



# UPGRADE SCHOOL MEAL APPEAL

## RIVERSIDE ELEMENTARY

*FOND DU LAC SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SCHOOL YEAR 2024-2025*

### PROJECT TEAM:

<b>DAVID GUAPP</b>	Chartwells District Director
<b>LISA MCCARTNEY</b>	Chartwells Executive Chef
<b>MELANIE PHILLIPS</b>	UW-Extension FoodWise
<b>LAURIE SCHLAFER</b>	Riverside Food Service

# Background



This project started off with a partnership between Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the University of Wisconsin- Division of Extension's FoodWise program. This collaboration focused on nutrition programs happening at schools across the state. DPI offered a grant for FoodWise staff to work with their local schools to promote school lunches. FoodWise staff connected with their school food service staff and schools to complete activities to enhance the cafeteria.

Locally, Riverside Elementary was willing to take on this grant, along with the team at Chartwells Food Service for the district. A team convened and got to work on assessing the current cafeteria landscape by completing the "Meal Appeal Self-Assessment". The team identified key areas of improvement and started working on simple strategies to improve the cafeteria in health, atmosphere, student involvement, and more.

Each member of the team completed the online course, "Upgrade School Meal Appeal" and took the ideas and applied them to Riverside. These strategies use the power of Behavior Economics: the science of how cues subconsciously "nudge" decisions.



# LUNCHROOM ATMOSPHERE

Attractive and healthful food posters were displayed throughout the cafeteria. These invited a pop of bright décor to the cafeteria while promoting positive messages about nutrition and school meals in general.





# Creative Labels & Displays

Research shows that giving foods creative & descriptive names improves student perception and increases selection of those items.

Small food labels and clips were purchased and utilized. Staff use colorful paper to write descriptive and fun labels for the food items.



Riverside Food Service Staff have noted that the kids have noticed the change. They like the signs, especially when they have a fun name on them.



# Bright & Interesting

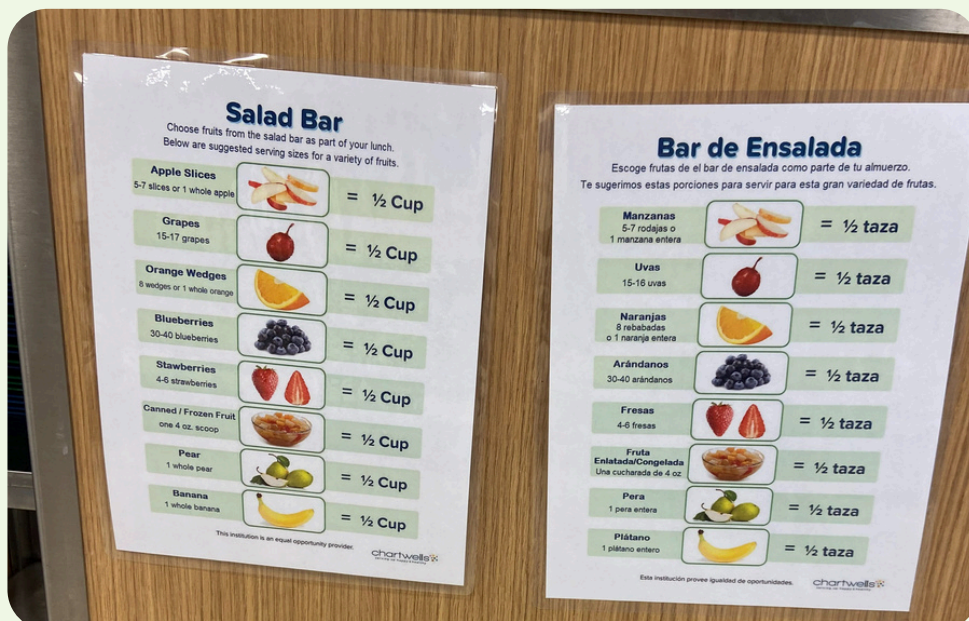
This project was able to fund some new and interesting pans for the cafeteria. Wavy pans & bright melamine bowls are now being used. These add a bright & interesting component to the food choices.



