here are a few easy dressings that I've enjoyed over the years. Remember the ratio of 2:1, and let your imagination take over!

- **Balsamic** - extra light olive oil, balsamic vinegar, salt, pepper, Dijon mustard, fresh oregano & thyme
- **Honey Mustard** - mayonnaise, honey, prepared yellow mustard, apple cider or white vinegar, dash of hot sauce
- **Spicy Asian** - Seasoned rice vinegar, honey, dash of Sriracha, grated fresh ginger, dark or regular soy sauce, Mirin (optional), orange juice, canola oil, dash of toasted sesame oil to taste, salt, pepper, garlic powder or mashed fresh garlic
- **Thai Peanut** - Seasoned rice vinegar, brown sugar, dried red pepper flakes or garlic chili paste, Sriracha, peanut butter, soy sauce, fish sauce, coconut milk, fresh lime juice, diced hot chili peppers (optional), canola oil, dash of sesame oil
- **Southwest Style** - white wine vinegar, fresh lime juice and grated zest, agave nectar or honey, pureed chipotle pepper with adobo sauce, fresh cilantro, avocado or canola oil, bit of cumin & chili powder
- **Fruit Vinaigrette** - white wine or apple cider vinegar, fresh lemon or lime juice, sweetened fruit pulp (pureed & strained berries, thawed frozen fruit, fresh or frozen mango, pineapple, etc.), salt & pepper, Dijon mustard, dash hot sauce, neutral flavored oil
- **Italian** - white wine vinegar, fresh or dried oregano, thyme, marjoram, rosemary, fresh minced garlic and parsley, finely chopped red onion, salt, pepper, sugar, Dijon or regular mustard, grated Parmesan, half olive & half vegetable oil (add a bit of mayo for Creamy Italian)
- **French** - grated onion, cider vinegar, ketchup, sugar, mashed garlic, Worcestershire, paprika, hot pepper sauce, white or black pepper, salt, vegetable oil
- **Creamy Avocado** - add mashed ripe avocado, cayenne, and salt to Italian dressing. Blend until thick and smooth.

**Recipes of the Month**
Salads, of course! One for an appetizer or side salad, a dinner salad, and a salad for a crowd as well.

**Granny’s Favorite Salad**
Serves 4

4 cups assorted salad greens, washed & torn into bite-sized pieces (I like to use leaf lettuce, spinach, Romaine mix)
2 large Granny Smith apples, washed, cored, and thinly sliced
1 cup dried cranberries
1 cup glazed pecan pieces (recipe follows)
1 cup crumbled Feta cheese
Lemon Honey Vinaigrette Dressing (recipe follows)

On 4 medium sized salad plates, arrange each with 1 cup greens and sprinkle with ¼ cup dried cranberries. Top with ½ sliced apple, ¼ cup glazed pecan pieces, and ¼ cup crumbled Feta. Serve with Lemon Honey Vinaigrette dressing.

**Lemon Honey Vinaigrette** - blend ½ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice, 2 Tbsp honey (or more to taste), pinch of salt and pepper, ½ tsp. Dijon mustard and dash of cayenne pepper. Whisk or shake to blend. Gradually whisk in 1 cup neutral flavored vegetable oil or shake until blended. Serve immediately.

**Glazed Pecans** - Melt 2 Tbsp salted butter in small nonstick skillet over medium heat. Stir in 1 cup pecan halves and 2 Tbsp light brown sugar. Cook, stirring constantly, until sugar begins to caramelize, about 2 to 3 minutes. Remove, and spread pecan halves onto a wax paper or parchment lined pan. Separate the pecan halves and allow to completely cool. Store in an airtight bag or container.

**California Club Salad Bowl**
Serves 4
8 cups torn romaine
4 medium boneless, skinless grilled chicken breasts, cut into ½” strips
2 cups cooked, crumbled bacon - regular or turkey
2 large avocados, pitted and cut lengthwise into ¼” strips
4 cups grape tomatoes (cut larger ones in half lengthwise)
¼ cup cubed Monterey Jack cheese (optional)
4 cups cooked quinoa (1 ⅓ c. dry cooked in 2 ⅔ c. vegetable stock or water)
3 multi colored bell peppers, seeded and cut into medium dice
3 or 4 green onions, sliced into ¼” slices
Washed & drained Alfalfa sprouts or microgreens (optional)
1 cup toasted sliced almonds or toasted walnut pieces
2 cups Creamy Avocado dressing (recipe above)

On 4 large salad bowls or dinner plates, arrange each with 1 cup romaine. Scoop 1 cup cooked quinoa in the center, and drizzle with approx. ¼ cup Creamy Avocado dressing. Sprinkle with ¼ cup toasted nuts, sliced green onion, sprouts or microgreens, and diced bell pepper. Arrange sliced chicken, grape tomatoes, cheese, and slices of avocado attractively around the quinoa towards the outside of plate. Sprinkle with bacon bits and serve with extra Creamy Avocado Dressing.

