



Director Spotlight!

Showcasing the passion, talents, and hard work of Arizona school nutrition professionals.



Eva Chalabi

Food Service Director, Riverside School District

Hometown: Chicago, Illinois

Current City of Residence: Glendale, Arizona

Favorite Childhood School Meal: Grilled Cheese Sandwich

When I was a kid, I wanted to grow up to be an: Architect

What prompted you to start working the field of school nutrition?

I love the hospitality field and the idea of helping children eat well. When the opportunity presented itself, I accepted a position as an Assistant Food Service Director 16 years ago. I have been in the field since and love what I do.

Tell us about a specific project or initiative you have championed that you are proud of.

I take pride in every detail of my work because it affects our students and staff. I'm very proud of our wellness program. I really wanted to tie our food program, the wellness initiative, students and the schools together. I partnered with a community dietitian from Maricopa County Department of public health to establish and promote student health and well being.

Assuming time and money were not barriers, what would be your top priority as far as changes you would like to see in your school nutrition program?

I'm all about training on the job. I would take all USDA recipes and create short comprehensive videos for the cooks and staff that would highlight tips on how to measure, season food, and cooking methods. I would also place monitors throughout the kitchens and cafeterias to display nutrition communication, and stream student cooking activities that take place at each site.

What are the top three skills a school food service director should have?

Leadership, organizational skills, and communication are important. I also feel strongly about business skills, projection, and integrity.

What advice would you give to a younger version of yourself just starting your role as Director?

Let your team know how the business is doing. Sharing this knowledge can make them feel better about themselves and the department. Knowing what is expected from the superior helps employees perform better in the workplace, thereby increasing morale.