



By ALIX BOYLE – Hartford Courant 7/29/10

Need Help With Dinner? Niche Companies Offer Meal Plans, Meal Prep, Shopping Lists, Recipes, Nutrition Advice

We're all busy. Who isn't busy? Even people who have buckets of free time sometimes would rather do almost anything than think of what to make for dinner.

That's when services like We Got the List, Nourishing Habits and Dream Dinners are a huge help.

Like many ideas, We Got the List was born of necessity. Teacher Stephanie Brucher of Madison took a long-term substitute position and was thrust back into a full-time work schedule while still keeping most of the cooking and shopping duties for her family. She felt stressed each day when she came home from work and tried to cook dinner and drive her three children to their after-school activities.

"When I went back to work, I didn't have the bandwidth to think about dinner, too," she said. "I was also spending a lot of money at the grocery store and nothing I bought was ever on sale. I joined an Internet menu service, but I never cooked one thing. The recipes were too complicated."

Wouldn't it be great to have a quick and easy meal plan and shopping list for the week? Brucher enlisted two friends with culinary backgrounds, Cheryl Hannan and Tina Newman, both from Madison, to help her create an Internet meal-planning service based on sale items at the local Stop & Shop.

We Got the List went live in April. For \$10 a month, subscribers receive menus for simple, crowd-pleasing meals and corresponding recipes and a shopping list. The idea is to feed a family of four for a whole week for \$150 or less by taking advantage of store specials.

One grade-schooler favorite is sliders, basically mini-cheeseburgers that can be thrown together in 30 minutes. (see recipe below). If necessary, a child could eat this meal out of a piece of aluminum foil in the car on the way to gymnastics or lacrosse.

Fancier meals include lemon-herb marinated grilled chicken New Orleans-style, yellow rice with sautéed onions and red peppers and diced watermelon for dessert. Cooks in a hurry can substitute a

prepared rotisserie chicken. There are vegetarian options, fast meals and crock-pot meals.

Currently, We Got the List is set up to serve clients from Maine to Virginia who shop at Stop & Shop or Giant supermarkets. "It saves time and money and eliminates stress and decision-making. The recipes are simple. If I can make it, anyone can," says Brucher. Find it at <http://www.wegotthelist.com>.

Below is a sample of one of the favorite kid friendly recipes from "We Got the List"
(Courtesy of We Got the List).

Regina's Oven-Baked Cheeseburger Sliders

2 pounds ground beef

McCormick hamburger seasoning

1/4 lb. American cheese slices

Miniature potato rolls

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place ground beef on cookie sheet and press to 1-inch thickness to form rectangular shape in center of pan, leaving a 2-inch border; sprinkle with hamburger seasoning and cook for approximately 15 minutes. Pour off liquid; top with cheese and bake until melts.

Slice into 12 equal squares. Serve on miniature potato rolls.