My father used to say, “Family is one of our biggest strengths,” and he was right. Backed by family values three generations strong, Whitsons is committed to treating everyone like family. As a result, our culture places a strong emphasis on teamwork and helping others. Collectively, we strive to make a difference in the lives of our customers every day, with every meal we serve. This same behavior transcends our work life and can be seen in the numerous initiatives that our team members become involved in.

There are endless opportunities to deepen our connections with others, and all of our team members play an important role in bringing our mission to life. The best way to fulfill this promise is to challenge yourself to think outside of the box. Consider how you can make a difference in the world around you. Ask yourself:

- How can I make our work environment an even better place for my team?
- How can I connect more with the people in my community?
- How can I learn more about the needs of my customers, and how can I respond?
- What opportunities for community service are available to me and my team?

In this issue, you will see simple examples of out-of-the-box thinking when it comes to service and community. One team member dedicated his off-time over the summer to train special needs students in real life skills. Another worked with her principal to create a convenient new online ordering system for teachers. Members of our wellness committee researched opportunities where Whitsons’ team members could support a local food drive.

These are just a few examples of the many service-oriented actions that I know our team members are taking around the company. I am proud to say that the Whitsons team is actively engaged in their own communities. I encourage you to keep up the good deed work, as well as continue to seek out additional ways we can personally connect with our communities. There are many out there who can use our help, especially as the holidays draw near and struggles become more prominent.

Together, let’s help those who need it most.

In good health,

President and CEO
Whitsons Culinary Group ©
Each year, Whitsons is proud to welcome our newest school nutrition and prepared meal partnerships, providing an opportunity to enhance the lives of the new communities we serve. With an expansion throughout the northeast, team members from all over the company have come together to make a new fiscal year a successful one.

At **Whittier Technical Regional High School** in Massachusetts, we helped the district to transition from a self-operated program to contract management. Under the direction of Food Service Director **Kevin Welch**, we offer our full line of signature concepts and marketing programs, to the students’ delight. Part of our services include supporting the district’s culinary program, a paying internship that allows students to work in the café along with the Whitsons team as part of their practical experience. As our future workforce and a connection to the community, we are excited to play a role in shaping their skills and experience.
Hull Public Schools, also in Massachusetts, now offers menus focused on whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables; new vegetarian options through Whitsons’ Meatless Monday program; daily self-serve pizza options at the middle school; and a new “fun lunch” station at the elementary school, where students can enjoy bagel meals. For added excitement, the staff decorated the serving lines in each school for the fall season. One of the biggest hits so far was when Guest Chef Richard Sandmann dropped by to offer his famous Wok ‘N Bowl promotion. The students went wild for the Zesty Chicken Teriyaki rice bowl! Committed to nutritional education and environmental conservation, Food Service Director Chris Piercey and his team began working with the high school’s “Green Team” on a composting program, converting kitchen “scraps” to compost for use in their school garden. The team also captured the attention of faculty and administration when they catered an all-staff breakfast, receiving rave reviews. According to Piercey, we’ve already increased breakfast and lunch options throughout the district!
The high school students at Ellington Public Schools in Connecticut were also treated to a culinary delight when Chef Sandmann visited for Ramen Bar day. In addition, students at the secondary schools enjoy selecting from a variety of daily menu stations, with plans to open up a new salad bar and smoothie station at the high school. Elementary students have especially liked the Bagel Fun Lunch and new daily special alternatives. Previously self-operated, Whitsons’ management stepped in to assist Ellington’s staff in transitioning to this new nutrition program. “The support team from Whitsons has been incredibly helpful in this transition,” says Food Service Director Lindsay Cowles. “Shout out to John Prunier [District Manager], Rich Sandmann [Culinary Innovation Specialist] and Patricia St. Laurent [Food Service Director] for all their efforts! Of course, special thanks to the Ellington district team for always going above and beyond for the students.”

The district seems to be pleased with the results, as well. “The response from the Ellington community is overwhelmingly positive in support of the changes to the menu.” says Ellington Director of Finance and Operations, Brian Greenleaf. “Parents and children are excited about the new lunch options. The fresh fruits and vegetables available with every meal are popular with the students. We look forward to building upon the program with the support of the community.” Our focus this year will be to continue supporting the staff in adapting to the new menus and procedures, increasing healthy and creative menu options, and increasing meal participation rates.

