

2014 Salad Committee Report

1 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The 2014 Salad Committee consisted of the following volunteers:

Andrew Sims – Chairperson
Rick Cramer
Kristin Donaldson
Desa Facey
Jeff Johnson
Camilia Rosca
Natasha Westland

2 COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Recruit committee volunteers from 6th grade parent pool (Chairperson)
- Coordinate with organizing committee chairpersons on procurement of salad ingredients and bowls (Chairperson)
- Coordinate salad committee shifts (Chairperson)
- Prepare ingredients for salad assembly (all)
- Assemble salads in advance of serving dinner (all)
- Distribute salads on dinner assembly throughout serving period (all)
- Clean up assembly / distribution area following conclusion of dinner (all)

3 PROCUREMENT

For the 2014 dinner, all salad ingredients were acquired through the Procurement Committee. Remaining foam salad bowls from the prior year's event were distributed to the Salad Chairperson in September and held by the chairperson until the event started. Upon initially receiving the bowls, it is the salad Chairperson's responsibility to confirm how many bowls remain from the previous year and to determine how many bowls need to be acquired to fulfill the needs for the current year. Historical estimates range from 1,100 to 1,500 salads served over the past several years, so it is advised that the Salad Chairperson arrange to have 1,500 bowls on hand for the night of the dinner. Bowls may be acquired by the Salad Chairperson or the Procurement Committee, so be sure to confirm in advance as to who is assuming that responsibility. Additional bowls for this year's dinner were acquired at Costco in packs of 300. There were 450 bowls left over from the 2014 year, so the 2015 Salad Chairperson should arrange for the purchase of 1,100 bowls for the next Spaghetti Dinner.

Salad ingredients were donated by Whole Foods, which was arranged by the procurement team. The ingredients were picked up on Monday afternoon and delivered to the Carlisle cafeteria by procurement team volunteers.

Important note concerning salad procurement and volunteer coordination: Salad donations have historically consisted of two types of salad – pre-cut, washed salad in bags or full cases of various types of head lettuce that need to be chopped, washed, and dried prior to assembly. To ensure proper volunteer coordination and preparation time arrangements, it is critical that the procurement team confirm and communicate in advance to the Salad Chairperson which type of salad will be provided by the donor. If the lettuce is pre-cut and bagged, then the Salad Chairperson can coordinate volunteers to work on salad ingredient prep and assembly for the afternoon and evening of the event. However, if the donor is providing uncut heads that require chopping, washing, and drying, the Salad Chairperson should plan to arrange for committee volunteers to work the prior evening on prepping the lettuce for assembly on the day of the event.

For the 2014 event, 7 cases of uncut lettuce (3 varieties) were received with approximately 25 heads in each case. Not initially knowing what had been donated, the Salad Chairperson stopped by the night before the dinner to see what had been delivered and to get a head start on the preparation. Upon realizing how much time it would take to prepare just the lettuce, the chairperson worked with the kitchen manager to start chopping, cleaning, and drying the lettuce that same evening. Several other volunteers from different committees joined in the effort and, three hours later, the 7 cases of lettuce had been chopped, cleaned, and dried. Had it not been for the kitchen manager and the other volunteers that stepped up, the salad prep volunteers originally scheduled for the following day would have quickly found themselves behind in their efforts to have everything prepped and assembled in time for the dinner.

The assumption made by everyone up to that point in time, with regard to procurement, volunteer scheduling, and time allocation, was that the lettuce would be the bagged variety donated in prior years. This was not the fault of any of the individuals involved; it was simply an unanticipated change that everyone reacted to with a positive attitude and everything ended up working out perfectly in the end. Going forward, Salad and Procurement Committee Chairs will now know to discuss this as the event gets closer.

Overall, there was too much lettuce, a little too much cucumber, slightly less carrot than required, not enough grape tomatoes (this happens every year), less than 25% of the croutons needed, and too many salad dressing varieties. The quantity of salad dressing bottles was okay, but there were four or five different flavors, which were not provided in enough quantity that they could be equally distributed among all the tables. Consequently, it would better if there were fewer varieties provided and the same number of bottles (estimated at 56) so that every table has the same dressings available. Whole red onions were also provided by Whole Foods, but they were not used.

4 VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT, SCHEDULING, AND WORKFLOW

For 2014, 6th grade parents were recruited via emails from the Event Committee to volunteer their time on one of the various committees, including salad. Parents were directed to an online signup site called SignUp Genius. Chairpersons with experience in prior year Spaghetti Dinners suggested 2014 was a particularly difficult year to recruit volunteers. Some suggested that it was due to this year's overall small class size, while others suggested it is part of a continuing trend of changing demographics in Carlisle where more families have two working parents with less time to commit toward volunteering. Regardless of the reason(s), the Salad Chairperson should reach out to their social network of sixth grade parents for volunteers as soon as they are named to the position and should not rely on the additional recruiting efforts put forward by the Event Coordinators. The

salad committee is one of the largest committees, with more positions to fill than most of the other committees, and therefore takes more time and effort to recruit a full roster of volunteers. The committee was supposed to have 12 members and ended up with 7. The additional five members would have been critical if a third shift was anticipated for scheduling a prep team to work the night before. Fortunately, there were enough extra people already on hand and things worked out okay, but that was due to luck, not good planning.

