

Lunch Menus Take Control

Staff Writer

Noticed a change in the cafeteria this year? Many students have and are buzzing about it.

The Stamford Public Schools have signed a contract with Chartwells, the new cafeteria company, through June 30, 2010. There is an option for four additional one-year renewals. Chartwells has replaced Sodexo, whose contract expired this past school year. *The Round Table* spoke with Hugh Murphy, Director of Finance, about the process of choosing a new food provider. Murphy and members of the Nutrition Committee of the Board of Education recommended Chartwells based on its food quality and quantity, management, financial conditions, health, sanitation, and accounting and reporting systems. After considering these factors, Dr. Starr, the superintendent of Stamford public schools, accepted Chartwells as the primary food distributor. Following his okay, the Board of Education approved the contract.

Bridget Fields, a past Stamford High School cafeteria employee, has returned and taken a new role as our new cafeteria lead. Fields has a variety of responsibilities, some of which include handling the cooking, paperwork, food orders, and employee time sheets.

She suggested a tasty and healthy meal for the Stamford High School cafeteria that many students are sure to enjoy. Pizza! According to Fields, there is no need for any side dishes because the main components (bread, cheese, and tomatoes) are already balanced to provide a healthy meal.

Thanks to the Wellness Committee, a group comprised of parents and the Nutrition Committee, all cafeteria food has a balanced amount of calories. But, as with many changes, students have clearly weighed in on the cafeteria changes with their opinions. Students have voiced a wide-range of opinions when asked about the new healthy menu.

Senior Stevens Laguerre said, "The food is nothing special. It's alright for cafeteria food. If I don't like anything else they're serving their pizza is always my fallback. It always tastes good and it's better than last year."

Junior Medlyne Lexis strongly opposed the change. She said, "What in the world is this? I feel like the school is putting us on a diet. Why is my mom paying taxes for us to eat this?" Also, junior Daniel Pardo said, "Yeah, the prices stayed the same from last year but it's still expensive. Also, the lines are really long; I have to rush to eat since I have no time."

But, Fields insisted prices have not increased. They have remained the same where portion sizes have increased. For instance, the smoothies remain \$1.75 but the cup sizes have gotten larger. Fields said, "Yes, prices are high when students buy SunChips and a Snapple. That's why they should buy a full meal like a salad, fruit and milk. Rather than spending \$2.25 for a drink and chips, they can get all their nutritious necessities with \$2.85."

The staffs work extremely hard to please the students that come to the cafeteria. They arrive at school at 6:30 A.M. everyday and rush to cook breakfast, which ends at 7:20 A.M. After breakfast, they quickly switch tasks and begin cooking lunch. Chartwells

serves and prepares all food in house. All produce comes from fresh local farms in Connecticut.

The decisions the Board of Education made on choosing Chartwells as our new cafeteria company has a major impact on students and staff members. Get used to Chartwells as they will staff our cafeteria for the full year and maybe more. Stay tuned for an update.