Over at Middletown Township School District in New Jersey, Food Service Director Jessica Ritz is serving up new live action cooking at the high schools, with special guest chef events planned with Char Steakhouse this month. Students at all 17 of the district’s schools are enjoying new Boars Head deli selections, 100% white meat chicken products, and other wholesome ingredients. The team has also partnered with local bagel and pizza shop businesses, with local pizza days doubling and tripling meal counts at individual schools! The response from the community has been welcoming and positive. In fact, at back to school nights, parents were heard saying, “My kids say the food is so much better this year,” and “My son said he had the best fish tacos!”

Led by Resident District Manager Mark Kirn and Food Service Director Nancy Baker, the nutrition program at Easton Public Schools in Pennsylvania is already proving to be a center of excellence. Overwhelming participation at the middle school inspired a station reconfiguration to expedite the demand for our Southwestern themed Coyote Grill station, which we also introduced to the high school, with much success. New digital marketing media, a special gluten and soy free menu, and harvest of the month promotions are
among the extra services brought to the table. Back to school night was also a success, as EASD Middle School Principal, Dr. Charlene Symia, wrote, “I wanted to thank you for everything that you and your staff did to make our open house so wonderful. The parents and staff were raving about the food!” Our services also extend to include managing special catering events for the Easton faculty, administration, staff and community members, such as the Easton Boys and Girls Club BBQ celebration of a new garden project, ice cream socials, and the Easton Family Connection’s 20th anniversary.

The community at Syosset Central School District in New York has shown Whitsons an overwhelming welcome back! According to District Manager Christine Kunnmann-Hanna, “Over the last two weeks, I cannot even begin to tell you how many people have come up to me and told me they are so glad we are back.” Led by Food Service Director Beth Drayer, our team members were excited to introduce our companywide new Meatless Monday options, including homemade lasagna rollups with sautéed broccoli rabe, spinach orange salad, fresh eggplant wraps, and bean and veggie burritos. A favorite at the high school is Coyote Grill Southwestern cuisine, while over at the middle school, students cannot get enough of our Miss Ruby’s Grill, featuring fresh, homemade all beef burger choices and our La Cucina pizza varieties. At the elementary schools, we have partnered with Choosi to introduce an online ordering system, where parents have the ability to pre-order a meal for their children up to 60 days in advance. With a strong start back, we look forward to our continuing partnership with Syosset Schools.
Another new school district in New York, **Eastport-South Manor** was introduced to our updated signage, new organic offerings, upgraded salad bar and made-to-order deli station, a feature they never had before. With the help of Food Service Director **Karen Piciullo**, plans are also in place to open up a new smoothie station soon at the high/middle school—sure to be a hit with the students!

At **Wantagh Public Schools**, also in New York, students were welcomed back to school with fresh acai bowls made to order! This addition, among other new menu and concept changes, has been well received by the community. We couldn’t do this without the talent, knowledge and support of the existing team, who embraced a transition to Whitsons and a new management staff, including Food Service Director, **Kirk Ingebretsen**. We are looking forward to this new school year as we continue to build positive relationships with the Wantagh students and staff.

According to Food Service Director **Katherine Ancona, R.D.**, the year is off to a great start at **West Hempstead Public Schools**, a New York district comprised of a kindergarten center, two elementary schools, a high school and middle school. At the elementary schools, we offer daily hot lunch options, cold sandwiches, and freshly made salads. The high and middle schools feature our Great American Sandwich Co. and World Market stations, and the students love how they can create their own sandwiches. “I have even heard feedback from parents about how their children are enjoying the new variety of quality menu options,” says Ancona. We also catered a staff breakfast for Superintendent Conference Day, where both the administration and teachers enjoyed refreshments, bagels, pastries, and fresh fruit.

