

For Immediate Release  
From Davis Farm to School Connection  
April 17, 2009

For further information: Ann M. Evans 530-795-4892  
[annmevans@aol.com](mailto:annmevans@aol.com)

### Superintendent Hammond Cooks with the Best

Davis Joint Unified School District Superintendent James Hammond donned a white chef's jacket and joined the staff of the Davis Joint Unified School District Nutrition Services for a cooking class with Georgeanne Brennan on Wednesday afternoon, April 15, at the DJUSD Central Kitchen. Rafaelita "RC"Curva, SNS Director showed him around the facility, including a visit to the kitchen's new herb garden, planted by Dorothy Peterson of the Davis Farm to School Connection.

Brennan, noted local cookbook author and teacher, has been providing professional development cooking classes to the SNS through funding provided by the Farm to School Connection for over a year. "We tried hiring professional chefs several years ago, as was the trend. However", Director Curva said, "we found professional development was better for us, because we are the people who want to improve school lunch."

Lessons have varied each month, focusing on seasonal fresh produce and whole grains and how to incorporate them into the commodity products used by the SNS. The purpose of the classes is to assist SNS staff in creating and adapting new menu items that reflect fresh, local, and in season vegetables and fruits.

Some items that have recently been prepared and served by the SNS based on the cooking classes are Sloppy Joe's (with lots of spinach, chard, and fresh herbs) Coconut Mandarin Soup, and seasonally topped pizzas, rice bowls, and pasta dishes.

Thursday's class featured locally produced organic polenta, spring asparagus from Durst Farm in the Capay Valley, and local chard, with a preview of summer's sweet peppers and eggplant. The staff, with Superintendent Hammonds' help, made three different polenta dishes: Polenta Lasagna with Eggplant, Polenta with Braised Chard and Sweet Pepper topping, Polenta with Ground Beef, Spinach, and Chard Topping. They also made Spring Asparagus and Chicken Pizza and a vegetarian Potato and Zucchini Pizza, all with fresh herbs.

As the staff and guests gathered around the conference table to sample the wares of the class, Superintendent Hammond declared the asparagus pizza was better than the one he had at a local restaurant earlier in the day, and said, "This is a great testimony to promises made, promised delivered on Measure Q".

For more information: [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org) and [www.djUSD.net/district/business/sns](http://www.djUSD.net/district/business/sns)