

# CAFE CONNECTIONS

CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

## ALL STUDENTS EAT FREE!

This school year we were approved to participate in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). CEP is a special provision to the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs that allows schools/districts that qualify to provide meals at no cost to ALL students. This school year, all Laveen students are receiving breakfast and lunch at no charge and the program may be extended to subsequent years.

While the program is in place, families do not have to apply for free or reduced-price school meals. However, all Laveen families are asked to complete the simplified Alternate Income Form to collect important data used for each school's federal funding allocations.

Adult and additional student meals, as well as a la carte items, are available for purchase.

Families should unsubscribe from recurring payments on their EZSchoolPay account, if they haven't already. Any negative charges from prior school years must be paid in full. Families can request a refund or donate to other student's negative lunch balance by contacting our office at (602) 237-9100.

We are thrilled to provide this service to our families and are already seeing the positive impacts in our meal participation rates.



**BREAKING NEWS**      *The Laveen Times*      **SPECIAL EDITION**

## THIS JUST IN!

**FREE SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL LAVEEN STUDENTS**

**FREE MEALS FOR ALL LAVEEN STUDENTS**

Great news! Laveen Elementary School District will be participating in a new school meal program option called the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for the 2024-2025 school year. All children enrolled in a Laveen school are eligible to receive school breakfast and lunch at no cost and there is no application required! Families will be asked to complete an alternate income form to help our schools maintain certain federal and state funded programs.

**REMEMINDERS FOR PARENTS**

**Negative Balances**  
Any negative balances accrued prior to May 22, 2024 must still be paid in full.

**Refunds & Donations**  
All money on students' EZSchoolPay accounts can be refunded or donated to negative lunch balances.

**Recurring Payments**  
If you are subscribed to recurring payments, please cancel through your online EZSchoolPay account.



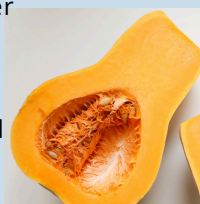
**CHILD**      **NUTRITION**      **SERVICES**

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## INTERN OBI'S SOOTHING BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

### INGREDIENTS

- 6 cups of butternut squash, diced
- 2 cups of vegetable broth
- 1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon
- 1 1/2 tablespoons of curry powder
- 1/4 tablespoon of black pepper
- 1/2 cup of olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 2 medium cloves of garlic, diced
- 2 cups of coconut milk



### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat a large pot over medium heat.
2. Once hot, add oil and sauté diced garlic cloves.
3. Add diced butternut squash to mixture, season with cinnamon, salt, pepper, and curry powder. Stir mixture occasionally.
4. Add vegetable broth and coconut milk. Cover and let it simmer for about 20 minutes until butternut squash is fork-tender.
5. Transfer contents to a blender and purée the mixture, ensuring it is creamy and smooth.
6. Once well-blended, taste and add any more seasonings or spices to desired taste.
7. Garnish with optional toppings, as desired.



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### Toppings (optional)

- Toasted pumpkin seeds
- Parsley

# NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK

SCHOOL LUNCH PIRATES: FIND YOUR TREASURE; OCTOBER 7-11, 2024

## FIND YOUR TREASURE WITH SCHOOL LUNCH

National School Lunch Week (NSLW) is an opportunity to celebrate the National School Lunch Program and recognizes that school lunches are healthy and delicious. All Laveen students are offered a free, healthy school lunch to fuel their day, every single school day. Students will have opportunities to win prizes at lunch time throughout the week. Some schools will be offering pirate-themed books in their libraries to check out. We invite all of our students to join us for NSLW, October 7-11! They won't want to miss out on these hidden treasures like 'Outlaw' Orange Chicken Bowls, Seasoned 'Pirate' Beans, and 'Buccaneer's' Beef Pepperoni Pizza with Fresh 'SEA'sonal melon.