Located in upstate New York, **Ossining UFSD** is another familiar account we are excited to welcome back to the Whitsons family. One of the new programs we are working on with the district is serving a school funded universal free breakfast program, where all students have the opportunity to enjoy a free breakfast every day. Under the direction of Food Service Director **Ina van der Sande**, we offer a grab and go breakfast, where students can pick up their meal upon arrival and eat it either in the classroom, or at the on-site cafeteria. Ossining also participates in the fresh fruit and vegetable program, providing local fresh produce to the district. We also source from several local vendors to provide as many local products within our menus as possible. High School Chef **Drew Alden** is a highlight of our program, as he not only creates excitement through special “Chef Trek” events, but he also provides helpful hands-on culinary training districtwide.
In addition to our new school nutrition accounts, Whitsons is proud to announce the newest partnerships in our Prepared Meals division: City of East Orange, African-American Planning Commission, Queens Community House, North Star Family Residence, Philadelphia Corporation for the Aging and Jersey City Public Schools. According to Michael Whitcomb, Vice President, “These accounts represent an opportunity for us to serve wholesome, delivered meals to new communities. By expanding our business, we are able to enhance life for a diversity of individuals, and nourish their bodies and spirits. It’s rewarding to know we can make a difference.”

To all of our new accounts, leaders and team members, we welcome you and appreciate your hard work and dedication to making an impact on the communities you serve. With a focus on food and family, it is our mission to continue enhancing life one meal at a time for all of our customers—new and old. Thank you for playing your part in bringing our mission to life.
In Whitsons’ ongoing effort to help people live healthier lives through wholesome ingredients, we recently introduced a few new items to our menu mix. Although availability depends on the region and account, we now offer a variety of organic dressings from Cain’s; organic veggie burgers; organic whole grain pastas, pitas and buns; organic sausage; and organic, low sodium black beans and garbanzo beans. Food Service Directors should check their order guides to determine their account’s eligibility for these items, and for all of our local, organic and non-GMO products.

We are also continuing our efforts to support the use of local ingredients in our on-site nutrition programs by offering local farm promotion days, harvest of the month specials, produce taste tests, on-site garden opportunities, and assistance in applying for grants, where available. If you are interested in expanding your program to include new locally-focused options, please contact your district manager.
WHITSONS CONTINUES GREEN EFFORTS

Whitsons is committed to taking a leadership role in environmental conservation and providing sustainable meals. As a company, we continuously strive to preserve the earth’s resources by recycling, reusing materials and reducing our global footprint. Our “green” business practices include using the latest technologies and techniques to conserve resources, such as recycling used vegetable oil, paper, plastic, and metal, as an example. Our meals are made from ingredients that are purchased locally whenever possible. We also believe that each Whitsons team member plays a critical role in safeguarding our planet.

At the location level, Whitsons adheres to each individual client’s environmental policies, including recycling paper, cardboard, bottles and cans, composting, using reusable trays, and reducing the use of energy. We also make recommendations when opportunities for environmental conservation arise that fit within a client’s goals and policies. We encourage our onsite staff to work proactively to develop a comprehensive environmental plan based on the client’s needs, budget and objectives.

In addition to the programs and initiatives we already have in place, we also continue to seek new ways to help protect the environment and bring meals to our customers more efficiently. For example, we are currently in the process of moving our Prepared Meals line of grab and go items from Styrofoam trays to trays made from a biodegradable paperboard material. We plan to complete this tray conversion by the end of 2018, by which time, we will have cut the number of Styrofoam trays we put out into the environment by 3.3 million trays per year. Although this is only one piece of Whitsons’ larger conservation strategy, it truly will have an immediate impact on our environment.

Our Simply Rooted® philosophy and sustainability platform is based on delivering wholesome, all-natural meals to everyone’s table, while also taking care of and giving back to the environment. You can count on Whitsons to continue to find ways to do our part in protecting our planet.
Once a year, Whitsons’ Golden Pineapple is bestowed upon one food service director or resident district manager who exemplifies business excellence in contracted food service and consistently goes above and beyond the typical day-to-day business. The Golden Pineapple Award Winner receives a commemorative golden pineapple and a $500 gift card!

This September, Whitsons’ Golden Pineapple was awarded to Kevin Silvia, Resident District Manager at Lexington Public Schools. Kevin was selected as this year’s recipient based on his overall operational contributions, stellar financial performance, and his ever-present involvement in the Lexington community. Kevin continues to strive to be the best team player that he can be, while bringing innovation and excitement to the food service program.

