

**The Road to the White House  
Or  
How a Math Lesson Turned Into a State Dinner Invitation  
By Noris Frades**

**How this whole adventure started!!!!**

**The students were complaining about the new “healthier” lunch in the cafeteria. We started to discuss why these changes were made. I realized that the children were not truly aware of what healthy foods were and why they were important. I have always been of the philosophy (it must be my Conchita upbringing) that we don’t complain, we find solutions. So that is where I came up with the idea of doing a math and nutrition unit.**

**The students had to work collaboratively in teams in order to come up with their month of healthy school lunches. They learned about portion size, how to read food labels, and how to calculate nutritional information. They kept food diaries and realized how much or even, how little they were eating. The students also had to make the lunches cost effective. They had to come up with a presentation of their month of healthy lunches. The students discovered how much math actually goes into everything around us!**

**I wanted the students to be able to use a secure website to look up all of the vital information they would need to complete their tasks. All of this was done in class using the Mac laptops. (Thanks, Mrs. Hastings!) This is where I came across [choosemyplate.org](http://choosemyplate.org). This helped the students look up information on certain foods, played games to teach them about healthy food, and gave them information on healthy daily servings. It is very “kid-friendly.” I signed up to receive their monthly newsletters for future lessons.**

**In April I received their newsletter announcing the White House Healthy Lunchtime Challenge. I decided this would be the culminating activity for this unit. All of the students would have to submit a recipe as part of their grades. They had to come up with the recipe, make sure it followed the [choosemyplate.org](http://choosemyplate.org) guidelines, and actually cook it with their parents because to enter the contest you had to also submit a picture of your meal. Once they were all complete and submitted, they also had to give me a copy of the recipe with the picture attached. We turned all of these recipes into a Mother’s Day cookbook. Then we received the wonderful news that both Nicole Medina and Barbara Silva were the finalists for the state of Florida!! I knew our odds were good to win! Nicole Medina went to the White House for a state dinner and met President and Mrs. Obama.**

**I was very pleased with all of their hard work. It was so much fun for them and for me as well. It was also important for them to realize that math is in our everyday lives.**