## SUNNY SUMMER MEALS RECAP

Children ages 18 and younger ate free breakfast and lunch all summer long. We served **34,498 FREE meals** to children in the Laveen community! In addition to offering Sun Meals at our schools, we partnered with the City of Phoenix to provide meals at Cesar Chavez and South Mountain Community Centers.

Thanks to funding from the Dairy Council of Arizona, we were able to bring back our Summer Meal Bucks program, where students earned meal bucks each time they joined us for a free meal and redeemed them for prizes several times throughout the month of July. The Dairy Council of Arizona also provided funding for our Family Fun Food Demo and Nutrition Lesson presented by our Nutritionist, Katie Christopher. Students and parents were able to learn more about nutrition and build their own Healthy Banana Split. Yum!

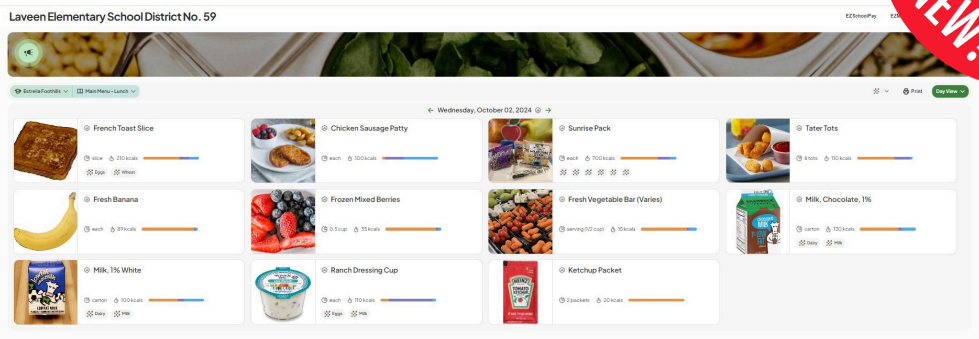


## NEW ONLINE MENU PLATFORM: EZSCHOOL LUNCH BY ETRITION

NEW!

We've updated our online menu platform from Nutrislice to EZSchoolLunch by eTrition. Check out our new online menus to see what is on the menu daily, weekly, and monthly - along with pictures, nutrition and allergen information.

This platform communicates directly with our daily kitchen operations, so that menu adjustments made at individual schools can be immediately reflected on our online menus, providing our users with more up-to-date menu information.



Check out our menus online at:  
<https://www.ezschoollunch.com/p/Laveen-Schools/menu>

Follow @LaveenChildNutrition for Child Nutrition Updates!



Check out @LaveenChildNutrition for updates on hiring opportunities, new menu items, upcoming events, and more!



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# CONGRATS TO AMERICA'S HEALTHIEST SCHOOLS AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations to three Laveen schools -- **Desert Meadows School, Paseo Point Dual Language Academy, and Cheatham Elementary School** -- on being recognized as America's Healthiest Schools. Through the collaborative efforts of the *Laveen Elementary School District's Wellness Committee* these three schools were able to take action and apply for this national award, which addresses nine health-related areas. These awards are given by the Alliance for the Healthiest Generation. These three schools were among 879 schools recognized nationwide. For more information, please visit <https://www.healthiergeneration.org/>




-  Supporting School Health Services
-  Strengthening Social-Emotional Health & Learning
-  Cultivating Staff Well-Being
-  Increasing Family & Community Engagement



-  Supporting School Health Services
-  Strengthening Social-Emotional Health & Learning
-  Cultivating Staff Well-Being
-  Improving Nutrition & Food Access



-  Supporting School Health Services

## YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS

THANK YOU!

**Maria Castro**  
Maurice C. Cash  
Elementary School  
15 Years



**Sara Contreras**  
Rogers Ranch  
STEM Academy  
15 Years



**Araceli Jimenez & Denise Scott**  
Desert Meadows  
School  
5 Years



**Mayra Garcia-Ocampo**  
Estrella Foothills  
Global Academy  
5 Years



# MEET OBI, OUR PVCC INTERN!



Meet Obi, (like Obi-Wan Kenobi; he gets that a lot). Obi is completing his Dietetic Technician Registered (DTR) program at Paradise Valley Community College. He is an intern with us at the Laveen Elementary School District and is here to fulfill the requirements needed for his food service management practicum.

