

FOODSERVICE EAST PRESENTS

SECRETS OF **SUCCESS**

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An ongoing series of interviews with chefs, restaurateurs and foodservice operators, Secrets of Success looks at the paths taken to professional recognition and acclaim.



Tim Cipriano

**Director of Dining Services
Chartwells School Dining Services, Farmington Schools
By Foodservice East**

Having young children led Tim Cipriano into school foodservice rather than the hotel and restaurant career he'd planned on, because it let him spend more time with them. "When I started," he says, "it was simply for quality of life, but now, feeding kids great food and working to end childhood hunger in America is who I am."

FOODSERVICE EAST SECRETS OF SUCCESS

FSE: You've been very active in Share Our Strength and No Kid Hungry. How do you get other foodservice operators to become involved?

CIPRIANO: They should e-mail Emily Roth at Share Our Strength, eroth@strength.org to get more involved with No Kid Hungry.

FSE: What do you enjoy most about what you do?

CIPRIANO: I love the interaction with the kids, feeding kids real food and talking to them about it is what is so much fun. Hands-on learning with the kids is so important. I dislike all the red tape involved with feeding children. I understand the need for the program to be regulated but there needs to be somewhat of a balance. Feeding kids real food shouldn't be that difficult.

FSE: What is the 'secret' of your success?

CIPRIANO: My secret to success is being a great dad and when I am at work using those same skills to interact with the kids.

FSE: How did you initially come to introduce school children to locally grown food?

CIPRIANO: I was at the School Nutrition Association of CT's Summer Conference when I first started in school food and went to "Breakfast with the Farmers". That breakfast was the beginning of my start with Farm to School. I was the Café Manager for a middle school in Cheshire, CT. My then boss, Madeleine Diker, gave me the flexibility to incorporate local foods into the menus...the excitement grew and grew and then a colleague coined a moniker I still use today to describe me - Local Food Dude.

FSE: When you were in New Haven, you brought locally grown produce into the school lunch program. What was the reaction of teachers/students and how did you involve them?

CIPRIANO: We were using almost 200K pounds of CT Grown produce in our schools. The kids were excited to support local farms, especially when we menued the food from our own farm grown by the students at The Sound School.

FSE: What do you expect to be doing in the next 10 years?

CIPRIANO: My role for the future is to end childhood hunger in America and continue to be an advocate for kids in America.

FSE: What would you be if you weren't in school foodservice?

CIPRIANO: If I wasn't in school food, I would be in the restaurant business, still working hard to end childhood hunger.

FSE: Do you cook, and if so, what's in your refrigerator?

CIPRIANO: I do cook. My refrigerator is filled with local, organic produce from Waldingfield Farm in Washington, CT, my CSA. I like to cook simple, local, organic, seasonal foods in the summer. Grilled Pizzas are always a favorite.