

“When the kids can tell the difference in the healthier foods, it makes our decision easier to make”

**-Krystal Boyd-
Food Service Director Perham Schools**



When you imagine school lunches, do you picture healthy foods with a nutritious balance of local fruits and vegetables?

Krystal Boyd, food service director of the Perham Schools, wants her school lunches to be delicious and nutritious, so she collaborated with the Fresh Connect Food Hub (FCFH) to ensure local fruits and vegetables make it onto the lunch trays of Perham students.

The Fresh Connect Food Hub works with regional growers and institutional food service buyers to bring fresh, local foods into the community. FCFH partners with local school districts like Perham to make sure healthy foods are on the menu.

“Nutrition is always going to be a number one priority,” Boyd said. She feels that in order to provide nutritious options, “fresh fruits and veggies are the better way to go versus canned.” Since the addition of FCFH foods at Perham Schools, students can tell the difference, and they really like the change.

“When the kids can tell the difference, it makes our decision easier to make,” said Boyd.

Last year, Perham Schools received several hundred pounds of fresh produce such as carrots, radishes, onions, tomatoes, apples, grapes, strawberries, watermelon, cucumbers, romaine, broccoli, and potatoes. They were able to use these foods in their “nutrition bar,” where students could simply grab an apple or some carrots to munch on.

Perham Schools also incorporated foods like the potatoes into their a la carte options via a potato bar. This was a big hit in the high school where students noticed and appreciated the larger size of the potatoes.

Krystal Boyd found that the partnership with FCFH benefitted students’ nutrition as well as local farmers. Boyd believes it is good to purchase foods locally as well as establish relationships with the farmers. Additionally, Boyd says even though it is sometimes extra prep work related to the fresh produce, the Food Hub is more cost effective for a large food service program’s budget.

“We’re providing the best nutritional care that we can,” Boyd said. The FCFH is a rewarding program because it allows Perham schools to provide healthy foods to the students.

Boyd and the Perham schools want to thank the farmers partnered with the Food Hub for their hard work and dedication put into supplying the students with high quality, nutritional produce. She feels that without the farmers and the Food Hub, none of it would be possible.

“To me it’s a healthier option,” Boyd said. “I think it would be silly *not* to check into it.”

February 2015

PartnerSHIP 4 Health is community and public health partners in Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, and Wilkin counties working together to create an environment that supports improved health for all.

*Supported by the Statewide Health Improvement Program
Minnesota Department of Health*

