

# DINING GUIDE

## Massachusetts School Nutrition Specialists: “Saving America, One Five-Star Meal at a Time”

By Melissa Orff  
Staff Reporter

“You are simply the most important people in the school system.” Can you guess who those people are?

According to internationally known speaker and author Maureen G. Mulvaney, they are the people that are “saving America, one five-star meal at a time.”

You guessed it – we are talking about School Nutrition Specialists (a.k.a. the Lunch Ladies) – and they had the chance to hear about the impact they make on the life of a child during a visit from Mulvaney at their March 30 Massachusetts School Nutrition Association

chapter meeting.

“One out of every five kids in America today is hungry,” said Mulvaney. “We feed these kids fruit, vegetables, whole grains, protein, and milk.”

Using humor and high energy, Mulvaney stressed the importance of being the first line of defense in the morning and afternoon to make sure kids are ready to learn.

“We raise test scores, lower behavior problems, and feed our future leaders,” she said.

Mulvaney also commented on the changes made to the school lunch program under Michelle Obama that brought healthier meal and snack options to schools across the country. “We are doing what is the right thing to do...I didn’t say that it was easy, but it’s the right thing,” she said.

With one out of three kids expected to be diagnosed with diabetes in the next 10 years, the importance of serving “five-star, quality, nutritious meals” is more important than ever, said Mulvaney.

But to accomplish all of this, said Mulvaney, it must start with treating each other, and their “customers,” with kindness and respect.

“We must be each other’s cheerleaders,” she said, shaking bright yellow pompoms. “Your number one job is to create happiness and spread hospitality.”

The chapter meeting ended with a meal in the high school cafeteria made by Milford’s Food Service Director Carla Tuttle and staff; a great way for the School Nutrition Specialists from across the state to network with each other, she said.

“No one really talks about Food Service Professionals as being an important part of the school district; so it’s nice to hear that we are,” said Tuttle.

Tuttle said that the Mass School Nutrition Association bringing Mulvaney to the meeting as a way of boosting morale and stressing customer service.

“We want to be that smiling face the kids see every day when they come in for a meal,” she said.



Internationally known speaker and author Maureen G. Mulvaney address School Nutrition Specialists during a March 30 Massachusetts School Nutrition Association chapter meeting, telling them they are “saving America, one five-star meal at a time.”

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