# Reimbursable Meals



Chartwells staff created a graphic to help students understand the amount of fruits and vegetables that they were being served for a reimbursable meal. These are posted on the service line in English and Spanish.



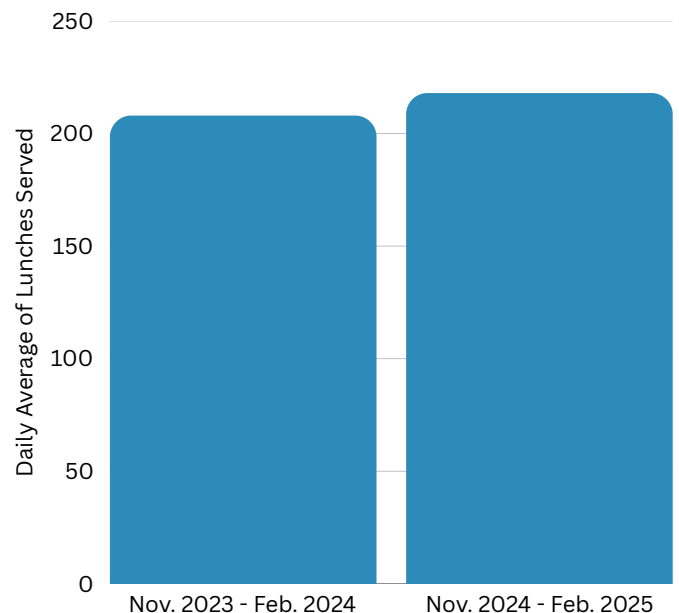
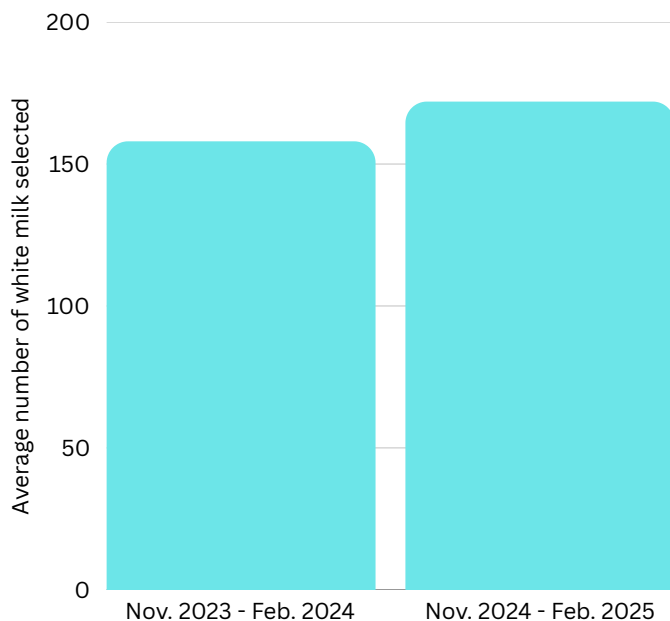


# White Milk Increase



Research has shown that food and beverage items that appear first in the line are selected more often. Riverside was up for an experiment. Lunchroom staff rearranged the milk cooler to display white milk first and for the white milk to represent a majority of the milk, having  $\frac{2}{3}$  white milk and  $\frac{1}{3}$  chocolate milk.

**Interestingly, they saw an increase of 8% of white milk selected.**



The charts show an increase of white milk selection and an increase of lunches served. The growth in white milk selection (8%) has outpaced the increase in lunches served (5%).

