

“Delicious!” page 3

Nutrition Conference roundup

JANUARY 2011

Hydration Stations, page 4

Chaska High School quenches kids

“Whole” Story, page 6

Red Wing masters whole grains

MSNA Thymes

Minnesota School Nutrition Association

Farm to School: We Dig Our Farmers!

The first-ever Farm to School Week celebration, held the third week of September in Minnesota, was a resounding success. Extensive media coverage, including newspaper articles, radio interviews and television features, helped reinforce the key message of Farm to School - that locally sourced food makes sense for our kids and communities.

“Whether it’s helping kids eat well and be ready to learn, supporting local farmers or strengthening local economies, Farm to School brings wide-ranging benefits,” said JoAnne Berkenkamp, of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP). Farm to School Week was initiated by IATP and MSNA, whose partnership

(Continued on page 2)



Upcoming Events

February 8, 2011 Commodity Expo at the St. Cloud Civic Center, hosted by the School Nutrition Directors of Minnesota

February 17, 2011 Minnesota Legislative Conference (See insert page for details)

President's Message



What's that bright light shining on us? That's right, it's a celebrity spotlight! After so many years of toiling in the background, it seems as if School Meal Programs, and those of us who make them happen, are receiving plenty of attention. We certainly are receiving positive press and national support from the President and the First Lady and their health initiatives.

National School Lunch Week in October brought us even more attention. SNA provided a fun personality quiz called "What's on your Tray?" Not to brag, but I scored 26 points and a "Radiant" rating.

Technology gives us more

opportunities than ever to market our programs. Have you submitted any stories to SNA's new Tray Talk? This is a great way to "toot your own horn" about the fun and healthy events going on in your district. Visit www.schoolnutrition.org/TrayTalk.

On the training front, we are partnering with Great Trays to provide no-cost training on IOM standards for School Nutrition Professionals in 2011-12. MSNA is also planning to go "back to basics" with Boot Camp this June. There will be Fundamentals and Safe Serve at Annual Conference this year to provide the credits needed for Level I certification. Details will be available

at mnsna.org.

With a new year comes a new start, and I'd like to encourage all of you to make a resolution to get involved in our great organization. Attend a chapter meeting. They are really fun and you can earn CEU's or Key Area credits. Bring a friend and encourage them to join MSNA. Let them know the benefits of being a member. I also encourage you to seek recognition for the great things you're doing in your school. Apply for awards and scholarships this year or nominate someone you think is deserving of an award. And have a great 2011!

Deb LaBounty

Farm to School continued from page one

Resources for Farm to School

www.mnsna.org

www.mn-FarmtoSchool.umn.edu

www.farm2schoolmn.org

has helped catalyze Minnesota's Farm to School movement. IATP also has a new "I Dig My Farmer" program, with more information available on their website (see sidebar at left for address).

"We want to support our local economy and support our local products," said Lyn Halvorson, Winona Area Public Schools nutrition director. As one of the "the biggest restaurants in the county," the public schools serve enough food to provide a significant market for local producers, she said.

Local products showcased at Minnesota schools over the fall and winter have included bison, corn on the cob, free-range turkey, watermelon, apples, sweet corn, toma-

toes, squash, carrots, root vegetables and whole grain bread and rolls made from locally grown flour.

More than 100 Minnesota school districts have adopted Farm to School initiatives, and more are expected to sign on this school year. Many started with easy-to-add items such as apples, and moved on to other local grower relationships and a wider variety of locally procured items from area growers.

IATP will be sending an email survey to Food Service Directors to explore the growth of F2S across the state, identify ongoing needs and challenges and gather feedback on next year's celebration.



Julie Ruchti, Wayzata West Middle School, prepares sweet potato fries while wearing an "I dig my farmer" t-shirt.

Clockwise on Cover: Winona staff celebrates: Front Row, L to R: Lila Cady, Arlys Bade, Carol Ives, Gayle McRae, Mary Loken. Back Row: Marlene Viestenz, Darlene Johnson, Marsha Korneta, Marji Ford; Winona School Nutrition Delivery Vehicle; Serving area display shown by Madonna Kuiper, Dover-Eyota High School.

Nutrition Conference is “Delicious!”

Nearly 300 MSNA members attended the recent MSNA Nutrition Conference, held October 30 at Chanhassen High School. The information-packed conference was organized and led by a planning committee that, according to one participant, “Really thought of everything.”

Under the umbrella theme “Nutrition Potpourri,” the conference’s goal was to cover a number of topics during the day. Presentation subjects included whey protein, statistics on the importance of breakfast, a primer on sugar, carbs and sodium and a presentation on including spices as part of

good nutrition. And, with a conference held one day before Halloween, it made perfect sense for attendees to receive a “treat” - a gift box and recipes from McCormick spices.

