

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



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Building Blocks to Success

by Sandy Valeri
President, SNA of Mass.



Greetings! I am excited to write my first letter as president of SNA of Mass. 06-07. Last year was a productive and exciting year. We continued to revise bylaws, resurrected the state scholarship programs, focused on leadership development while providing professional education for school foodservice professionals in the state. I am confident the upcoming year will continue in this direction and I am honored to be able to work with an enthusiastic, dedicated and talented board of directors.

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Ann Pitzen, Auburn-Leicester Director, chair of the revised education committee. This committee will work with our professional development committee, the Dept. of Education, the John Stalker Institute and our delegates and delegates-elect to develop fundamental educational training for managers, cooks, bakers, and assistants.

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My theme this year is "Building Blocks to Success" and I will continue to build on the strong foundation that we were able to put in place last year and continue this positive metamorphosis. Sincere thanks to our past presidents and boards for their contribution of time and expertise for it is upon their work that we continue to build effective communication, volunteer opportunities, leadership development and quality membership services. With so many important topics facing our profession today including childhood obesity, wellness policies and HACCP, it is even more critical that our association continues to provide quality education, develop mentoring programs and networking opportunities, and quality conferences.

National School Lunch Week (NSLW) is the week of October 9, and a great opportunity to show students, faculty, administrators, parents and the entire community what a wonderful job you do serving children every school day. I am excited about the national SNA campaign - Vote for School Lunch. Students will vote for their favorite school lunch; Rocco Taco, Sally Salad, Pete Pizza, Ricky Chicken, and Heddi Spaghetti. We are combining NSLW with "Take a Legislator to Lunch Week". Invite your local representatives to school lunch and promote your schools' programs and success while getting some positive media coverage.

Our fall conference is October 17-18 and we've moved to central Massachusetts. Join us at the Best Western Royal Plaza and Trade Center in Fitchburg. And save the date for our Spring 07 conference, March 13-14 at the Holiday Inn, Boxborough Woods. We are bringing back by popular demand Fred Schafer the fit food dude, as the keynote speaker. We have lots of fun entertainment planned including casino tables, a DJ, and more. For more information on these and other events visit our website www.schoolnutrition.info.

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Legislative Action Committee

by Debra Korzec-Ramirez

This is the second of a series that focuses on SNA of Mass. committees.

We like to refer to ourselves as the Legislative **Action** Committee because we are always on the go! Our committee provides members with information concerning the legislative process, its impact on child nutrition programs, and helps develop proactive initiatives for our members to affect the legislative process. *Translation:* We communicate school nutrition issues and concerns to you and to our state and federal representatives/senators to promote appropriate and effective legislation for school nutrition programs.

You may have seen one of our many email blasts strongly requesting that you contact your state representative about a certain issue. Did you know that it takes only 5 emails or faxes/calls from different people about a subject to get the attention of that legislator? This means that your call or fax can really make a difference. So when one of these blasts comes your way, please pay attention to it and know that your call is important.

Let me introduce you to our committee:

Debra Korzec-Ramirez,

Chair: Nutrition Education Coordinator, Boston
Gail Koutroubas

Assistant Chair, Director, Andover

Doreen Iovanna

Ed. Specialist: DOE, Nutrition, Health and Safety

Anne Marie Stronach

Director, Lawrence

John Overcash

Director, Littleton

Judy White

Director, Wrentham/Plainville

Our most exciting time of year is of course, The Legislative Action Conference, which occurs in March. When 700 members from across the country 'storm the hill' for one day to rally our cause with the House and the Senate, you really feel the impact! They know we are serious and passionate about our children. Last year, 15

members represented Massachusetts. This year we are hoping for more. It's invigorating and action packed. Please read about our trip last year on the SNA of Mass. web site; www.schoolnutrition.info.

This committee is dedicated and hard working, **but we need more members!** If you think the legislative process may be an area for you, please give us a call. You don't need to volunteer for the whole year, perhaps for just one event. Debra Korzec-Ramirez: 617/635-9303 or dkorzec@boston.k12.ma.us

Mark Your Calendars

55th Annual Fall Conference & Food Show

October 17-18, 2007

Best Western Royal Plaza Trade Center

Fitchburg, MA

Spring 2007 Conference

Commodity Connection

Healthy Happenings

March 13-14, 2007

Holiday Inn

Boxborough, MA

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My goal for this year is to help our members meet the challenges in this time of transformation for the school food service industry and to adapt innovative ideas as a positive response to the new trends and stricter regulations facing our profession with enthusiasm.

I believe that our most important possessions are our students and our priority has always been our students' safety, healthful meals and nutrition education available to all children. We as professionals must always continue our mission to nurture and cultivate our nation's future, our children.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm".

