

A CHEF'S TRAVELS TRANSLATES TO TEXAS SCHOOL FOOD

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INTERNATIONAL IMPACT & CULINARY EXPERTISE MEETS TEXAS TASTEBUDS

I am from Dallas, Texas. I graduated from the University of Texas at Austin where I majored in nutrition, received a minor in business and matriculated into their coordinated program for my dietetic internship. My passion for food subsequently led me to **The Culinary Institute of America** for their two-year culinary arts program.



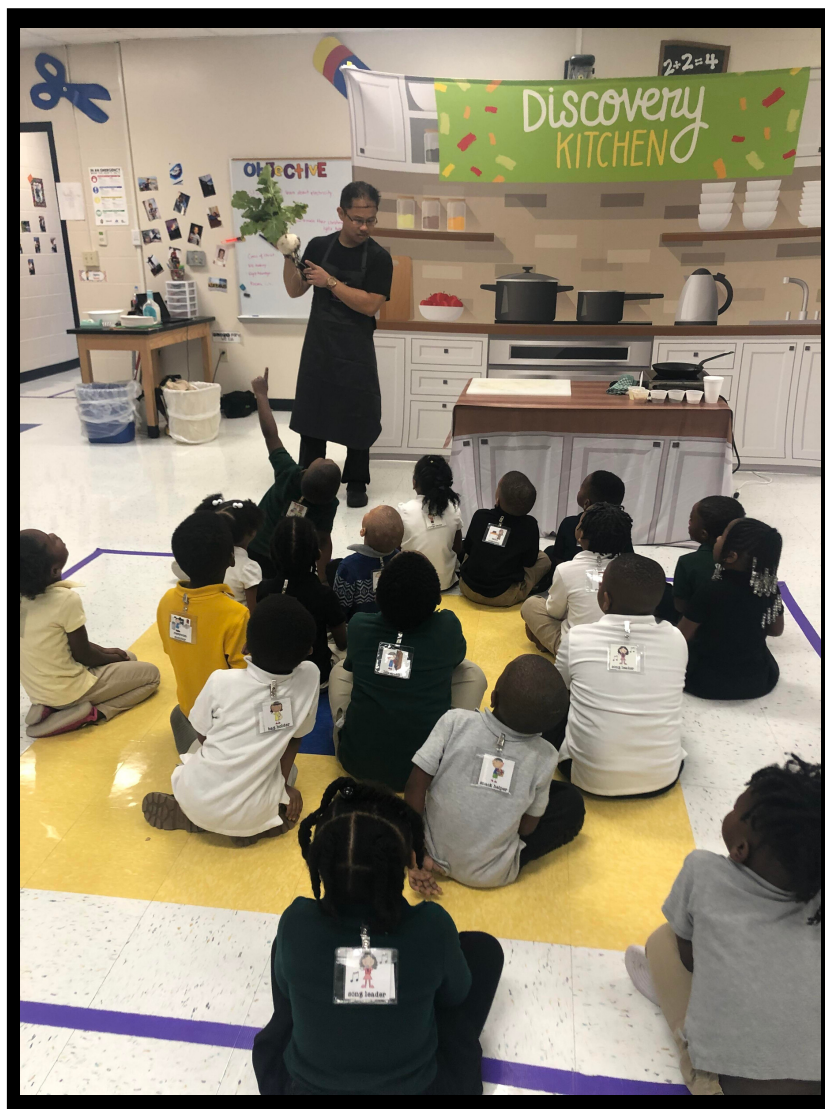
We asked Jeff...

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR CAREER PATH SO FAR AND HOW DID YOU LAND IN SCHOOL NUTRITION?

After culinary school, I traveled and took a gustatory tour of China and Japan. Afterwards, I worked the restaurant scene and catered in Puerto Rico, Los Angeles and Dallas. When it was time to settle down and start a family, I changed directions and worked long-term care consulting for eight years. While consulting, a dietetic colleague in the school nutrition field coaxed me into considering a career shift. The rest is history and I am enjoying every minute of it.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR ROLE AT CHARTWELLS IN DALLAS, TEXAS.

My role in the district may not look like that of other Chartwells dietitians. Besides menu management, nutrition education, cooking demonstrations, allergen record keeping, writing special diets, staff training, grant writing and equipment procurement, I also check orders and monitor commodity usage.



WHAT PROJECTS ARE YOU EXCITED ABOUT FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR?

This year I'm really excited about starting a food pantry at a few schools and incorporating our share tables to assist in stocking it. It is another way we can help cut down on food waste and help nourish students outside of the cafeteria - it's a win-win.

WHAT HURDLES HAVE YOU SEEN WITH BIC AND HOW DO YOU HELP SCHOOLS OVERCOME THEM? DO YOU SEE THE SUCCESS THAT COMES WITH THE BIC PROGRAM?

The biggest hurdles I've seen at schools is getting buy-in from the school administration. The most successful method I have identified for overcoming that hurdle has been to invite these administrators to tour nearby districts that already utilize this type of delivery method, in order to allow them to see what a successful BIC program looks like. It also helps to recruit administrators in my own or nearby districts to be BIC cheerleaders who will answer any questions and provide guidance for those considering the transition. I see the success that comes with BIC not only in the increased student participation in the school nutrition program, but while walking the halls in the mornings - I enjoy hearing the students get excited about what they can choose for breakfast.

HOW ARE YOU INCORPORATING F2S INTO THE SCHOOLS?

I am heavily invested in our district gardens. We assist in planting when possible, and when it comes time to harvest I host a tasting workshop and nutrition lesson highlighting that fresh seasonal produce for the students. The kids and teachers are always amazed at the different ways the same fruit or vegetable can be prepared. As the garden becomes more established and bountiful, my long-term goal is to provide produce from the garden to the school café and food pantries as well.

