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For Immediate Release

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# Teens Take on Cafeteria Food

## *Burbank High's 'Health Squad' to work side-by-side with school district chef on kid-friendly menu choices*

**May 17, 2011 (Sacramento)** – Teenage rites of passage: Football games, the prom, yearbook autograph sessions and ... complaining about cafeteria food. Whether the food is unhealthy (think pizza and burgers) or too healthy (salad), kids never seem satisfied with whatever it is on their lunch trays.

But instead of just griping about cafeteria fare, students of Luther Burbank High School's after-school Food Justice Class are doing something about it. Today (Tuesday, May 17), the group will work with Sacramento City Unified School District's (SCUSD) Chef John Bays (formerly of Morton's and Rio City Café) to create new recipes hoped to please the fickle teen palate.

**The cooking session and food discussion will take place TODAY (Tuesday, May 17) from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the Luther Burbank High School cafeteria, 3500 Florin Road.**

The Food Justice Class was established in January to teach kids about nutrition and to "empower them to make a difference in their community," said Aly Kronick, program coordinator for the nonprofit agency Health Education Council, which runs the class, funded by a USDA grant.

Kronick meets with the teens twice a week. Early on, they expressed frustration with the "content and cultural relevancy" of the food they are served at school, she said.

"They didn't know how to tackle the issue," she said. "They didn't know what would be heard and not heard" by those in a position to alter the cafeteria menu.

Fortunately, their timing was perfect: SCUSD is also working to improve the food served to 30,000 students a day in cafeterias throughout the district's 81 campuses. Last spring, SCUSD Superintendent Jonathan Raymond formed the Healthy Foods Task Force – a coalition of district representatives and various partners – to bring healthier food to schools, including fresh, locally grown produce like oranges and strawberries.

Today (Tuesday, May 17), the students and Bays will create dishes suggested by the Burbank students, including Mexican *tortas*, a type of sandwich, baked macaroni and cheese, French toast bread pudding and chicken dumpling soup, a favorite in the Hmong community.

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