Strawberry Spinach Salad for a Crowd
Serves 8

2 large or 4 small bags fresh baby spinach, washed and dried
Optional: 2 cups torn romaine - if your family doesn't care for straight spinach
2 large red onions, sliced crosswise into ¼” rings
2 quarts fresh strawberries, washed, hulled, sliced lengthwise
Optional: 8 hard cooked eggs
3 cups Glazed Pecans (recipe above)
Strawberry Balsamic Dressing (recipe below)
Croutons (optional)

Layer washed spinach in a large serving pan - full sized disposable steam table pan is great for this. If your family isn't crazy about straight spinach salad, mix in a couple of cups of torn romaine as well. Top pan with larger outside rings of red onions, reserving the interior rings for other uses. Sprinkle evenly with sliced strawberries and glazed pecans. Hard cooked eggs may be sliced and arranged on salad, or diced and served separately. Serve with Strawberry Balsamic Dressing and croutons, if desired.

Strawberry Balsamic Dressing
Yield: 1 Pint

⅓ cup pureed strawberries, either fresh or frozen
¼ cup sugar
2 Tbsp finely diced red onion or scallion
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
½ cup packed fresh basil leaves or 1 tsp. Dried basil
Salt & pepper to taste
½ cup Balsamic vinegar
¼ cup red or white wine vinegar
¼ cup water (if needed)
2 cups neutral flavored vegetable oil

This recipe works best in a blender or using a stick blender but will also do fine shaken in a jar. In container, whirl together strawberries, sugar, mustard, basil leaves, onion or shallot, salt, pepper and vinegars until smooth. Taste and adjust seasonings. If vinegar is too strong, add up to ¼ cup water to dilute. Slowly blend in the oil, mixing well until fully emulsified. Serve immediately. Leftovers can be refrigerated up to 1 week.

**BONUS: Fresh Fruit Salads!**

Summer brings us a bounty of fresh fruits, so let’s make the most of them!! Here are a couple of easy salads your family will love.

**Summer Fruit Salad** - 1 lb. fresh strawberries, washed, hulled, largest ones halved; 3 or 4 large fresh peaches, washed, pitted, and sliced; 1 cup fresh blueberries; 1 heaping Tbsp. freshly chopped basil or mint leaves; **Dressing** - 2 Tbsp. lemon juice; 1 Tbsp. real maple syrup or honey; 2 tsp. Balsamic vinegar. Toss fruit and herbs, drizzle with dressing made from lemon juice, syrup & vinegar. Refrigerate for about ½ hour to allow flavors to blend.

**Watermelon Feta Salad** - **Dressing** - ¼ cup extra light olive oil, juice of 3 large limes, ½ tsp. grated lime zest, 1½ tsp. salt, ½ tsp. black pepper. Blend and set aside. In large bowl, place 8 lb. watermelon, cut into bite sized cubes and drained in colander (about 12 cups melon), and 1 packed cup fresh mint leaves, chopped. Pour dressing over melon, toss gently, then add 1 ½ cups crumbled Feta cheese, stirring gently to distribute. Serve within 1 hour of preparing for best results. You'll love the sweet-salty-zesty flavor!!

**Last CNS Newsletter of the school year** - we wanted to take this opportunity to thank the school system and community for your support. It’s been quite a year, with some exciting new ideas and upcoming changes, but we should remember that our mission is to help shape and support the next generation of Roughers. Child Nutrition Services plays a vital role by creating a climate of caring by nourishing our students’ bodies and minds. We appreciate the opportunity to serve our students this year, and look forward to fueling up our student population for the 2019-2020 school year!

EVERY HEART...EVERY MIND...EVERY DAY - THE MUSKOGEE WAY!