



# Gardiner School Serves Locally Grown Meal: Montana Bison and Lentil Chili March 2022

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Team Nutrition Program works in close collaboration with the Office of Public Instruction School Nutrition Programs and is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Team Nutrition Training Grant Program. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Gardiner School Features Montana Bison in Special Lunch, March 8, 2022

Gardiner school nutrition staff highlighted some of Montana's best with their special lunch featuring local Montana bison and lentils on March 8, 2022. The school nutrition staff also incorporated Montana grown beets into their salad bar that were pickled by Gardiner 3<sup>rd</sup> graders as part of their nutrition education lessons.

Gardiner is one of six school districts in the state working with Montana Team Nutrition to test recipes and conduct nutrition education featuring Montana grown and raised foods through a 2021 USDA Team Nutrition Grant. Montana Team Nutrition works in collaboration with Montana Harvest of the Month to showcase Montana grown foods.

Anna Holloway, Gardiner School Food Service Director, and Nicole Lumley, Assistant Cook, have participated in the Montana Harvest of the Month (HOM) program for years. They go above and beyond in their service of locally grown foods paired with nutrition education not only in the lunchroom, but also in the classroom. Each month Anna introduces a new HOM food to expose the students to foods grown in their own backyard. Her strategy is as follows: taste test in the classroom with the HOM food in a simple, plain form, prepare a small batch recipe offered on the salad bar, and then prepare a recipe featuring the HOM food to serve on the main lunch line. Because of Anna's dedication to introducing new foods to the students in this way, Gardiner students are comfortable trying new foods, are used to a variety of local flavors, and tend to





generate very little food waste as a result. Thank you to Anna Holloway, Nicole Lumley, and the rest of Gardiner school staff for working together to bring nutrition education from the classroom to the plate.

Montana Team Nutrition staff had the pleasure of joining Gardiner students for the special meal on March 8th. The cafeteria was lined with artwork made by students showcasing Harvest of the Month foods, such as the bison cutouts above and colorful drawings of cattle below. Throughout the cafeteria were smiling faces of students and staff, and Team Nutrition could feel how much effort and care went into preparing this

meal. The lunch menu included Montana Bison and Lentil Chili, homemade cinnamon rolls, a fresh salad bar with pickled Montana beets, and milk. The spread was incredible!

This Montana Team Nutrition project, funded by a 2021 USDA Team Nutrition Grant awarded to the Montana Office of Public Instruction, supported the development of six recipes for use in school meal programs using ingredients from foods produced in Montana including barley, beets, bison, sweet cherries, and lentils.

Recipes are currently available from Montana Team Nutrition through their website at <https://www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/>. The recipes will also be incorporated into the USDA Institute of Child Nutrition Recipe Box allowing schools from across the nation to experience Montana flavors, recipes, and cultures. Recipes will be accessible through their website at <https://theicn.org/cnrb/>.



Story developed by: Ali Badger, MSU Dietetic Intern, August 2022

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