

Sending Your Kids to School for a Nutritious Box Lunch That You Didn't Prepare

After Eloina LeBuhn and her husband and two young sons moved to Rose Valley from Center City, where she had run a successful translating business, she decided to start another business, one that would be more "relevant to my children's lives."

At first she considered making and selling fresh baby food, but she couldn't come up with a profitable business plan. Born and raised in Brazil for her first 18 years, she began to think how "amazing it was that kids eat so poorly in this country." She had grown up cooking with grandparents. And she was looking for meals that were not fancy, but homemade, like Thanksgiving dinner, that came to the table "fresh and completely unprocessed." Except the tables she had in mind were lunch tables at schools.

What she came up with was kidOrganics, a company that prepares box lunches with "just real good fresh food" that is delivered directly to schools. Individual boxes are labeled with the recipient's name.

Kids can choose one of four main entrees—a sandwich, wrap, waffles, or past dish. Then there is a choice of two sides from daily categories of a seasonal fruit, a fresh vegetable with homemade dip, a healthy chip (e.g., organic white cheddar cheese puffs) or a freshly baked treat. Water or a choice of low sugar, organic juices are included. "We try to be as seasonal and local as possible," says LeBuhn.

The food is delivered mornings to the school in coolers in a manner that is not disruptive to the teaching routines. The boxes, plates, forks and knives are 100% biodegradable (made of potato peels and sugar cane). Recently, kidOrganics served lunches to Trinity Summer Camp children and LeBuhn is talking to various schools in the region about starting deliveries this fall.

Nearly every element of the lunch box has been carefully considered for nutritional value or sustainability. Parents choose whether their children will receive lunch boxes 1, 3 or 5 days per week, "to fit the parents' and children's schedules," she says.

LeBuhn is an admirer of chef/restaurateurs Alice Walker and Ann Cooper (also author of *Lunch Lessons: The Way We Feed Our Children*), author Michael Pollan (*In Defense of Food* and *The Omnivore's Dilemma*) and nutritionist



Eloina LeBuhn of Wallingford displays one of her company's lunch boxes filled with healthy edibles for children.

Marion Nestle (author of *Food Politics*), who have made a huge impact on what people and children put into their mouths. "Every school is committed to better nutrition," she says. "Partnering with us gives schools the opportunity to deliver fresh, healthy lunches." And, in turn, it give kids the chance to choose what they eat.

The healthy, nutritious lunch that is bought directly by parents and delivered daily to their kids' schools is not a new idea (it's at

least 5 years old), but it is new to this area and far less common in public schools, LeBuhn says. However, kidOrganics' goal is to deliver fresh, unprocessed and nutritionally superior meals everywhere children gather to learn, play or are cared for.

For food tastings, questions, or to get your school to enroll in the kidOrganics lunch program, call 888-314-5430, e-mail info@kidfoods.com or visit www.kidfoods.com.

The Swarthmorean

Your Hometown Newspaper since 1893