

## **A Cafeteria without Children: Delicious Expectations Even During a Pandemic**

Much has happened since the 50th anniversary celebration of the German School Washington in 2011:

We've become an international school (which has also been reflected in my recipes); the school kitchen has increased its range of dishes and drinks, and introduced vegetarian options. And the number of meals has also increased significantly: At peak times, it can be more than 450 meals per day, which is quite a challenge given the size of the kitchen.

Many stories can be told about the last decade, but really no one was prepared for the "story" of a pandemic.

Suddenly our school had to be closed!

And so, during the lockdown, there were online cooking classes and regular postings of favorite recipes from the school kitchen, which many sorely missed. The many, kind emails I received from parents and students during this time were comforting proof of this.

After the summer vacation of 2020, we were at least allowed to cook for the kindergarteners again and each meal was--and still is--individually packaged and delivered fresh to the kindergarten.

Then, from late fall 2020 through spring 2021, more and more SuS in various hybrid models slowly started coming back to campus to be served meals. But where



*Sandwich options in the GISW kitchen.*

were the SuS going to eat? Under corona conditions, they could no longer do so in the cafeteria. And so the concept of packing a lunch bag for each SuS was developed.

With much love and care, lunch bags were packed with hot and cold sandwich options, including burritos, schnitzel rolls, and butter sandwiches with German cold cuts--to name just a few examples--as well as a piece of fruit or a dessert, a snack, and a drink, and then delivered to the classrooms: A full meal in a bag, in keeping with our motto: "Learning to eat is on the curriculum."

After the Easter break, when all students were allowed back on campus, the number of bags increased from 40-50 bags per week

to over 160. Currently, we are distributing 220 lunch bags to students; given the equipment and the size of our kitchen, we are already reaching the limits of what is possible. And it is much nicer to cook for children who are eating in the cafeteria and fill the room with life again. And so I can't

wait to see "my kids" again and spoil them with the world's best pasta bolognese.

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(DSW /GISW: 1999-present)



*Busy at work in the GISW kitchen preparing individual meals-to-go .*