

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



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President's Message

By Joanne Morrissey, SNS

The 26th annual Massachusetts School Food Service Association conference was my very first conference. Having just finished at U Mass Amherst with a degree in Home Economics, I took a summer job at the Department of Education, Bureau of Nutrition as a field reviewer for the Summer Food Service Program for Children. I was offered a teaching position for the fall but my plans changed when the Bureau Director, John Stalker called me into his office and said "you should stay here". He convinced me that School Food Service was a growing and exciting field with great opportunities. I didn't know at the time that John Stalker had been a key player in the drafting and passage of the National School Lunch Act which established the first federal Child Nutrition Program; I would be working for a legend!

That year, the conference was held in Boston at the Park Plaza Hotel and ran from Wednesday through Saturday. Four days of exhibits, educational sessions, culinary demonstrations, lots of "hospitality suite" sharing sessions and a formal gala banquet. Yes, formal. The school lunch ladies wore gowns and had a ball! (Men attended as well but they were mostly exhibitors, were much fewer in number and didn't wear gowns.) Over 500 people attended the conference. Bureau of Nutrition staff we were encouraged to become members of the Association, attend the conference and become involved.



That year and the next few years, I helped with exhibitor registrations. I've had other association roles since, Legislative Chair, Delegate Elect/Delegate and Treasurer. I wasn't planning to run for President, but again, a very persuasive person intervened and "suggested" I should. When I gave it some thought, I realized that I had personally known and/or worked with so many of our past presidents. It is pretty awesome to follow in the footsteps of so many wonderful and dedicated people who have served our Association and from whom I have learned so much.

From the beginning, the foundation of our association has been sharing ideas, expertise and friendship. We didn't have the benefit of college degree or certificate programs that are available now through Framingham State College and the John Stalker Institute for people working in the school nutrition field. The annual conference, the spring meeting, area meetings and other training opportunities that were held throughout the year were collaborations between DOE and MSFSA and were the place to learn the business of school lunch. (Try saying MSFSA three times fast—I'm glad we are now SNA!!)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message	1
Education Committee	2
Mark Your Calendars	2
Harvest for Students Week	3
SNA of Mass. 2007-2008	4
Fall Conference Evolves	5
Did You Know?	6

Continued on page 5

Education Committee

by Ann Pitzen, Chair

Fifth of a series focusing on SNA of Mass. committees.

Now that the hectic opening days are done, we can all settle down to the day to day madness that is the life of school nutrition. Last year, our Past President, Sandy Valeri established an ad hoc committee, the Education Committee. We did not achieve some of the goals that the committee had envisioned for last year. This year we begin a new year with hopes that we can further develop those goals and with a fresh look at what an Education Committee might provide for SNA of Massachusetts.

It comes as no surprise to any one who has worked in school nutrition for a few years that we have received mandates that necessitate change. Changes need to be made in an educated environment and we all need the tools and resources to address the changes. One of our goals is to begin a database of resources and a list of people that can be accessed by our members to provide educational sessions and information. I would encourage anyone who has used materials or people who have established trainings, to share with the group and contact SNA or me to be a part of a developing resource.

Another area the Education Committee would like to address is to establish competency areas for School Nutrition Managers, Cooks, and Assistants. It would then follow that educational trainings would be essential to develop these areas. In our committee, we discussed the need to repeat trainings for staff. One challenge that we are all experiencing is the fact that staff changes far more frequently now than they did in the past and many of our new employees come to us with little or no experience. There is also the factor that limited financial resources often necessitate that trainings be to the point and concise. All these things combine to make education so important to us all.

I have had the opportunity to be part of the Education Committee for our national organization, SNA. The same issues we face in Massachusetts are those that are discussed on a national basis. We will try to draw on some of the programs that have been developed by SNA and NSFMI to enhance the work of our committee. It is our hope that we can provide a good beginning to establish educational resources for our members.

Our first committee meeting at the Annual Installation of Officers on August 22nd was a good working start and we have set some guidelines and initiatives that we will continue to work on this coming year. Just like the Marines and Army, we are still looking for a few more good people, but unlike them, we can not offer you a signing bonus. We can offer some great interaction and some fun in learning, so to speak. **Please call or email if you would like to become involved in shaping the tasks that this committee will undertake this year.** Call Ann Pitzen, Education Chair at 508-832-7755 or email apitzen@auburn.mec.edu.

