**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** [Insert Date]

**Local School Nutrition Managers Participate in N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute**

School Nutrition managers from across the state are participating in the North Carolina K-12 Culinary Institute this summer. [Insert Number] School Nutrition managers, [Insert Names], from [Insert Public School Unit] participated in a K-12 Culinary Institute regional workshop on [Insert Date] at [Insert Name of Public School Unit hosting the regional workshop]. The institute was developed by the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, Office of School Nutrition in cooperation with team of registered dietitians and chefs to increase the availability of fresh, appealing, nutritious meals at school.

“The K-12 Culinary Institute is a unique opportunity for our School Nutrition professionals to enhance culinary skills and glean tools and information critical to their important roles in providing quality, nutritious school meals,” said [Insert Name], director for [Insert Public School Unit], School Nutrition Program.

The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition worked with Chef Cyndie Story and the K-12 Culinary Team in development of the institute to meet five core objectives:

* Improve student health, well-being, and academic success through nutritious, appealing meals at school,
* Increase participation in high quality, enticing school nutrition programs,
* Expand capacity of local school nutrition programs to purchase, prepare and serve fresh, locally grown produce,
* Increase consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole grain-rich foods, and
* Provide continuing education opportunities for School Nutrition personnel.

Over two hundred new recipes have been developed for school meals in North Carolina, featuring whole grains, fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, lowfat dairy and locally grown ingredients. The menus and recipes developed for the K-12 Culinary Institute include scratch, convenience, and modified scratch products and techniques, instructions written for production amounts consistent with pack or pan sizes commonly available in school kitchens, and nutritional analysis files for easy import into software programs and adjustments for standardization in Public School Units (PSUs).

Planned instructional segments for the institute include topics such as knife skills, weighing and measuring accurately, preparing foods for just-in-time service, work simplification and scheduling, effective use of equipment, and quality food preparation and service for a variety of meats, grains, fruits, vegetables, and condiments. In addition, merchandising, marketing, and nutrition education best practices are addressed.

The N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute graduates are chef ambassadors and culinary specialists. These ambassadors are prepared to teach other School Nutrition professionals at the PSU/school level utilizing institute teach-it-forward lessons and resources.

The NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition is the State Agency (SA) in North Carolina administering the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Special Milk Program, After School Snack Program, Seamless Summer Option, and Summer Food Service Program with federal assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Additional information regarding School Nutrition Programs in North Carolina and the N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute can be found on the NCDPI, Office of School Nutrition [website](https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/district-operations/office-school-nutrition). [Insert Public School Unit] administers School Nutrition Programs at the local level. More information can be found on the [Insert Public School Unit] website. [Hyperlink “website” with URL]. USDA, NCDPI, and [Insert Public School Unit] are equal opportunity providers and employers.

*###*

About the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction:

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction provides leadership to 115 local public school units and 200+ charter schools serving over 1.5 million students in kindergarten through high school graduation. The agency is responsible for all aspects of the state's public school system and works under the direction of the North Carolina State Board of Education.

About the [Insert Public School Unit]:

[Add paragraph regarding Public School Unit]

For more information:

NCDPI, Office of Communications, 984.236.2000

[Insert Public School Unit] Public Information Office, [Insert Phone Number]

---

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant’s name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.