

# My Turn

By Dennis Franks

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There are many perks to my job, but one delicious benefit is Pickaway-Ross' cafeteria. Just the other day, I was leaving my office to go to a meeting and intended to grab something along the way when the great smells from the cafeteria lured me there instead.



Chef Chris Seyfang, center, with his staff, from left: Jeff DeLong, Darla Cryder, Karen McDowell, Angela Blanton and Delores Brown

And certainly the food, prepared by Chef Chris Seyfang and his staff, is delicious and enjoyed by the majority of our staff and students every day.

But this month our cafeteria, under Chris' leadership, received a behind-the-scenes accolade that has me equally proud of what he brings to our school.

During an extensive and mandatory review by the Ohio Department of Education, Pickaway-Ross' kitchen operations were found to be perfect.

School cafeterias are required to meet a number of regulations regarding ingredients and portion sizes. And the multiple meal options that Chris makes available every day are a result of a

dedication to good nutrition and a lot of planning.

Chris said he and his staff spent a lot of time researching what foods the students would like to ensure that they would buy what was offered but, more important, eat what they bought.

But the biggest change Chris made when he came to Pickaway-Ross four years ago was to eliminate the a la carte food options and create four theme meals: Fresh Express, Café Cuisines, Pizzeria and Sensational Salad Bar. Each consists of a meat, dairy, grain, vegetable and fruit.

This change in the school lunch concept has been met with enthusiasm. The average participation in school lunch programs is 60 percent to 65 percent. At Pickaway-Ross, we are averaging 92 percent.

Knowing this review was scheduled, Chris worked hard, starting to prepare for it in September.

"I knew we had a great program," he said, but he spent months ensuring that all of his menus and meals were in compliance.

His hard work paid off. Carol Maples, who conducted the review of Pickaway-Ross for the ODE, wrote in her comments:

"Very nice planning with variety of vegetables (on salad bar), fruits and bean legumes offered daily. All nutrition guidelines and meal planning regulations implemented."

Maples also commented on how warm and inviting our cafeteria is. Good food and a pleasant environment ... so, where are you going for lunch today?

