



ENCOURAGING HEALTHY EATING AT SCHOOL

LLCC teaches public school cooks how to incorporate local foods

Local school food managers accustomed to serving processed food to students said they were ecstatic to actually cook “real food,” and that they can’t wait to serve the healthy dishes to children this fall.

LLCC’s Value-Added Local Food program offered several summer sessions for Springfield District 186 food service managers in the state-of-the-art culinary facilities of the college’s Workforce Careers Center.

Making dinner rolls, hummus, pizza and garden salad all from scratch with fresh, mostly locally grown ingredients was a delight for the cooks. Instructor Greg Christian, who has helped schools across the country incorporate local foods into school lunches, is passionate about the subject. “Schools currently serve basically ‘boxed lunches,’ mostly processed, full of salt and lacking proper nutrition. We realize that schools can’t go completely organic, but I encourage them to start with one scratch-cooked meal per week. We are teaching them ways to do this, to reduce waste and still keep within their schools’ budgets.”

In addition to school food managers, LLCC’s new Value-Added Local Food program teaches culinary experts, food business entrepreneurs, farmers and others wishing to start or expand in the farm-to-table culinary field. “A value-added product is something grown or raised by a farmer that can be increased in value through labor and creativity, resulting in a higher net worth for the producer and more local food options for consumers,” said Marnie Record, workforce specialist and developer of the curriculum.

LLCC also partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and University of Illinois Extension in a grant-funded study on extended season growing, using high tunnel greenhouses on the LLCC campus. The project produced a series of videos on topics such as building beds, planting, growing, pest management and harvesting. The videos are available to educators and farmers wanting to teach or learn how to start production in a high tunnel.

From the [2014-2015 Lincoln Land Community College Annual Report](#), pg. 19.