2010 BEST PRACTICES AWARDS

USDA FOODS PROGRAM

AWARD APPLICATION FORM

Please attach this form to the first page of submitted summaries. Please forward completed applications to the Office of General Services, Division of Food Distribution & Warehousing, Corning Tower Bldg. – 37th Floor, Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York 12242.

Name of Applicant (School Code & Name):

A116 - Gates Chili Central School District

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Your District's Federal ID #: 16-6001759

Please attach a short summary describing the activity or initiative and its impact on the success of your program.

GATES CHILI MIDDLE SCHOOL – Super Bowl of Pizza

We created an entry form to collect healthy pizza recipe entries from the Middle School students. Five recipes would then be chosen as Game Finalists. Those student's recipes would be created and served for lunch with the help of our "Player of the Day – the student that created the recipe", a different recipe for each day of the week leading up to Super Bowl Sunday. Students would try the pizza and vote for their favorite and that recipe's creator would be our "PIZZA BOWL MVP."

Some additional things to note: each pizza was prepared using a Wheat Pizza Crust that is purchased "par" baked from a local bakery. It is the crust we use across the district for our homemade pizzas. I was surprised to hear so many staff ask for our crust recipe. ***Government commodities played a major role in each pizza too. We had both Government Mozzarella Cheese and Government Shredded Cheddar Cheese on hand to use. We also have created a seasoning blend to mix into our government commodity spaghetti sauce for use as a red pizza sauce. Sorry.....the recipe is a stadium kitchen secret.*** *(We used 1 Tbl of sugar per can of the Spaghetti Sauce prior to it being Low Sodium, and now we add not only the sugar but a spice blend that includes "Pizza Seasoning, Garlic Powder and Basil to the Low Sodium Sauce.)*

It turns out that the winning pizza was a four cheese blend pizza, but many of the other entries incorporated a variety of vegetables, different proteins and even fruit that did positively impact the nutritionals for each recipe. These recipes were well received by the parents that tried them at the Middle School Wellness Fair that was held in March.

This event was not just a Food Service event, it turned out to be a building wide event that created a tremendous amount of excitement for all; beginning right at the top with the building principal and his administrative team, faculty, staff, students, and food service. Everyone sported their favorite team apparel in addition to the stadium kitchen team that became "Gates Chili Spartans" for the week. ADP too increased for the week by an average of 30 meals per day or 4.3%. A graph is enclosed in the event packet that depicts this information.

The results: we not only have 5 kid tested, kid approved new pizza recipes that we will use again and again, but the event resulted in great "PR" for the Middle School Meals Program. Five different middle school students, one student aide and one player mom spent the day with us, working side by side preparing part of the meal served to their peers that day. If only I could have been a fly on the wall as they chatted with their friends and family after their special "Game Day."

*The write up of this event will appear in the "**NYSNA FOCUS MAGAZINE Summer Issue,**" and the various recipes are posted on the Gates Chili Website for anyone to download if they would like.*

Sounds like a very simple concept, right??!! Well this event was like a snowball coming down hill!! It was a grand collaboration of Students, Staff, Administration and Food Service. It was such a popular event that we have already decided to have the "Super Bowl of Chicken" next year.

Following is a complete packet detailing the event and everything it entailed.

Gates Chili Middle School - Super Bowl of Pizza

The concept for this event began to be developed after the "Just Say CHEESE!" package was received from the American Dairy Association and Dairy Council. The "Cheese Pizza" clock was immediately placed in the cook's area as that was where our "Pizza Person" using the new Impinger Pizza Oven (purchased using the OGS Best Practice Award grant money) was located. Shortly after receiving this package I ran into Flo Selin, I thanked her for the clock and shared with her how thrilled my staff was with it. Flo asked me if I had seen the contest information contained in the materials. I had looked at it but really hadn't considered how to incorporate it into the program. I did give the packet a second look and so began the process of bringing the "Super Bowl of Pizza" to life at the Gates Chili Middle School.

Our original thought was to do an "Iron Chef" type competition, but in discussing our cooking contest idea with the principal, he had no idea what "Iron Chef" was. So through an open dialogue amongst staff the Super Bowl of Pizza idea started to gel. The general idea was as follows:

We would create an entry form to collect healthy pizza recipe entries from the Middle School students. Five recipes would then be chosen as Game Finalists. Those student's recipes would be created and served for lunch, a different recipe for each day of the week leading up to Super Bowl Sunday. Students would try the pizza and vote for their favorite, and that recipe's creator would be our "PIZZA BOWL MVP." Sounds like a very simple concept, right??!! Well, this event was like a snowball coming downhill!! It was a grand collaboration of Students, Staff, Administration and Food Service. It was such a popular event that we have already decided to have the "Super Bowl of Chicken" next year.