Farm Fresh and Fabulous

by Lynn Petrowski

Squash, parsnips, peppers, and turnip. Are any of these vegetables featured on your school menus? Unless you are part of a growing trend to purchase locally grown produce, these vegetables may not come to mind as menus are developed.

For many years now we have seen restaurants feature seasonal produce on menus highlighting the best our region has to offer. As the concept gained popularity in restaurants colleges and now schools have begun to utilize locally grown foods on a regular basis. Farm to School programs are popping up all over the United States.

Here in the State of Massachusetts approximately forty (40) school districts are participating in farm to school projects. This number translates to a little more than ten percent of the three hundred and fifty districts across the commonwealth. With the help of organizations such as the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources the number of districts should continue to grow.

The goal of a farm to school program is to improve the nutritional value and taste of school meals while supporting the local economy. School food service departments do face obstacles in establishing a successful farm to school program but the results are well worth the effort. The most common products being purchased by schools are apples, blueberries, and nectarines, corn on the cob, tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, carrots, zucchini, spinach, parsnips, and more!

When beginning your search for a local partner you must first consider the needs of your district. Do you have a sufficient number of staff members and the necessary equipment to prepare your product? When adding something new to your menu you want to ensure that it is well prepared, that it tastes good and looks good. Remember that your efforts will be for naught if the students don't eat it. Promote your efforts throughout the district; provide the students with health and nutritional education opportunities that will last a lifetime. Incorporate farm to school purchasing into your district wellness plan.

There are currently ninety-six farmers markets being held throughout Massachusetts. In getting started you may want to visit these markets to investigate any interest on the local level. Again, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources assists districts by providing educational materials and lists of farmers in your area who are interested in school customers. The national farm to school web site may be accessed at:

www.farmtoschool.org. Several districts have also had success partnering with Lanni Orchards in Lunenburg, and Acme Pre-Pack in Worcester. SEMAP-Southeastern Mass. Agricultural Partnership provides a comprehensive listing of business-to-business partners in the southeast and cape cod areas based on available products.

So what are you waiting for? Get started with a farm to school project and support not only your local growers but also the mission of the School Nutrition Association-making the right food choices together.

55th Annual Fall Conference

If you haven't registered for the Fall Conference, October 17-18, go to our website and register now. This year we have moved to central Massachusetts to be more accessible to our members.

The conference program is posted on our website and this year's program has something for everyone. In addition to the timely education sessions, there is a field trip to Lanni Orchards, a fun filled evening of entertainment Tuesday night, and a bigger and better food show. This year the food show theme is the Price is Right and the vendors are determined to make the price right. Come prepared to buy.

Join us in Fitchburg whether your goal is to get your batteries recharged with our keynote speaker Bobbie Staten, browse the information on display in the resource room, network with your peers, get or give some helpful hints at our roundtable discussions, or see what new products are available. All this and more will be at the 55th Annual Fall Conference!

The Unspoken Value of Volunteering

by Sheila Parisien, Past President and Nominating Chair

The definition of **volunteerism** according to Webster is the act of doing **volunteer** work in community service. The definition of volunteer is a person who **voluntarily** undertakes or expresses a willingness to undertake a service. **Voluntary** is defined as proceeding from the will or one's own choice or consent. Volunteerism ... volunteers voluntarily volunteering to provide **Value** to both sides.

SNA of Mass regularly attempts to court you into volunteering in some capacity and I believe that every member should investigate and consider our opportunities. We have spelled out some of the wonderful benefits of volunteering such as tapping into your talents, meeting new friends and contacts, doing rewarding work, building self confidence and becoming involved with a wonderful organization that helps kid grow up healthy.

What I want to focus on here is the unspoken value of volunteering. The benefit that we all experience no matter what we volunteer for, but for some mysterious unknown reason, none of us dare to express. The truth is that the most common reason for volunteering and the greatest benefit we all receive from it is the unbelievable personal high we experience from volunteering! It's a wonderfully euphoric feeling of accomplishment and pride in our strengths and abilities. It's a way to personally shine without actually showing off. There it's been said. Volunteering in any organization at any capacity makes you feel really good about yourself as a human being. It's true, you are providing a great service and we all do want to give back to society and our profession, but that feeling you get deep inside just can't be matched. Now can any of you disagree with me? We all know it's true and there is absolutely nothing wrong with admitting it; it's a wonderful feeling and should be acknowledged and shared. Who doesn't need their ego boosted on occasion? Who doesn't have a need to feel wanted, appreciated and respected at times? In this business, we are all multi talented, not necessarily by choice but rather because of our very complex job descriptions.

During the past two years many of us at SNA of Mass. have had the opportunity to experience the "ego boosting" effects of volunteering by working to build a solid foundation for the association as the profession continues to grow and face new challenges. We have developed clear job descriptions for board members, developed a structure for each committee, and continue to work to identify clear and precise goals for the association.