“Kevin exemplifies what superior work ethic and drive looks like. He strives to be the best and always demonstrates such an incredible discipline in his achievements,” says John Prunier, District Manager. “As a 10-year veteran of Whitsons, Kevin’s leadership role is obvious every day on the job. He is well respected by his team members, peers, clients, and customers. We are proud and honored to have Kevin on our team!”

John R. Gersbeck, Whitsons Senior Vice President, added, “Kevin’s dedication to school food service is evident in everything that he does. He is always looking to raise the bar, and his passion is infectious.”

The nutrition program at Lexington Public Schools consistently showcases remarkable efforts to succeed, and achieves the most innovative results. Congratulations, Kevin!
OUR CAFETERIAS GET A REFRESH

PHOTO TAKEN AT MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY
A SIMPLY ROOTED® DESIGN

We’re serving up a whole new look in our school cafes this school year. From our new chalkboard Signature Series station signs, to our welcoming wood grain signage, our serving lines have never been more inviting. Of course, our food is the star of the show, as it is made from only the freshest, most delicious ingredients, but our new look helps to draw the crowds in. Take a look at some of our most recently made over serveries. Our Simply Rooted® philosophy sure has left its mark on our school serving lines this summer!
At Saugus Public Schools, learning doesn’t end for the summer. Launching its new summer special education student program, the district offered students aged 18-22 a chance to enhance real life job skills. Parents were looking for an opportunity for their children to receive valuable project-based training, and the district responded with this successful pilot program.

The students were tasked with preparing and delivering lunches to a local senior center, and when asked if he could help train the students, it was an offer Food Service Director Jamie Osgood could not refuse. Typically off during the summer months, Jamie dedicated his time to help the students learn how to prepare meals and deliver them safely. The training they received will also help these students earn ServSafe certification, a distinguished achievement in food safety skills. Jamie was joined by District Manager Joseph Armenti, who also stepped in to help with student training.

“Thank you for taking the time to commit to these students,” wrote Superintendent David DeRuosi in a note to the Whitsons team. “What I saw today was outstanding, and none of it would be possible without your efforts. Whitsons is only as good as the people representing it. The both of you are great examples of people willing to go the extra mile for the people you work for.”

Together with Saugus teachers and administrators and the staff at the senior center, the program helped to make a great impact on the lives of these children. The seniors enjoyed a wonderful lunch that lifted their spirits, teaching students more than just food safety: it taught them how to also be the best part of someone’s day.
TEACHER LUNCHES GONE GOOGLE

A NEW WAY TO PRE-ORDER

What’s new at Lexington this year? An online ordering system for teachers! At Fiske Elementary school, teachers and staff now have the ability to pre-order lunches through Google instead of facing a lunchtime wait.

This exciting new feature has proven to increase convenience for our customers, saving them valuable time. It was an idea spurred by lead Mary Reitano, who was recently promoted to Fiske. She previously worked at the Bowman Elementary School, where she was very diligent about talking to teachers and promoting the program to increase their participation at lunch—with great success. It was only natural that she brought that same level of innovation to her new school.

In collaboration with Fiske principal, Tom Martelone, Reitano helped to build an expanded teacher program, which included an easy-to-order, photographic menu of salads and sandwiches. Martelone is credited with developing the Google online ordering system, enabling teachers and staff to conveniently pre-order meals and pick them up in the cafeteria at lunchtime. In the first couple of days, the number of teacher orders increased, and sales continue to grow. Another score for Lexington!
A LONG ISLAND CARES FOOD DRIVE

This past April, Whitsons’ Wellness Committee spearheaded efforts hold a food drive for local charity, Long Island Cares. Committee member Katherine Ancona, R.D. was tasked with researching local food banks to determine where our support was most needed.

“Long Island Cares was in the greatest need of our donated items,” reports Ancona. “Plus, their mission was aligned with our philosophy to provide healthier food items, such as whole grains, canned low sodium vegetables, and fruits packed in 100% juice.”

Ancona and committee worked with representatives from LIC to set up an online bank, as well as determine the most needed items and create flyers to promote the drive. As donations were received, the committee organized them into boxes at Whitsons’ corporate office and coordinated the delivery of goods to Long Island Cares’ Harry Chapin Food Bank.

Both culinary center and corporate office team members generously donated food and paper goods to make it a successful drive, raising 80 pounds of donations! The LIC was grateful for our support, welcoming us to hold future drives. In appreciation, Whitsons received a certificate of acknowledgment from LIC CEO Paule T. Pachter.