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire! – William Butler Yeats

Here's to a year of fire starting!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

SNA of Mass. 56th Annual Fall Conference
and Food Show
October 17-18, 2007
Best Western Royal Plaza and Trade Center
Marlborough, MA

SNA of Mass. Mentoring Workshop
November 2007
time and place to be determined

SNA Legislative Action Conference LAC
March 2-5, 2008
JW Marriott
Washington DC

SNA of Mass. Spring Conference 2008
Commodity Connection
March 11-12, 2008
The Cranwell Resort, Lenox, MA

SNA Annual National Conference (ANC)
July 20-23, 2008
Philadelphia, PA

MASSACHUSETTS HARVEST FOR STUDENTS WEEK WAS GREAT!

by Kelly Erwin, Massachusetts Farm to School Project

Congratulations to the more than one hundred school food service operations in the Commonwealth which celebrated the first statewide **Massachusetts Harvest for Students Week (September 24 – 30)** by purchasing and serving locally grown foods. Hope you had fun at one of the special luncheons created for school food service directors during the Week, or with community members you invited to share the harvest in your cafeteria. Did you get a copy of [Fresh from the Farm](#), Amy Cotler's new local foods cookbook created for and with school food service workers and approved by the Mass. Dept. of Education?

During Harvest Week some cafeteria managers tried recipes from the new cookbook, while others just put fresh local fruits and vegetables on the menu every day. But don't stop now – juicy apples, crisp carrots, bright green broccoli and peeled butternut squash are only some of the items likely to be in season.

DID YOU KNOW...

- Adding the fresh taste and color of local foods in season to school meals appears to encourage healthier student eating habits.
- Some Mass. schools report their meal participation rates went up when they began to regularly serve locally grown fruits and vegetables.
- Most Massachusetts school districts and colleges buying fresh fruits and vegetables directly from Mass. farmers report the costs are the same or lower than the costs of produce from conventional distributors.
- Most Massachusetts farms that sell to schools already have the liability insurance that a school system requires.
- Municipal or state procurement guidelines are not usually an impediment to purchasing local products directly from a Massachusetts farm.

Would you like some assistance in launching or improving your local foods program? The Mass. Farm to School Project, a non-profit grassroots group, is happy to help schools look for farms which can deliver products right to the cafeteria kitchen. The Project also has many promotional items available online for downloading and would love to post information about your experiences and successes.

Contact the Mass. Farm to School Project for more information, 413-253-3844 or kelerwin@localnet.com. Check out our websites www.massfarmtoschool.org and www.mass.gov/agr/markets/Farm_to_school/.

SNA of Mass. 2007–2008

By Susan Sacks, Executive Director

Welcome back! As you settle down to begin a new year, take a moment to see what's going on at SNA of Mass. There is truly something for everyone. Whether you have been in the profession for years and wish to give back through our mentor program or perhaps serving on the board, or if you are just starting out in school food services and would like to become a protégé or perhaps serve on one of our committees, know that you are welcome. Please take some time to review our resources including the website www.schoolnutrition.info, attending your local chapter meetings, coming to the state conferences and food shows, and hooking up with National at www.schoolnutrition.org. If you have any questions, feel free to contact any of the board members. Their contact information is posted on the website, or contact the SNA of Mass. office 617-734-8822 or info@schoolnutrition.info.

Mentor Program

SNA of Mass. is pleased to announce that the Mentor Program is now available as a member benefit. This program has been created to lend support, guidance and networking opportunities to new and experienced food service professionals. Our goal is to match up mentors with their protégés at the Fall Conference (October 16–17) and provide guidance and training at a workshop in November. We will provide training and networking opportunities for those members who wish to serve as a mentor and for those members new to the profession, protégés, with an opportunity to work with each other in this ever changing field.

If you are a new Foodservice Director, a mentor can help you learn more about your new position and help you jump the hurdles! Learning curves are natural occurrences of any new job. We're here to help you achieve your goals, and share successful strategies. If you need help tackling an unfamiliar problem, a mentor can give you ideas and information to help you find a solution. If you'd like to expand your current skills, a mentor can direct you to information and resources to help you improve and expand those skills. For those of you that have been in the school food service profession, this is a great opportunity for you to give back.

Simply complete the application (available on our website at www.schoolnutrition.info under professional development) and tell us more about you and your school district. We will match you up with a food service director in your area.

Scholarship Opportunities

SNA of Mass. provides three \$500 scholarships for members continuing professional development and up to \$1000 worth of scholarships (\$250 per person) toward additional education in school food service. Applications are due April 15. Visit our website for more information and applications.

We will be awarding five \$500 scholarships to members who wish to attend the Legislative Action Conference in Washington, March 2–5, 2008. Stay tuned for more information on how to apply.

Spring 08 at The Cranwell

The SNA of Mass. Spring 08 conference will be held at the Cranwell Resort in Lenox, MA. March 11–12. Conference attendees will receive a 20% discount on spa services, so be sure to plan for that in advance. The resort will honor the SNA room rate for 3 days before and after our conference in case you want to schedule some extra time away. Stay tuned for more information on this conference program that will include the annual commodity show.