# Lunchroom Activities

Keeping students excited about participating in school lunch is an important aspect for any cafeteria environment. Incorporating fun activities, such as special events and taste tests, is a great way to upgrade the environment. The Chartwells team offered a "Discovery Kitchen" taste test event, where students were able to taste a new food and received stickers and prizes. Chartwells will continue to offer this throughout the year.

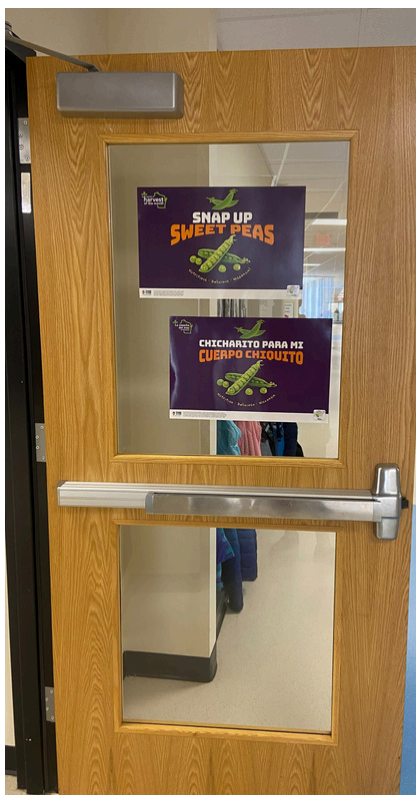
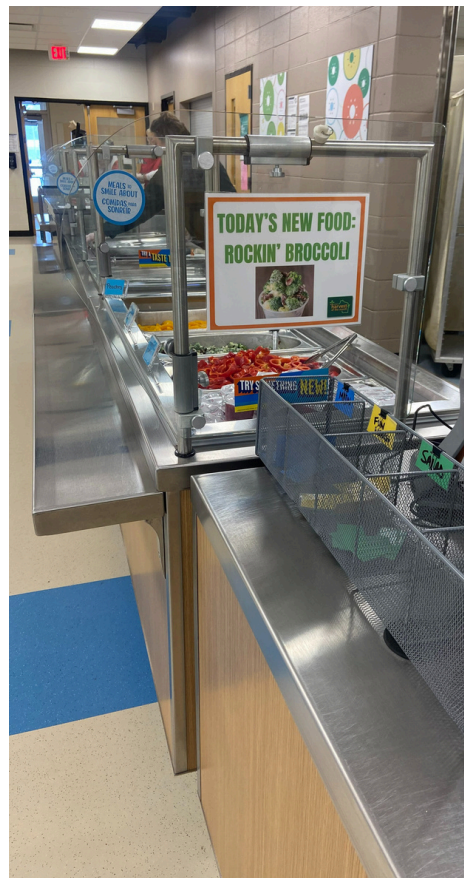




In addition to Chartwells offering the “Discovery Kitchen” taste test, staff chose Harvest of the Month vegetables to include in the monthly menus. Each month promoted a different item. Posters were hung up and FoodWise was present in the cafeteria to promote that food item.

# Lunchroom Activities

Continued



Harvest of the Month is a campaign to promote Wisconsin-grown fruits and vegetables to kids. Taste testing new recipes is a great way to engage students while also providing valuable feedback to items offered.





# Student Involvement

Meal environment and student engagement are major factors to upgrading school lunch.

FoodWise teamed up with Riverside's art teacher to bring attention to an underutilized bulletin board inside the cafeteria using the featured Harvest of the Month vegetables to create art.



K-1st graders learned about cabbages and drew "cute" cabbages for display.



Students created "peas" inside the pod with balls of paper.



Students used beet ink to write 3D positive words.



# Nutrition Education



Hummus taste test during the protein foods group lesson.

Nutrition education in the classroom is taught by FoodWise educators. Engaging lessons about the MyPlate food groups and healthy decision-making can translate into the cafeteria when students are presented with choices. Many students enjoy seeing FoodWise staff in the cafeteria and are intrigued by what the new food or tasting activity will be.

