

# Canteen insights with Ocean Reef Senior High School Canteen

**Master of Nutrition and Dietetics students, Teliesha and Zayd, had the opportunity to volunteer at Ocean Reef Senior High School, gaining valuable insight into the day-to-day operations of a school canteen.**

Working alongside canteen manager Chelsie and her team, they gained hands-on experience in food preparation, serving students, and understanding the systems that keep a school canteen running smoothly. This practical experience provided a deeper appreciation of the diverse roles and responsibilities within a canteen environment. The learnings from their placement have contributed to the development of [the freshSNAP Canteen Toolkit](#), and Teliesha and Zayd have shared their personal reflections below.

## Teliesha's Reflection

Returning to my old high school was a surreal yet eye-opening experience that allowed me to see the canteen from a completely new perspective. As a student, I had only ever known the canteen from the other side of the counter, unaware of the hard work and dedication that goes into sourcing ingredients, preparing meals, serving students, and everything in between.

It quickly became clear that Chelsie's background as a chef plays a key role in the canteen's smooth and efficient operation. For Zayd and me, without prior experience in this environment, the role was both challenging and physically demanding, requiring adaptability and quick thinking. The fast-paced nature of the canteen made the hours fly by and left me with a newfound appreciation for the incredible efforts of canteen staff.



One key takeaway for me was that, despite the physical demands of preparing and serving meals, everyone in the team shared the same purpose – ensuring all students have access to nutritious food.

The staff were also deeply connected to the school community, reinforcing my belief that the canteen truly is the heart of the school.

Canteen staff really are superheroes!

## Zayd's Reflection

Through this experience, I learned that running a school canteen is no small job – it's every bit as demanding as any commercial kitchen. The early starts, the preparation, and the rush before recess and lunch made me realise just how much work goes into keeping things running smoothly.

Chelsie made it all look effortless, crediting her background as a professional chef for the canteen's smooth day-to-day operations.

However, it was clear how challenging this role could be without that level of experience, highlighting the importance of seeking support when needed.

You're not just serving food! You're sourcing affordable suppliers, managing tight budgets, keeping students satisfied, and navigating school policies and procedures. It's a huge task that requires real dedication, organisation, and passion to deliver healthy, appealing meals every day.



**Thank you to Chelsie and the staff at Ocean Reef Senior High School for all your insight into your school canteen!**

**Don't forget, freshSNAP is here to support you!**

### freshSNAP Canteen Toolkit

Check out the [Canteen Toolkit](#) with all the tips and trick to running a school canteen.

Contact freshSNAP for more details!

### freshSNAP resources top pick

[A Canteen Managers Guide to the Healthy Food and Drink Policy](#)

[Tips for a Healthy and Profitable School Canteen](#)

E-Learning modules for [FREE online training](#)