One of my goals as this year's past president and chair of the nominating committee is to reach out to our members, each of you, and discuss what you can do with and for SNA of Mass. and to help you realize what SNA of Mass. can do for you. Volunteering is a two way street. In addition to the personal high, we are determined to make sure every volunteer's experience meets their personal needs. Some of you may wish to contribute by helping out on site at conferences. Others may prefer to work from their office. Perhaps you would like to be a buddy to a new member and work one on one with another member. Some of you may wish to be more involved on the board and perhaps consider moving on to a volunteer position with SNA national. Others may wish to help out at the local chapter level. There are many opportunities and I encourage you to join Susan Sacks, Executive Director and myself at the roundtable on SNA of Mass. during the fall conference to learn more.

Some of you have talents or interest beyond the job that you may be able to showcase and be acknowledged for through the association. My recommendation is that you each consider volunteering your time in the area that you are best at, want to show off in or that you have the most interest in. Check out Volunteer Opportunities on our website www.schoolnutrition.info, give us a call, or some talk with us at the Fall conference. You are all welcomed!

Invite Your Legislator to Lunch

by Doreen Iovana

DOE Dept. of School Nutrition, Health, and Safety, Legislative Action Committee

It's that time of year again – The **“Invite your Legislator to Lunch Day”**. During National School Lunch week, October 9–13, invite your local legislator to lunch. What better way to show our local lawmakers how important our school lunch programs are to our children.

Did you ever send an invitation to your representative before? Well, it doesn't take as much effort as you think. To locate them is the first step: Go to www.mass.gov then; Find *State Government*, Click on *Legislative*. There you can locate your local state representative for your district. That's the easy part.

The hardest part is taking the time to actually do it. It's very busy at the onset of school and time can easily slip away. It doesn't matter how you extend the invitation, but the fact that you do is what's important. Here's an idea. Maybe you can select a class of children to write an invitation for lunch to your local legislative representative. Let them see first hand that our nutrition programs are the building blocks to learning effectively.

So invite someone over to your “house” for lunch. You'd be surprised at what could happen!!!!

Members are an Association's Best Friend

by Susan Murray, Membership Chair

The Fall membership drive celebrates the Diamond Anniversary of SNA. Established in 1946, SNA is the only association devoted exclusively to protecting and enhancing children's health and well-being by providing healthy, high-quality, low-cost school meals and sound nutrition education. The future of child nutrition programs is dependent on a strong national association that represents the largest possible number of foodservice personnel, school districts and schools.

The SNA Fall membership drive is an excellent opportunity for you to promote and strengthen child nutrition programs. The success of this campaign depends on your participation. If everyone recruits one member we will double our membership. Strengthen Child Nutrition by Participating in the SNA 2006–2007 Membership Campaign.

SNA National is proud to offer the following services to its members:

Child Nutrition U

Training Needs

Keys to Excellence

Interactive Wellness System

Benefits of SNA Membership

- Information and Knowledge
- Education and Training
- Networking Opportunities
- Advocacy
- Grants and Scholarships
- Research
- Public Awareness
- Collaborative Partnerships
- Discounts on SNA Emporium products

Vote for School Lunch

The nominees are Rocco Taco, Sally Salad, Pete Pizza, Rickey Chicken, and Heddy Spaghetti – and the winner is?

SNA National will tabulate the votes and announce the winner the week of October 9 – National School Lunch Week.

If you were too late to join in the campaign, consider a follow up – feature the winning lunch. Think about scheduling a Vote for School Lunch week and feature each candidate each day and end with the winner.

See SNA national's website www.schoolnutrition.org for more ideas on how to capitalize on this fabulous national campaign.

Did You Know?

- ❑ We have a members-only section on our website. Log in on the home page www.schoolnutrition.info with your name and SNA membership number. An updated member directory is posted along with association documents, school food service resources and references to help you with your work.
- ❑ The Koutoujian Bill will not make it to the House floor for debate until at least January 2007. Check out the Legislative Update on our website for more details.
- ❑ The Whole Grains Council has assembled a list of whole grain options at www.wholegrainscouncil.org
- ❑ This year the fall conference auction will be bigger and better – come prepared to shop at the live, silent and blind auctions. Items will be on display on the tradeshow floor Tuesday, October 17.
- ❑ National School Lunch Week 2006 is the week of October 9th.
- ❑ SNA of Mass. And MASBO (Mass. Association of School Business Officials) are developing an education program for both school food service directors and their business managers. Keep an eye out for more details on this exciting program.
- ❑ We offer a variety of scholarships (applications due 4/1/07) along with SNA national. Check out the scholarships and awards page on our website. Click on the link to national to learn more about their programs.



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Register for the 55th Annual Fall
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