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## **Small Oregon School District Wins Big Thanks to Whole Grains**

*Indian Harvest visits 2012's "Rookie" winner of the Whole Grains Challenge.*

BEMIDJI, MINN., June 3, 2013—As “Rookie” category winner of the sixth-annual Whole Grains Challenge last autumn, Baker School District in eastern Oregon received as its grand prize a recent visit from culinary experts from Indian Harvest.

Michael Holleman, Indian Harvest’s director of culinary development, and Coleen Donnelly, K-12 corporate chef, dropped in on Baker City situated 300 miles east of Portland and 120 miles northwest of Boise to conduct cooking demonstrations featuring whole grains in flavorful, practical applications for the benefit of the district’s nutrition-services staff as well as foodservice personnel from nearby Pine Eagle School District and a local substance-abuse program.

“What a great thing to share with my community!” says Jessica Wickert, foodservices director for Baker School District, who established a Grain of the Month program, hung posters promoting whole grains, engaged her students in trivia games and staged recipe competitions in the months prior to entering the 2012 Whole Grains Challenge.

Holleman and Donnelly demonstrated five whole-grain dishes that have earned raves from school nutrition managers across the country: Sunrise Breakfast Apple Parfaits, Wheat Berry & Black Bean Salad, Buffalo Chicken & Barley Salad, Black Pearl Medley<sup>®</sup> Chicken Fried Rice and Whole Grain 5 Blend<sup>™</sup> Deep-Dish Beef Chili (featuring beef donated to the district by local ranchers).

“We cooked and talked for two and a half hours in a casual, informal setting,” says Donnelly. “We told stories and shared information about the challenges of school lunch that everyone in the country faces. The conversation continued through lunch. Everyone enjoyed the dishes and thought the kids would, as well.”

Baker School District is located mostly in Baker City, which has a population of just less than 10,000. It is the largest of three rural school districts in Baker County, and is made up of four elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. The six schools serve approximately 1,800 students.

“In my role for Indian Harvest, I meet a lot of the big names in the school-lunch world who are influential in creating change,” Donnelly says. “I am also lucky to meet some of the lesser-known directors who approach school meals from a different angle. These individuals are crucial to fueling change in our school-lunch programs, and although they exist all over the country, it’s rare they are recognized for their efforts. Jessica Wickert is one of those directors. She runs a very small district and doesn’t have corporate funding or a PR budget. But she is making a big difference.”

The annual Whole Grains Challenge, executed through the Boston-based nonprofit Oldways and its Whole Grains Council (WGC), aligns with new USDA school-food rules and encourages K-12 schools to share

their success stories for promoting whole-grain consumption. In 2012, U.S. schools participating in the National School Lunch Program were invited to compete in one of two categories. “Veteran” schools were cafeteria trailblazers that had jumped into the whole-grains game long before the new rules came out. “Rookies” were schools new to whole grains that were ramping up quickly in the wake of the July 1, 2012, requirements. In addition to visits by guest chefs for the two grand-prize winners, those districts and eight runners-up received samples of whole grains and whole-grain products from a variety of manufacturers and suppliers.

For a listing of 2012 Whole Grains Challenge winners, visit <http://wholegrainscouncil.org/newsroom/2012-whole-grains-challenge-winners-chosen>. For menu support and solutions from Indian Harvest’s experienced Culinary Team, call (800) 346-7032 or visit [www.IndianHarvest.com](http://www.IndianHarvest.com).

**About Indian Harvest**

Indian Harvest Specialtifooods, Inc., headquartered in northern Minnesota, is a foremost U.S. producer and procurer of some of the world’s most distinctive varieties of grains, beans and legumes for the foodservice, industrial and retail sectors. The company’s dedication to discovering and promoting lesser-known, heirloom grains and seeds is deep-rooted in its 35-year heritage of providing chef-driven inspiration and solutions to an evolving food industry. For more information, visit [www.IndianHarvest.com](http://www.IndianHarvest.com).

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