



Operator Spotlight!

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



Rachel Gomez-Acosta

Wellness Coordinator, Concordia Charter School

Hometown: Scottsdale, Arizona

Current City of Residence: Chandler, Arizona

Favorite Childhood School Meal: Turkey, Mashed Potatoes and Gravy

When I was a kid, I wanted to grow up to be a: Nurse or Teacher

What was your first job in child nutrition?

NSLP Coordinator.

What prompted you to start working to support child nutrition?

The opportunity to develop a new program at a growing school. I was also excited to return to the education field after a bit of a break.

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

I loved the idea of buying food from local farms, but it took time to build those relationships and figure out how best to grow a sustainable farm-to-school program. This passion for fresh, local foods also seeded a thriving school garden program and several wellness policy implementation activities, including taste-tests and nutrition promotion.

Assuming time and money were not barriers, what would be your top priority as far as changes you would like to see related to Child Nutrition Program operations at your organization?

We would love to incorporate more scratch cooking using locally-sourced ingredients, and lots of exciting, hands-on professional development for our whole Nutrition Services team.

What are the top three skills a Child Nutrition Program operator should have?

Passion and vision for the "big picture," flexibility and creativity, and the ability to communicate in a way that builds and inspires a community.

What advice would you give to a younger version of yourself just starting in the role of a Child Nutrition Program operator?

Be willing to take risks and try big things!