

# THAYER CENTRAL COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

A NEBRASKA THURSDAYS STORY



## SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

**Food service director:**  
Jennifer Waldmeier

**Number of feeding sites:**  
1

**Regional location:**  
Southeast Nebraska

**Number of food service staff:** 6

**Number of students:**  
436

**Meal participation rate:**  
82%

▶ **26 TO 50%** OF FOOD IS MADE FROM SCRATCH

▶ THAYER CENTRAL COMMUNITY SCHOOLS HAS A GOAL TO INCREASE THIS PERCENTAGE TO 75% IN THE FUTURE

## HOW WE GOT STARTED

“A beef program had already been started when I started my position as food service director. Mark Hintz has been providing local, in-season fruit and vegetables for several years prior to our involvement with Nebraska Thursdays.”

## DID YOU DO ANYTHING UNIQUE TO PROMOTE NEBRASKA THURSDAYS?

“The grow tower was set up in the cafeteria. The FFA students would cut the lettuce and then we would serve it on the salad bar with a sign stating what it was. The younger kids thought it was cool to see the process.”

## FAVORITE LOCAL FOODS TO USE IN THE MENU

“A favorite would be the local beef. The kids all know that it is local beef. There is a sponsor banner in the cafeteria that we display, which includes the names of the producers. The kids see their own names, plus names of friends and other family members.”



These institutions are equal opportunity providers.

## WHERE WE PURCHASE

“We purchase from the local grocery store or Mark Hintz most often, but also from distributors and USDA Department of Defense Fresh Program vendors.”



## GOAL FOR NEXT YEAR

“I would like to introduce at least four new local items to the school year menu. The items may or may not be ‘new’ to the students, but new to our school by being local.”

## HOW MUCH TIME DID IT TAKE?

“Since we already had a similar program in place, it took more time to focus on what other local foods we could add to the menu. I worked about an hour a week, talking to my vendors, and looking into other options.”



## LOCAL TRAY BREAKDOWN

Cheeseburgers are one of the kids’ favorite meals. The pictured buns were from Rotella (Omaha, Nebraska), milk from Hiland Dairy (Omaha, Nebraska), locally-grown tomatoes from Mark Hintz, and lettuce from the FFA grow tower.

## IMPACT OF BRINGING LOCAL FOODS TO SCHOOL MEALS

“The budget has increased slightly, but so has participation in lunch. Staff is knowledgeable with most local foods, so training hasn’t been difficult. We have not had any equipment needs, but have been able to show how different things can be made and/or processed.”