The number of volunteers required for the committee is entirely dependent on whether the lettuce is pre-chopped or individual heads. If the lettuce is pre-cut and bagged, then four volunteers (plus the Chairperson) should be recruited for the early prep and assembly shift on the day of the event. Three volunteers (plus the Chairperson) should be scheduled for the second shift for serving and clean-up. If the lettuce is whole, unwashed heads, then the Salad Chairperson should plan for an additional prep shift of four volunteers (plus the Chairperson) to work on the evening prior to the dinner. **Important note: This year's online sign-up process was great, but future sign-up programs should enable the volunteer to provide their contact information. One member of the team didn't receive emails because the information in the Husky Handbook is inaccurate. Also, future Salad Committee sign-up list should be broken down by shift time, rather than just one committee list to sign-up on. This would enable people to determine which time works best for them in advance.**

If whole lettuce heads are provided, then the salad Chairperson should plan to have a prep shift come in the night before the dinner at 5:30 to chop, clean, and dry the lettuce. Prior to 5:30, the sauce team is using the majority of the kitchen, so this is about the earliest the team can start (unless the sauce team changes their process and timeframe). The team started by chopping up the heads and placing the lettuce in the large colanders available in the kitchen. The kitchen has plenty of sharp knives. The lettuce was then washed in the colanders and dried in salad spinners. (Note: The salad spinners are not available in the kitchen and were provided by various volunteers in advance, not knowing whether they would be needed or not. If lettuce needs to be cut, the chairperson should arrange through volunteers to have 4 spinners on hand.) After spinning the salad, it was put in large bags from the kitchen and left in the refrigerator for the next day's assembly shift.

This first shift on the day of the event should plan to start in the kitchen at 1:30 to prep the remaining ingredients and assemble salads. For 2014, we received approximately 1.25 bushels of whole cucumbers, 3 cases of pre-shredded carrots, and an uncertain quantity of grape tomatoes. The cucumbers and grapes were washed in the large kitchen sink. The tomatoes were left to drip dry in the large colanders provided by the kitchen. The cucumbers were cut in half (length-wise) and provided to a volunteer for slicing in a food processor. (Note: There is an available food processor in the kitchen, but it is advisable to also have one of the volunteers bring one from home). Had whole carrots been donated, then additional time would have been necessary to clean and shred the carrots in a food processor, but there would still have been enough volunteer capacity on hand to take this additional task on.

After everything had been prepped, the team began assembling salads. The seven cases of lettuce turned out to be significantly more than was required for the dinner. Large quantities were left over at the end of the night, which was given out the following days for free during school lunch periods. However, this also enabled the team to fill the salad bowls to the top and offer a nice salad to the diners. Cucumbers were also plentiful, so six to 8 pieces (3-4 whole slices) were scattered on each salad and more could have been included. The carrot quantity was adequate, but the team was careful to ration them somewhat to ensure they did not run out. The grape tomatoes were initially distributed three to a salad, but halfway through the count was reduced to two

per salad to ensure they would be enough for all the salads. Everyone seemed to agree that the salads looked best when they were built with salad, then cucumber, then carrots, and the tomatoes on top.

Each team member built their own salads, pulling from the ingredients placed in the middle of the table. Finished salads were stacked on large metal trays (as the bread team finished with them), which were loaded on to wheeled carts taken from the walk-in refrigerator. Salads were stacked in pyramids on the trays to maximize storage space. When there were no more large trays available, smaller trays were used and placed wherever they would fit in the refrigerator. Towards the end, about 4:30, salads were positioned on the serving line and croutons were added to the salads. A bowl of croutons was left at both servicing stations and the croutons were added to new salads as the station was replenished by the second shift. This kept the croutons from getting soggy on the damp salad in the refrigerator. By the end of the first shift, approximately 1,100 salads were built. This was all the salads the second shift would need for the entire dinner.

The second shift started about 5:00, just as diners were starting to appear. As the pre-positioned salads ran out, new salads were brought out from the refrigerator by the two team members stationed at the serving line and croutons were added. One person kept the refrigerator organized so that large trays could be brought out quickly without the service line people having to move stacked salads around to free up a tray. This minimized crowding in the refrigerator, which other teams also needed to access.

At the end of the evening, there were about 60 salads left and enough ingredients to make more salads if the demand had been higher. However, there would not have been any tomatoes available and the carrots would have quickly run out. The assembled salads were combined into metal containers and left for the cafeteria to serve the following day. Clean up consisted of washing the large bowls used to contain the salad components and anything else used by the team, which took very little time.

5 SUMMARY

The team worked great together and everyone provided helpful suggestions on ways to make the process work smoothly. A special call out to Lauree Eckler is warranted for all the extra assistance she offered a novice chairperson and to Sue Robichaud for all the tireless effort and help that she provided throughout the two evenings spent in "her" kitchen. Sue was critical to the success of the Salad Team. Monday night's spontaneous prep shift would not have been possible without the support of Joanna Quinlan, Katherine Dhar, and Karen Smith stepping in and rolling up their sleeves to chop more lettuce than they will ever choose to again.

The degree to which next year's Procurement Team can coax the future food donor to adjust the mix of what they donate for salad ingredients will make the job of the next Salad Chairperson that much easier. The ingredients provided by Whole Foods made for great tasting, colorful salads. Aside from not anticipating the need for prep work to start the night before, the most difficult part of the Chairperson's responsibility was recruiting volunteers. Future kitchen oriented chairpersons should be sure to communicate to their team in advance to wear baseball hats or similar head coverings if they do not wish to wear hair nets. Wearing comfortable shoes is another necessity.

This was a rewarding opportunity to meet new parents, support a great cause, and have fun throughout it all. I am glad that I was able to participate in a meaningful way.