



AUBURN SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL FARMERS AND FOOD



ABOUT THE EVENT

Chris Piercey, School Nutrition Director at Auburn Schools, had the great idea to partner with the Isuken Co-op, Maine Marinara Collaborative, and Healthy Androscoggin for a fun lunch for Park Ave. Elementary School students in Auburn.

Isuken Co-op is a Somali Bantu farm-to-table food truck. The Maine Marinara Collaborative connects the local supply chain from farmers to produce pounds of marinara sauce. The sauce is made from tomatoes, zucchini/squash, carrots, and onions. Their goal to produce 3,000 gallons or 179,000 servings of marinara sauce. After this sauce is produced, it is delivered to schools, hospitals, and correctional facilities. Healthy Androscoggin staff helped to conduct a taste test and assisted with making the sambusas.

Auburn nutrition staff made beef & vegetable sambusas and mozzarella sticks to pair with the marinara sauce. The Isuken Co-op assisted by frying the sambusas and making the injera bread.



CHALLENGES

The Auburn School District has a diverse student body with many different ethnicities and backgrounds. Unfortunately, school meals do not often contain culturally engaging food options. The standard American fare is what is usually offered to students. Children in Auburn have been expressing that they want more culturally relevant foods on the menu. Nutrition Director, Chris Piercey, has been listening and putting things into action. This is just another great example of the work that he does for his school district.

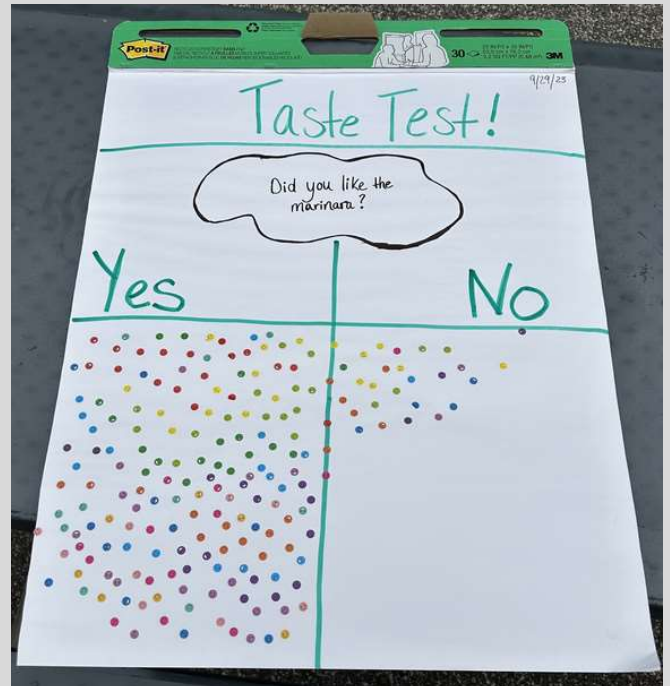
School meals have to meet specific nutritional standards set by the USDA. These standards can limit what and how things can be made. Despite the challenge, school nutrition staff are committed to serving students foods that they like and that are culturally relevant.



RESULTS/SUCCESS

The partnership between the Auburn School District, Isuken Co-op, Maine Marinara Collaborative, and Healthy Androscoggin was successful. Students and staff members were raving about the local and culturally diverse foods. This team came together to provide a delicious meal to all students. The students loved the marinara! Many students could not believe how fresh the sauce was. Many students expressed that they have only had canned marinara from a grocery store. I witnessed many Somali students jumping and cheering when they saw the sambusas and injera bread.

Serving more culturally relevant foods can increase the students' knowledge of other cultures and promote inclusivity among diverse populations.



Contact Healthy Androscoggin for more information at info@healthyandroscoggin.org or 207-795-5990