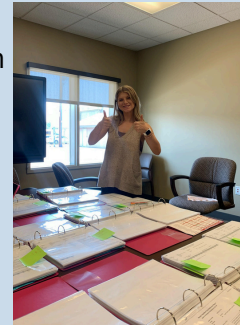
He grew up with and has been involved with sports from a very young age. Growing up, he has dabbled in soccer, basketball, kickboxing, obstacle course races, and more. He is a thrill seeker and is always willing to try anything that gets his heart racing. Aware of the importance that a proper nutrition and wellness regimen plays in the health of individuals, he was always intrigued, curious, and wanted to learn more about how to maximize its effects for the human body. After he completes his program at Paradise Valley Community College, he wants to work in a clinical setting, but is open to opportunities that present themselves. Ideally, he would like to get an opportunity working as a sports dietitian with athletes to help them maximize their performance and also dominate in their given field.



# SPECIAL SHOUTOUT TO OUR FORMER INTERN, KAYLA!



Kayla Aho joined us this summer and early fall from Grand Canyon University as a Dietetic Intern. Kayla was a key part in helping us update our new menu software platform. She also helped us with taste testing our new chili recipe and posting on social media, as well as helping us update our recipe books. Thank you so much for all of your hard work, Kayla!!



**Laveen's 11th Annual  
Winter Festival**

**December 6, 2024  
5:00 PM - 8:00 PM**

**David Glasser  
Athletic Complex  
5001 W. Dobbins**

Join us for an evening of games, activities, entertainment, food, photos with Santa, and more!

Proceeds benefit the Laveen Education Foundation

[www.LaveenSchools.org/Winter-Festival](http://www.LaveenSchools.org/Winter-Festival)

Free Admission! Tickets sold for select activities

## FROM OUR DIRECTOR



In Good Health,  
Jennifer

It feels wrong to write a cliché greeting about the Fall season with this heat wave that we are experiencing. So, instead I hope you are all staying cool and hydrated as we wait out these record temperatures. Despite the weather, the 2024-2025 school year is off to a GREAT start. Being able to offer breakfast and lunch to all of our students at no cost through the CEP program is truly a highlight of my career. As a busy mom I can certainly appreciate knowing that we've got healthy and delicious meals covered for your student, so I hope that takes one thing off of your ever-growing list each day. I am also happy to share that we have 5 schools on the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) this year. The FFVP provides students with the opportunity to try a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables twice a week accompanied by a nutrition education lesson. We've been posting the monthly FFVP menu on our social media, so be sure to check it out. Additionally, we had 3 schools recognized by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation as America's Healthiest Schools. We are using the award criteria to drive goals and policies related to wellness through our District School Wellness Committee this year and hope to have more schools recognized. You can find wellness committee agendas and meeting minutes on our website. Finally, I hope you'll join us for free lunch for all children 18 and younger in the Desert Meadows cafeteria during Fall Break. Enjoy!



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Laveen Child Nutrition

OCTOBER  
7-11

FREE LUNCH  
FOR KIDS  
DURING FALL BREAK

LOCATION

DESERT MEADOWS SCHOOL CAFETERIA  
6855 W MEADOWS LOOP EAST  
LAVEEN, AZ 85339

DATES & TIMES

OCTOBER 7-11  
11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Laveen Elementary School District will be on Fall Break from Monday, October 7th to Friday, October 11th. We will be serving FREE lunches to all kids 18 years and younger at Desert Meadows School during the break from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. Join us in the cafeteria to enjoy a delicious lunch for your children each day! Everyone is welcome, regardless of where you live or income. Adult meals will not be available.

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