Member Only Page

Be sure to check out our website www.schoolnutrition.info as new information is continuously being posted. Don't forget our member-only page that includes such resources as the member directory, handouts from previous conferences, association bylaws and other important resources. You will need to use your last name and your member number to log on initially and then you can create your own user name and password.

Board Members

We are looking for candidates for the 08–09 year for delegates–elect, one for each chapter, and for the positions of treasurer and vice president. Board members receive leadership training, an opportunity to help guide the association and the profession, as well as personal and professional development and growth. The board meets 4x/year (two of the meetings are combined with the state conferences). Please contact Sandy Valeri, nominating chair at 978-534-7706 or email svaleri@leominster.mec.edu or any of the other board members to investigate this exciting opportunity.

Fall 07 Conference Continues to Evolve!

SNA of Mass. is committed to educating, supporting and inspiring school nutrition and food service professionals. Our conference programs are designed to help you grow both personally and professionally and this fall our theme is evolution. Not only does the field of school nutrition continue to evolve, but we all need to continue to evolve as both professionals and as individuals. Sign up today and take advantage of the following sessions:

- Critical Success Factors of Effective Leadership
- Act Like the Person You Really Want to Be
- Mass. Food Cookbook Demo
- Time Management Training
- 50 Ways to Love your Computer
- Serving Healthy Choices to Kids: Have your Thought of This?
- MyPyramid in Perspective
- Mental Toughness
- Super Foods
- DOE Update
- And more!

Join our vendors as they celebrate the theme E3 – Educate, Eat Well and Exercise. This is the best way to see what's new for products and services in school food service all under one roof. There will be a raffle on the show floor and plan to take advantage of show buying opportunities. Prepare in advance. Think about giving assignments to your coworkers and perhaps have different people responsible for researching various product categories.

This year we are introducing a director's special. Register yourself and three other employees for the full conference and the fourth attendee gets in at half price. Every attendee over these first four will receive a \$25 discount.

Join us as we honor and celebrate the John Stalker Institute's 20th anniversary during Wednesday's lunch. A DOE update will follow this presentation. Register online at www.schoolnutrition.info today!

President's Message Continued from Page 1

Our conference this year on October 16 and 17 at the Royal Plaza in Marlboro will be the 56th Annual Conference for SNA of Mass. I know you're good at math, since accounting skills are required in our job, so I'll admit that this is my year for a 30 year pin. It is so hard to believe, the time has gone by so fast. My daughter just graduated from college and is now where I was when I first joined this profession and Association. She asked me if I am happy with the choice I made. My advice to her is to give careful consideration to her first job. It may set the direction that her life takes. Choose a course that will make you happy and will make a difference. I am so lucky to have chosen a field that does both! Of course there are those days when working in school nutrition can feel overwhelming challenging, frustrating, and lonely. In these electronic days, help or a sympathetic ear is only an email away. Whether you are a new or seasoned member make use of the resources available through SNA. Log onto our web page www.schoolnutrition.info and make sure we have your up to date email address to stay current and find the information and support you need. Consider becoming a part of our brand new mentoring/protégé program or volunteering at the conference or on one of our many committees. This year we have an exceptionally talented Executive Board who have set ambitious goals and planned many activities to achieve those goals. The opportunities to get involved in your association are many. Many hands make for light work and a strong association!

Did You Know?

- Vote for School Lunch needs your students' vote! You can vote online www.schoolnutrition.org/vote or call 800-877-8822. Check out the website for exciting ideas for School Lunch Week October 15-19.
- SNA of Mass. has three candidates for a variety of positions with SNA National. Please be sure to vote for these outstanding representatives of our state and our profession; Jackie Fiorentino, Northeast Regional Director, Katie Millet, State Agency Representative, Ann Pitzen, Nutrition Committee Chair
- We are creating a finance committee to work with the treasurer. This is a great opportunity for those of you with a head for figures, an interest in budgets and investments, and we especially would like to hear from someone with Quick Book experience. Contact Deb King, Treasurer if you would like to learn more - telephone (508) 234-8163 or by email dking@nps.org.
- The Mass. Public Health Association's Annual meeting is Thursday, October 11, 2007 at the Royal Plaza Hotel and Trade Center in Marlborough. Frances Moore Lappe, the author of Diet for a Small Planet will be the keynote speaker. For more information. Call 617-524-6696 x103 or email tmaseon@mphaweb.org.
- National School Breakfast Week is March 3-7, 2008. Check out the competition SNA national has prepared and posted on www.schoolbreakfast.org to help celebrate school breakfast.
- The Annual National Conference (ANC) is coming to Boston in 2014!



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Register Now!
SNA of Mass. Fall Conference
October 16-17, 2007