Following is the timeline of activities leading up to and including the "Big Game Week":

- First thing after the Christmas Holiday Break the contest forms (Attachment 1) were distributed to students and signs were posted around the building to market the event (Attachment 2). Mr. Iuppa, the Building Principal, began silly announcements to get the kids excited and involved. Recipe entry forms began to come in.

- January 11th marked the first formal announcement for the event by me. Eight students received a coupon for a free treat as their recipes were awarded "First Downs" and would continue in the competition (Attachments 3 & 4).

- A call was made to the Athletic Director for the District. We asked to borrow 15 football helmets and jerseys to use for our event. She graciously agreed to lend them to us. Other football decorations were purchased at a local party outlet too. Staff wore the jerseys and helmets, and many helmets were used as décor for the event.

- January 21st marked another round of announcements, and 4 more students received "First Down" coupons for a free treat (Attachment 5). Building staff

had been inquiring about the event and wondered it they too could enter. So we did open it to building staff and extended the deadline an additional week. As it turned out, no staff entries were received.

- Much discussion took place between the building principal, Gerry Iuppa, and me regarding the event. I asked if each student finalist could be "benched" from team training (class time) on their game day so that they could report to the stadium kitchen at 9am to prepare their touchdown winning recipe for meal service that day. He agreed 100% and thought it was a fabulous idea. He then began to formulate his role in the game.

- We then named Mr. Iuppa the "Head Referee" for the games. He brought the role to life with an official uniform, complete with whistle, which he thought he would wear at various times during the game week. As it turned out, it was his daily attire for the week and he enjoyed every minute of it. He also enjoyed explaining his attire to others at various meetings he attended that week too.

- The MVP's and Finalists' recipes would be featured on the Gates Chili Website and also be available for tasting at the Wellness Event that was being planned at the Middle School in March. Parents would be able to take home copies of the recipes at that event for home use.

- January 25th we announced our finalists. We chose 6-one extra if in case we needed a substitute player (Attachment 6). At this time we also announced the prizes for the group. Marcia Beckman, ADADC was able to donate a generous gift card for the MVP- an autographed Buffalo Bills mini helmet for each finalist and a "Fuel up to Play" pedometer for all 6 players. The MVP would also receive an autographed "Game Ball." The Gates Chili Kitchen Stadium Team under the direction of Coach Grover and team owner Beauvais all had signed the ball. One of the team members (school meals employee) made the suggestion to give each finalist a personalized uniform for the day of their game. Using iron–on transfer paper a personalized apron was created for each player finalist. Sample artwork is attached (Attachment 7).

- Each finalist came to the main office to complete their player profile sheet, receive the game info packet (Attachment 8 & 9), have an official photo taken, and select their game day. It turned out that our substitute player would get called into the game as one of the finalists could not play.

- Each finalist's recipe was entered into a menu analysis program and ingredients were gathered for each game day. New pizza topping ideas in play included: baby shrimp, turkey sausage and turkey pepperoni, pineapple, and Asiago cheese. Each day the player would prepare several 16" pizza rounds to be served as entrée slices and several sheet pizzas that would be cut into small squares to offer students the opportunity to just take a taste. A score card was created (Attachment 10) for use each day by the fans (students and staff).

- An announcement was created for the staff bulletin and appeared daily beginning Friday the 29th of January through Friday the 5th of February to market the games (Attachment 11).

- Using the player profiles, pizza and cheese trivia, daily announcements were written. They were in a pre-game/postgame format. Mr. Iuppa took pleasure in being our game announcer along with his role as referee (Attachment 12). Each day after the morning announcements: Referee Iuppa would then escort the day's player down to the Stadium Kitchen for the pre-game photo session. The player then returned to the Stadium Kitchen at 9am to begin pizza "play" preparations. Additional photos including a special "TEAM" photo were taken throughout each day's game. A photo collage is included with each enclosed Game Day packet.

- The scrolling sign bars and televisions in the cafetorium were used to market the event the week prior and each game day. The Middle School AV staff was a key partnership as they took a variety of photos and created daily PowerPoint presentations featuring the "Player of the Day." During game week a large screen and projector were used to show the PowerPoint of the day during mealtime. There is an assortment of photos included in this packet, and I have enclosed a CD with the full photo collection.

- Just like the Super Bowl we too had "Media Day"- Thursday the February 4th. A press release was created by Beth Meyer, ADADC and distributed to the local media outlets (Attachment 13). Marcia Beckman, ADADC was on hand for the day as were Jonathan Bowerman and Chef Jeff, Bowerman and Associates. Jon was instrumental in the process of procuring the Impinger Oven and following through with staff on start-up procedures and training to use the oven. The weekly administrators meeting happened to be at the Middle School on Media Day, and various administrators including the Superintendent, Dr. Mark Davey, and Assistant Superintendent of Business & Administration, Dr. Michael Mamo were our special fans that day. Disappointingly, we did not have any other media outlet visits, but we knew there was no guarantee they would come. They did miss out on a truly fun story though.

