No more mystery meat

*WNY schools praised by state, federal officials for nutritious lunches*

by Reporter Staff

06.16.13 - 12:01 am

GOOD EATIN’ – Representatives from each school holding plaques include (left) Sal Valenza, WNY School Food Service Director, and (center) School Superintendent John Fauta and Kim Gray, chef.

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture and United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service presented Memorial High School, West New York Middle School, Harry L. Bain School and Public School numbers 1,2,3,4, and 5 in West New York with national awards Friday, May 31 for their efforts to improve the health of their students and the community.

The schools are among only 68 schools in New Jersey that have met the Healthier US School Challenge, a voluntary program open to schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program.

The West New York district schools attained the bronze level of the multi-tiered program and were presented with plaques and banners from the USDA at a ceremony at the West New York Board of Education office. Each school also will receive a $500 prize from USDA.

In January 2012, former President Bill Clinton dropped in unexpectedly at West New York’s P.S. 2 to speak about the importance of nutrition and health, and to praise the town for its recent efforts in transforming the school system’s nutritional program.

Clinton spent an hour touring the school and speaking with children and staff, after which he held a half-hour news conference in the library.
Clinton also visited the cafeteria while the children were having lunch, after NBC filmed them eating breakfast in the morning. He also visited the gym.

“He was very personable with kids and staff alike,” Fauta said. “He took photos with them and spoke with them.”

**History of healthy change**

The West New York school system is no stranger to nutritional achievement.

P.S. 2 received a Bronze National Recognition Award in 2009 and a Silver National Recognition Award in 2010 from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation – a program founded by the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation to reduce childhood obesity. They received the award in honor of their efforts to provide students with a fresher, more nutritional meal plan.

In June 2010, Memorial High School received the first and only Gold National Recognition Award given by the alliance after receiving the bronze in 2008 and the silver in 2009.

In October 2009, the alliance awarded Sal Valenzia, food service director of the West New York School District, the distinction of Healthy Schools Program Champion.

© hudsonreporter.com 2013