

YOUR HEALTH

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On the Web: charleston.net

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About half the lower (elementary) school students at Charleston Collegiate School on Johns Island participate in Schoolhouse Fare's lunch program, with the other half bringing their lunch from home. A different local restaurant delivers food on a particular day of the week, including Moe's Southwest Grill (pictured here) on Fridays.

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GRACE BEAHM/STAFF

Stay-at-home moms Bradley Morrow (left) and Carol Fair work out of their houses taking and coordinating school lunch orders for their business, Schoolhouse Fare.

Healthier choices

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Schoolhouse Fare

area restaurants, such as Moe's Southwest Grill, Mama Fu's and Andolini's Pizza.

Tapping expertise

Knowing that they weren't health experts, they work closely with local wellness expert Dr. Ann Kulze, who serves as a menu consultant and offers the daily "Dr. Ann's Top Pick for Health." Kulze reviews menu options to make sure they are balanced, "reasonably healthy" and consistent with age-appropriate nutritional needs. Kulze applauds their work.

"I love the Schoolhouse Fare concept," says Kulze, who has been outspoken on issues such as the availability of soft drinks in schools. "There is a growing parental and school interest in healthy nutrition for kids fueled by both the obesity epidemic and recognition of the role nutrition plays in cognitive function."

Kulze adds that parents are busier than ever, and many don't have time to pack lunch. Schoolhouse Fare's approach of ordering food online makes the process quick and easy.

Schoolhouse Fare's menu has a few minimal health requirements, as prescribed by Kulze. Those include:

- ▶ Less than 35 percent of total calories being from fat.
- ▶ Less than 10 percent of total calories being from saturated fat.
- ▶ Zero trans fat.
- ▶ At least some form of fresh fruit or vegetables.
- ▶ An emphasis on protein- and calcium-rich foods.
- ▶ No french fries or dessert ts.
- ▶ The only beverages served are Coburg 2 percent fat milk or 1 percent chocolate milk.

At the suggestion of friends and Kulze herself, Schoolhouse Fare's menu is not sin-free. Some menu items include a cheeseburger from Melvin's or pepperoni pizza from Andolini's. After all, Morrow and Fair themselves know they are dealing with children, who can be finicky about the food they eat.

So far, so good

To date, the reviews are good. "We've been very pleased," says Angela McLaughlin, public relations director and mother of two students at Nativity Catholic School on James Island. "It's still so new, but so far the feedback has been positive."

About 50 percent of Nativity's 151 students have ordered food. McLaughlin says that parents like the healthy alternatives, the convenience of ordering food online and having different restaurants to choose from on different days of the week.

They also like the fact that

WHAT IS IT: Schoolhouse Fare is a private, online lunch-ordering program with a healthy twist to it.

WHEN DID IT START: August. **WHO STARTED IT:** Two stay-at-home moms, Carol Fair and Bradley Morrow. Fair is an interior designer by training, Morrow is a dog trainer and former volunteer lunch program coordinator for Mason Prep.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS: Charleston Collegiate, Trinity Montessori, Charleston Christian and Nativity Catholic.

PARTICIPATING FOOD PROVIDERS: Andolini's Pizza, Barberio's, Chick-fil-A, Fazoli's, Mama Fu's Asian House, Melvin's Southern BBQ, Moe's Southwest Grill, Quizno's Sub Shop, Schlotzsky's Deli and Whole Foods Market.

BASIC LUNCH PRICES: Ranges from \$2.96 to \$6.31, including sales tax.

WEB SITE: www.schoolhousefare.com

Morrow and Fair send out e-mail reminders for ordering food.

Vicki Getsinger, assistant head of school at Charleston Collegiate on Johns Island, says that the true indication of the program is that, so far, she hasn't received any complaints.

"The students enjoy the food," says Getsinger. "The students in the upper (high) school have a choice, and the parents of students in the lower (elementary) have a choice."

Getsinger also notes the convenience factor.

Charleston Collegiate previously hired a food service that would serve food from a table. Students had to wait in line. Now, they get it, sit and eat.

All four schools will benefit in another way: Schoolhouse Fare's fundraiser day. In what is a gesture that is both goodwill and good marketing, Morrow and Fair are giving each school one day where all the money generated by food orders goes to the school.

Health, convenience

Of the four schools participating, about 30 percent of the student bodies had ordered food within the first month of operation.

Morrow and Fair are confident not only that the percentage will grow, but that more schools will start working with them, especially since they have concrete data to provide to them.

After working up a business plan a year ago, Morrow and Fair started making presentations last winter to 18 private schools in the Greater Charleston area. Their initial goal was to get three.

Public schools, they say, will be difficult to serve because of federal regulations on lunch programs and bidding.

"It (serving public schools) might be down the road, but doesn't look feasible right now," says Fair.

Morrow and Fair vow to keep evolving Schoolhouse Fare, seeking out new restaurants and new menus to offer healthy options to Charleston's school-age population.

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A Healthier Choice for Kids

Schoolhouse Fare offering online food selections to four area private schools

BY DAVID QUICK
The Post and Courier

The childhood obesity epidemic. Busy, frazzled parents. Overtasked school faculties. Junk food in schools. Attention-span issues. These are just some of the troublesome signs of the times.

Yet opportunities await in the midst of crisis, and two suburban stay-at-home moms saw one: a chance not only to start a business but to address those problems on a local level and from a parent's perspective.

At the beginning of the school year, Bradley Morrow and Carol Fair launched Schoolhouse Fare, a private, online lunch-ordering program with a healthy twist.

"We knew first hand that there was a need for something like this," says Fair.



WADE SPEEDS/STAFF

Schoolhouse Fare features a "Dr. Ann's Pick," a selection deemed by local wellness expert Dr. Ann Kulze as being the most nutritious lunch menu item each day.

"We knew combining convenience and nutritional choice would be a great service that would help both parents and

(school) administrations."

Morrow, who served as the volunteer lunch coordinator at Mason Prep for one year, noted that not only are school faculties stressed, but schools suffer from a dwindling volunteer pool. Both faculties and volunteers should be freed up to spend more time on education, not food service.

The basic lunch prices range from \$2.96 to \$6.31, including sales tax.

Morrow and Fair, who knew each other from being neighbors in the Stiles Point subdivision, provide four private schools — Charleston Collegiate, Trinity Montessori, Charleston Christian and Nativity Catholic — with a program for parents to order mostly healthy food from several

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