

WONDERFUL CURATES A CURRYFORNIA BOWL

ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Wonderful College Prep Academy (WCPA) is located in California's Central Valley in Kern County. WCPA has two transitional kindergarten-through-twelfth grade schools serving 2,400 students of which 86 percent were eligible for free and reduced-price meals during the 2022–2023 school year.

ACTIVITIES

- Developed standardized recipes featuring brown rice and quinoa from Lundberg Family Farms, butternut squash from Irigoyen Farms and olive oil from WCPA's on-site farm
- Taste-tested three recipes with students
- Provided nutrition education to students through cooking and nutrition classes promoting health and wellness and featuring a live cooking demonstration
- Adopted a requirement in the local wellness policy that all catering must be provided through the WCPA nutrition services department
- Offered staff development through and cooking classes for culinary staff and California Department of Education's recipe standardization process

*“Come for the academics,
stay for the food.”*

Devinder Kumar, Director of Food Services

LOCAL INGREDIENT

WCPA prepared three recipes featuring locally grown ingredients. Brown basmati rice and quinoa were both sourced from Lundberg Family Farms. The butternut squash was sourced from Irigoyen Farms. Finally, the olive oil used in the recipe was sourced from WCPA's own olive orchard.



(Top) Student preparing the recipe
(Bottom) Masala Fried Brown Rice, Kachumber Salad, and Butternut Tofu and Veggie Curry

RECIPE DEVELOPMENT

The nutrition services team at WCPA, also known as the Harvest Hall Team, created a standardized Curryfornia Bowl recipe to build on student taste preferences. The Curryfornia Bowl is a Mediterranean and Indian fusion dish comprised of three elements: 1) Butternut Squash, Tofu, and Veggie Curry, 2) Masala Fried Brown Rice and 3) Quinoa and Kachumber Salad. Each of the ingredients, spices, and herbs have a role in the harmony of the final dish; the color, texture, and body balance of this dish are very intentional. In fact, the Curryfornia Bowl uses a fragrant masala spice mix that was made from fourteen different spices and can be used in other dishes as well. The recipes are plant-centric and developed with sustainable, local, and minimally processed ingredients. Each of the three elements can also be served separately.



Colorful and creative marketing from the Harvest Hall event

The primary challenge the Harvest Hall team faced was to maintain the flavor and integrity of the dish while meeting the National School Lunch Program nutrition requirements. Ultimately, the team reduced the amount of salt, olive oil, and coconut milk but didn't compromise on flavor!



Another satisfied student taste-tester

NUTRITION EDUCATION

WPCA partnered with an award-winning chef from Austin, Texas, Chef Iliana De La Vega to host a virtual cook-along class with students and families. WPCA provided 104 food baskets with 26 ingredients primarily from CA local farms to cook 4 authentic recipes. Just over 100 members of the WPCA school community participated in this virtual cook-along event. WPCA also offered students hands-on culinary classes combined with nutrition education information and created a video detailing how the Curryfornia bowl was made; the Curryfornia bowl recipe was the featured recipe in the CDE's standardized recipe workshops.

Wonderful College Prep Academy

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*Recipes: Masala Fried Brown Rice,
 Kachumber Salad, and
 Butternut Tofu and Veggie Curry*



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