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## **2009 Whole Grains Challenge Winners Announced**

BOSTON, Nov. 19, 2009 – A whole grain revolution is taking place in the United States, and the Whole Grains Council is awarding medals of valor to its outstanding heroes. In its third annual Whole Grains Challenge, the non-profit organization scoured the country to find workplace cafeterias, hospitals, restaurants, hotels, and schools serving at least one whole grain option daily, then awarded extra points to those augmenting their dishes with creative educational promotions about whole grains. At the end of the month-long competition, ten foodservice winners took top honors.

"We hear a lot about what's wrong with restaurant and school food," said Cynthia Harriman, Director of Food and Nutrition Strategies for the Whole Grains Council and for Oldways, its parent organization. "We wanted to highlight what's right, by telling the stories of those who really understand how to combine nutritious with delicious. Other foodservice outlets need to follow this road, to give Americans what they want and need."

And how did this year's winners beat the competition to take the top prize in each of the ten Challenge categories? Here's what impressed the judges:

### **Catering and Lodging: Canyon Ranch**

Well known for its innovative and holistic approach to health and wellness, Canyon Ranch has long emphasized nutritional intelligence and engaged eating. Each menu option is a balanced plate of vegetables, protein, healthy fats, and of course, whole grains. Guests receive full nutrition information packets detailing Canyon Ranch's nutrition philosophy, priming them for delectable options such as red coconut curry vegetables with brown rice, oatmeal brulee, wild rice crepes, or quinoa and endive salad.

### **College and University: Roger Williams University**

In addition to making whole grains standard at every culinary station in both the Upper Commons and Baypoint Café locations, Bon Appetit Management Company keeps students at Roger Williams University well-fueled with a plethora of daily whole grain specials as well.

### **Fast Casual / Family Dining: The Pump Energy Food**

With 6 locations in New York City, this small chain bases their menu on simple, fresh ingredients and healthful preparation. Serving whole grains is a critical component of their nutrition philosophy, which means long grain brown rice, whole wheat wraps, whole wheat pastas, and home-baked whole wheat pita chips aren't just options - they're the only grain options!



**Fine Dining: Our Place Indian Cuisine**

This small restaurant transports diners with its use of traditional Indian clay ovens called *tandoors*. In addition to using fresh and natural ingredients to create a variety of delicately spiced dishes, their *roti*, *paratha*, *aloo paratha*, and *poori* breads are made from whole wheat flour and baked fresh inside clay ovens.

**Neighborhood Dining: Snooze**

With two locations in Denver, CO, Snooze focuses on local products and from-scratch recipes made fresh each and every day. With menu items ranging from the decadent to the traditional, Snooze can wake you up with whole grain pancakes, sandwiches, and more every day of the week.

**Healthcare: East Carolina Heart Institute**

Whole grains have been shown to help reduce the risk of heart disease, improve the health of carotid arteries, and help maintain healthier blood pressure levels, so it's no surprise that they appear in almost every menu option served by ECHI Café at East Carolina Heart Institute in Greenville, NC, where the foodservice is run by Aramark.

**Workplace: Cafe Target**

From the massive bowls of whole grains at the salad bar and special Target Wellness Wednesday menus, to table tents and full-page signs touting the full flavor of whole grains... Café Target at Target headquarters in Minneapolis wowed us with their entry. In addition to their Food For Your Well Being week-long healthy food promotion (featuring whole grains, in September, for Whole Grains Month), Bon Appetit's management of Café Target included a month-long whole grains theme (also in September) and October menu specials such as buckwheat pancakes, free-range turkey and barley burgers, vegetable beef soup with faro, and toasted coconut-banana-cashew brown basmati rice.

**K-12 (small schools): South Duxbury, VT**

Harwood Union High School has been making many changes in the past few years, none the least of which has been serving more whole grain options to their seventh- to twelfth-grade students. Daily offerings include local farm-fresh eggs and chicken, apples from area orchards, and homemade whole grain breads, cookies, and muffins.

**K-12 (medium schools): Muskegon, MI**

Students at the Orchard View Schools have a reason to look forward to school this year, namely the district's new - and completely free - breakfast program, featuring whole grains every day. Students and parents were educated about this new program and the importance of including whole grains at breakfast, and enjoyed an open house event where samples of whole grain products were given to all attendees. To keep their kids interested and engaged in healthy eating, Orchard View used health classes as a way to teach the importance of whole grains and health. Not only did whole grains appear on every school menu, samples of different whole grain products were also given out and students voted for their favorites.



**K-12 (large schools): New York, NY**

Serving an average of 860,000 meals per day, SchoolFood for New York City schools might have the toughest job going. Featuring whole grains is one way they stretch their budget dollars while providing healthier options for up to 15 unique menus each month. From breakfast to lunch, in snacks and on Saturdays, SchoolFood makes sure students in the City that Never Sleeps at least have the whole grain energy to keep up with the hustle and bustle.

**Runners-Up and Honorable Mentions**

Another six school entries fell just short of winning but displayed so much creativity that they deserve special recognition:

K-12 (small): Willamina School District, OR, runner-up; Amesbury Public Schools, MA, honorable mention

K-12 (medium): Weston Public Schools, CT, runner-up; De Soto Public Schools, MO, honorable mention

K-12 (large): Winston Salem / Forsyth County Schools, NC, runner-up; Shelby County Schools, AL, honorable mention

Winners will receive an attractive framed medal commemorating their success and valuable whole grain prizes generously donated by members of the Whole Grains Council. "In this season of giving thanks and being grateful, it's wonderful that our members can help provide even more whole grain options to schools, restaurants, and other foodservice operations," said Kara Berrini, Program Manager, Whole Grains Council, who organized this year's competition.

This is the third year that the Whole Grains Council has run the Whole Grains Challenge. Foodservice operations who missed this year's contest are invited to start planning now for the October 2010 competition.

Please contact Alison Clancy ([aclancy@oldwayspt.org](mailto:aclancy@oldwayspt.org) or 617-896-4888) for more information, including hi-res graphics.

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***About Oldways and The Whole Grains Council***

Oldways is a non-profit consumer advocacy group changing the way people eat through positive and practical programs grounded in science and tradition. The Whole Grains Council (WGC) is an Oldways program working to increase consumption of whole grains for better health. The WGC's many initiatives help consumers to find whole grain foods and understand their health benefits; help manufacturers and restaurants to create delicious whole grain foods; and help the media to write accurate, compelling stories about whole grains. You can learn more about both at [oldwayspt.org](http://oldwayspt.org) and at [wholegrainscouncil.org](http://wholegrainscouncil.org).

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