“Thank you for joining us in our mission to ensure that more Long Island children and families do not go hungry. On behalf of all of the children and families served by Long Island Cares, William Gonyou, Community Event and Food Drive Manager, and I are truly grateful for your continued support.”

It was our pleasure to support such a worthy cause. It’s also a great reminder to us all to give back to our local charities and organizations, especially as the holidays draw near.
Each year, Whitsons partners with the SCO Family of Services to help make holidays a little bit easier for those less fortunate by coordinating a gift drive for the Bethany Houses, a transitional living program for teenage mothers in foster care with their children. While living in the Bethany residences, young mothers finish school and acquire skills that will allow them to become self-sufficient young women who can care for their children. This year's gift drive was an enormous success. Whitsons had over 40 gifts collected and dropped off at the Bethany Houses on December 18th by a few of our Whitsons team members. Our gifts supply the young mothers with basic needs, as well as presents of hope, to encourage them on their journeys.

COURTNEY YABLONSKY, RD, CDN
WHITSONS TAKES ON A TOUGH MUDDER

FIVE MILES OF MUD & OBSTACLES

Whitsons’ Wellness Committee hosted a Tough Mudder half marathon this past July for those bold enough to get in the mud with their co-workers. The Tough Mudder half marathon is 5 miles of mud and loaded with slippery obstacles that are specifically designed to test your teamwork and toughness. This dirty team-building exercise was an absolute blast! Participants tackled the Block Ness Monster and made it up Everest 2.0 together as a team. Fortunately, the Tough Mudder is not so much of a race as it is an endurance challenge; however, it sure does test both your mental and physical strength. What a great team-building opportunity this was for those who joined in the fun; you simply cannot make it out without help from your team. For all those who participated, wear your headband proud! Stay tuned for more, as the Whitsons Wellness Committee will be announcing future team events like this soon.

PRESENTED BY CELSIUS
AUTUMN APPLE CHILI SALSA

A WARMING FALL FAVORITE

With apples being in such abundance this time of year, why not give this delicious recipe a try?

INGREDIENTS:
- 1 large crisp-tart apple (Fuji or Gala), cored and chopped
- 2 bell peppers, cored and chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ¼ cup chopped fresh mint
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tbsp. cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp. lime juice
- Salt and ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS:
In a medium bowl, toss together the apples, peppers, jalapeno, garlic, mint, cilantro, vinegar and lime juice. Season with salt and pepper. Enjoy!

Don’t forget to share your dish with us on Facebook!
The Whitsons Family Foundation was created by the Whitcomb family and Whitsons Culinary Group to support Whitsons team members and their immediate families with temporary emergency financial assistance and/or grants for college education. All team members in good standing, who have been employed for six months or longer, and are regularly scheduled to work, are eligible to apply.

**TOTAL TEAM MEMBER GRANTS SINCE 2012: $406,635.10**

**HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

If you have ever known what it is like to struggle, you may also know how it feels when there is somewhere to turn to for help. If you are in a position to give back to those you work alongside, please consider signing up for our weekly payroll deductions. Just think, if we increase our participation rate to 25% and have each newly enrolled team member donate only $1 a week, the Whitsons Family Foundation would receive an additional $57,000 a year! Imagine how many more team members we would be able to help with that kind of support. To make your donation today, please ask your manager for a payroll form, or contact the Foundation for a copy.

**NEED ASSISTANCE?**

Simply ask your manager for an application, or contact the Foundation.
2019 FAMILY FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Part of the goal of the Whitsons Family Foundation is to assist team members and their immediate family members in acquiring scholarships to help fulfill their need or desire for a higher education. Applications for scholarships will be accepted until February 15th, 2019.

A team member can only receive one scholarship grant per year, and funds may only be used to defray the cost of tuition, enrollment fees, books, supplies or equipment required for the course of study.

An eligible recipient must provide proof of current enrollment (or admission to enroll) in an accredited higher education institution in the United States of America leading to at least an Associate’s Degree or higher and must achieve a cumulative G.P.A. of at least 3.0 over the last 4 academic years preceding the date of the application.

WHITSONS FAMILY FOUNDATION
1.800.813.5833