- Each "Game Day" we prepared full slices of the pizza that fans could take as their entrée choice and small tasting samples were available so every fan could try the pizza in play and score it even if it was not their entrée choice that day. Many of our adult fans were our first customers each day to sample the "pizza play of the day" and submit the score card. This week-long event did show a spike in our meal participation too (Attachment 14). Meal counts from two weeks prior and one week after were compared to the meal counts for the Super Bowl event week. The weekly average meals were compared. Super Bowl Week meal counts averaged 730 daily while the other three comparison weeks' counts were between 693-711 meals per day on average.

- There is a packet enclosed for each Game Day. It includes the Game Announcement, Player Profile, Recipe in its final form, Recipe in the nutrient analysis software format, and a copy of the actual player's recipe submission along with a photo sheet. The players were as follows:

- Day 1: Football Frenzy by Nadia
- Day 2: Super Bowl Pizza by Shannon
- Day 3: Cheesy Basil Pizza by Abby
- Day 4: Play-Off Pizza by Claire
- Day 5: Super Dooper Pizza by Patrick
- Relief Player: White Super Bowl Pizza by Justyn

Fan score cards were collected at the end of each Game Day. They were totaled and counted, and an average score was assigned to each player. The Scores were as follows:

Day 1:	Football Frenzy by Nadia	11.3
Day 2:	Super Bowl Pizza by Shannon	10.1
Day 3:	Cheesy Basil Pizza by Abby	15.86
Day 4:	Play-Off Pizza by Claire	16.2
Day 5:	Super Dooper Pizza by Patrick	15.5

It was great to see that the scores were so close, but the clear-cut winner and Gates Chili Middle School "Pizza Bowl MVP" was the "Play-Off Pizza" by Claire. Referee Iuppa was on hand the afternoon of Friday the 5th to announce the finalists and the MVP, distribute the prize bags, and pose for some final event photos.

Some additional things to note: each pizza was prepared using a wheat pizza crust that is purchased "par- baked" from a local bakery. It is the crust we use across the district for our homemade pizzas. I was surprised to hear so many staff ask for our crust recipe. Government commodities played a major role in each pizza too. We had both government mozzarella cheese and shredded cheddar cheese on hand to use. We also have created a seasoning blend to mix into our government commodity spaghetti sauce for use as a red pizza sauce. Sorry.....the recipe is a stadium kitchen secret.

It turns out that the winning pizza was a four cheese blend pizza, but many of the other entries incorporated a variety of vegetables, different proteins, and even fruit that did positively impact the nutritionals for each recipe. I am anxious to see how parents respond to these new recipes when they are featured for a tasting at the upcoming wellness fair in March.

This event was not just a Food Service event; it turned out to be a building-wide event that created a tremendous amount of excitement for all, beginning right at the top with the building principal and his administrative team, faculty, staff, students, and food service. Everyone sported their favorite team apparel in addition to the Stadium Kitchen team that became "Gates Chili Spartans" for the week.

The results: we not only have 5 kid-tested, kid-approved new pizza recipes that we will use again and again, but the event resulted in great "PR" for the Middle School Meals Program. Five different middle school students, one student aide, and one player mom spent the day with us, working side by side preparing part of the meal served to their peers that day. If only I could have been a fly on the wall as they chatted with their friends and family after their special "Game Day."

I have enclosed one final item, an e-mail (Attachment 15) that I received from a school counselor at the Middle School:

> *"Debbi, I know that you and your staff went the extra mile this week pulling that all off. Please share with the kitchen staff that it was noticed and appreciated. I really liked hearing from the kids how much they enjoyed not only having their pizza made, but actually getting to work in the kitchen preparing them all. Nice job!"*

I heard many similar remarks as I walked around the building after the conclusion of the event. The overwhelming success of this event was remarkable and we plan to make it an annual "Super Bowl Week" tradition..... a new main ingredient or food concept would be featured each year. Just think of the possibilities.....

ATTACHMENTS FOLLOW:

1. **GCMS Super Bowl of Pizza Entry Form**
2. **Event Marketing Flyer**
3. **January 11th Morning Announcement**
4. **First Down Coupon Template**
5. **January 21st Morning Announcement**
6. **Announcements for January 25th- Finalists**
7. **Art work for apron iron-on transfer**
8. **"Game Day" Player Profile Sheet**
9. **Game Info Packet**
10. **Game Stats Score Card Template**
11. **Announcement for Daily Staff Bulletin**
12. **Pre-game/Post-game announcement copy**
13. **ADADC Press Release about the Event**
14. **Meal Participation Comparison**
15. **E-mail received at the close of the event**

EACH GAME DAY PACKET FOLLOWS ALONG WITH A GALLERY OF PHOTOS FROM THE EVENT AND A COPY OF THE FEBRUARY MENU.