QUEST INSIDER

NOVEMBER
2026

PEOPLE & INNOVATION

Quest Partners with Two-Time James Beard Award Winner Chef Sarah Stegner

Working closely with Quest's Vision and Innovation team, two-time James Beard Award winner Sarah Stegner is bringing original recipes, ingredients sourced from local farmers, and hands-on food education to students in Quest schools across Chicagoland.

"Food has an incredible ability to create connections between students, their communities and the people who grow and prepare what they eat," Quest CEO Nicholas Saccaro said. "Working with Sarah allows us to bring those connections to life in our cafeterias in a way that is authentic, engaging, and memorable."

Each month, select Quest-operated cafeterias will feature an original recipe highlighting seasonal ingredients and local producers, along with recipe cards students can use to recreate dishes at home.



Catch the Quest Team & Chef Sarah Stegner on FOX 32 Chicago

Click the play icon to watch!

AROUND QUEST

Students Bring Food Truck Concepts to Life

As part of a truly hands-on initiative at Barrington Community Unit School District 220, students developed original food truck brands complete with concept names, logos, and menu ideas.

Quest helped bring their vision to life, with the food trucks debuting at fall football games, giving the community a chance to experience the students' creativity firsthand. From "Puppy Tacos" to "Polish Girls Desserts," the imaginative menus showcased the entrepreneurial spirit of the students. We're grateful to our team for helping showcase these student ideas and support a unique culinary and learning experience.



Quest Turned Students' Culinary Ideas into Finished Recipes



Corporate Chef Zac Maness Hosts a Microgreens Tasting

AROUND QUEST

Students Sprout a Love for Microgreens

Quest's Vision and Innovation team visited four Illinois North Shore School District 112 schools this month to introduce students to the flavor and benefits of microgreens. Led by Corporate Chef Zac Maness, the tastings featured locally grown microgreens including cilantro, sunflower, cantaloupe, broccoli, radish, and more. Students learned about their nutritional benefits, including vitamins and minerals that support immune function, eye health, bone health, and overall wellness. A special thank you to our partners at Local Leaf Farms in Highland Park for providing the microgreens and helping us introduce students to new foods.

AROUND QUEST

Quest Internships Create Campus Impact

Quest works closely with its higher ed partners to create internship opportunities that give students real-world experience and prepare them for success in their chosen fields.

Through these partnerships, students work alongside Quest teams and gain skills they can bring into their future careers.

Maleah Hill, a student at Quest partner school Eureka College, spent summer 2026 interning with Quest's marketing department and is now putting those skills into practice back at school.

This fall, Meleah helped transform an area in the college's Commons Cafe into a Vendor Wall showcasing the local businesses that supply the campus dining program, bringing her marketing experience to life on campus.



Maleah Hill Debuts Vendor Wall at Eureka College



UMSL's Triton Grounds Cafe Features Kaldi's Coffee, A Local Roaster

NEW OPENING

Quest and UMSL Highlight Local Partnerships Across Campus Dining

Quest has partnered with the University of Missouri–St. Louis to highlight local partnerships across campus dining. Students can enjoy locally roasted Kaldi's Coffee at Triton Grounds, along with products from St. Louis-area vendors Prairie Farms, Bakers Pride, and Drunken Fish.

"The University really wanted us to explore local partnerships and make certain that the spirit of the St. Louis community was represented in our dining options," Quest's Resident District Manager Amy Dugan said. "That was the forefront of our plan."

The expanded program also features six new made-to-order stations at The Nosh, offering everything from scratch-made comfort food to global entrees, along with boba tea at The Catalyst Cafe. Quest and UMSL will continue to build local partnerships and incorporate student feedback.

Click here to read the full story in St. Louis Magazine.



Niles Mobile Breakfast Carts

AROUND QUEST

Breakfast Carts Expand Universal Breakfast Access

Quest is expanding universal breakfast access with free, convenient options for students. This fall, Quest launched mobile breakfast carts at Niles North and West high schools in Illinois, featuring fresh fruit, yogurt, beverages, and grab-and-go items. From August through October, breakfast participation increased 31.9% at Niles North and 22.5% at Niles West compared to the same period last year. The increase reflects growing student participation in the district's Universal Breakfast Program.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Quest CEO Nicholas Saccaro Joins *Blessings in a Backpack* Board

Quest CEO Nicholas Saccaro has joined the Board of Directors of Blessings in a Backpack, a nonprofit fighting childhood hunger by providing weekend meals to children. Drawing on his experience launching weekend backpack programs at two food banks while working with Feeding America, Saccaro hopes to expand the organization's reach through fundraising and stronger community partnerships.

"I would like us to figure out how to help as many children as possible," Saccaro said. "I think about them being able to be kids, have fun, and experience joy without those kinds of burdens and responsibilities on their shoulders." Quest leaders recently packed 1,020 weekend meal bags to support local families. Saccaro hopes to build on that effort by creating more opportunities for Quest schools and students to get involved.

1,020 BACKPACKS
PACKED AT THE 2026 SUMMER MANAGERS MEETING

BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK





QUEST CHEF RECIPE

Tembleque (Coconut Pudding)

Enjoy Quest Chef Nick Correa's Puerto Rican coconut pudding this holiday season! Made with fresh coconut milk, orange blossom water, and a dusting of cinnamon, this creamy chilled dessert is a festive favorite.



Ingredients

1 fresh coconut
3 ½ cups hot water
¾ cup cornstarch
¾ cup sugar
A pinch of salt
1 tsp orange blossom water
Ground cinnamon, for garnish

Make the Coconut Milk

Use a clean icepick (or screwdriver) and hammer to pierce the coconut's three eyes. Strain the coconut water into a blender. Wrap the coconut in a kitchen towel and crack it open with a hammer or the dull side of a cleaver. Remove the meat, peel off any brown skin, rinse, and chop. Blend 2 cups of coconut meat with 3 ½ cups of hot water until smooth. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve, pressing the solids to extract the milk. For extra milk, squeeze the solids through a cheesecloth.

Prepare the Pudding

In a saucepan, whisk together the cornstarch, sugar, and salt. Stir the coconut milk if separated, then whisk in 4 cups of coconut milk and the orange blossom water until smooth.

Cook over medium-high heat, whisking constantly. Once thickened, reduce the heat to medium-low and stir until gentle bubbles appear. Remove from the heat and quickly pour into 10 dry ramekins (about a scant ½ cup each).

Chill and Serve

Cool for 30 minutes, then cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours until chilled and set. Serve in ramekins or run a knife around the edges to unmold onto plates. Dust generously with cinnamon before serving.

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