The lunch menu, which followed the principles of the Mediterranean Diet, included spring pasta salad, Greek salad, avocado chicken sandwich, herb-crusted baked cod and apple crisp. (see photo at right)

Comments from attendees included:

- * *The speakers knew their stuff and I heard many great questions.*

- * *Liked the idea of eating vegetables at breakfast.*
- * *Never heard about celiac disease, interesting!*
- * *Very good information in a short amount of time.*

Committee Chairperson Anne Peglow said, “The Nutrition Conference Committee works very hard to put this conference together. I commend committee members and the work they did.

“We are also grateful to all the brokers, manufacturers and distributors that donated food, beverages, and sponsor speakers. Without them, this conference would not be as successful for the MSNA and its members.”

Photo at left: Nutrition Conference attendees share notes on the busy day.

Photos at right, top to bottom: “Mediterranean Diet” lunch, speaker Lisa Brown and “Great Trays” skit featuring Sarah Carroll as a Rolling Stones reporter and Laurence Anderson as John Lennon, Imagining School Lunch Heaven.



Connect with MSNA

The next time you’re surfing the Internet, make a quick stop to mnsa.org to see our enhanced website. Each

to update their own chapter pages with announcements and milestones.

While you’re there, check out your chapter's page and if information is missing, contact your chapter president. To find out what chapter you’re in, ask at mnsa@citescape.com.

Plus, don't forget to connect with MSNA on Facebook!



chapter president has been given access on the website

Kudos to the Nutrition Conference Committee

As one appreciative attendee said, “No one really knows how hard it is to put on a great conference until they work on the planning committee!” Thanks to all who contributed.

- | | |
|---|--|
| Anne Peglow, Chair
Eastern Carver County ISD | Melissa Anderson, Nutrition Chair
Holdingford ISD |
| Joy Cook
Forest Lake ISD | Kitty Demorret
Roismus Elite |
| Amy Hess, Food Marketing
Services, Minnesota | Judy Johnson
White Bear Lake ISD |
| Lisa McCann
Midwest Dairy | Angie Schuhmacher
Rochester ISD |
| Heidi Springmeyer
Campbell’s Foodservice | Rhonda Stingley
Land O Lakes |

Chaska Quenched at Hydration Station

Drink Up!

- * Studies show that a significant number of children begin their school day in a mild state of dehydration.
- * Another study showed that children's math ability was impaired if they were just 1% dehydrated, which is not even enough for them to feel thirsty.
- * California has enacted a law requiring that free water be available where food is served in schools. The legislation said, "Dehydration is associated with impaired cognitive function and can adversely affect alertness, attention and memory."
- * The Child Nutrition Bill (in Congress at printing time) mandates that free water must be served in schools.

Spencer Fischer is a man with a mission. Not only does the Kitchen Site Manager want the students at Chaska High School to eat nutritious foods at school, but he wants them to be well-hydrated, too. In his quest for a completely quenched student body, Fischer has introduced a flavored-water Hydration Station, available free to all students throughout the school day. The station includes clear containers, each one filled with water, ice and fruits and veggies for flavoring.

"We always have a lemon-lime option and a cucumber option," Fischer said, "and our third container is our wild card. Choices there have included orange-mint, strawberry-pineapple, cantaloupe and watermelon."

The containers are placed on a cart that gets filled with water and chilled overnight. Staff add flavoring ingredients and roll the carts out at 6:30 each morning, where they are refilled throughout the day

and during after-school programs. Seven-ounce cups are placed nearby, but students are also encouraged to fill their reusable bottles at the Hydration Station.

Fischer said the inspiration for the stations came from several sources. "I had read an article in the newspaper about water stations at St. Cloud State. Then, when I was at the MSNA Annual Conference in Rochester this summer, I attended the presentation by Carrie Peterson, the Sports Nutrition Consultant. She said that water keeps the brain functioning, so I began to think of how I could bring more water into our students' at-school diets."

There were a few challenges when the stations were first introduced. "The first challenge was in getting the right containers for the water. At first, the ones we wanted, which are clear, were on back order. Once we got those in use and students could see the flavoring ingredients, the water was more appealing and become very popular. Our biggest challenge right now is

just keeping the containers full of water all day."

Fischer estimates that he provides 20 – 30 gallons of water a day for about 1,200 students and staff. Feedback started strong and has grown even more positive. "Students come down with carts and get enough water for a whole class, then wheel it back for everyone in their classrooms," he reported.



Michael Childers, senior, said he visited the Hydration Station at Chaska High School every hour. His favorite flavor is strawberry-pineapple.



Spencer Fischer, right, introduced a Hydration Station that has made a big splash at Chaska Senior High School.

Recipe for Water (Really)

Step One in Hydration Station creation, Spencer Fischer said, is to gain staff commitment for the project, since there will be some extra steps to set up and maintain the station. "It's only about five minutes a day to cut up the fruits and veggies," he said, "but it does take time to keep water and ice refilled."

Fischer suggests offering a couple mainstays and a daily "wild card" to keep things interesting, and to create en-

gagement through student recommendations. Fill the containers with water at the end of service each day and allow them to chill overnight. Add fruits or veggies, and ice, in the morning, then roll the station into the serving area.

A little goes a long way for flavoring, Fischer said. "For five gallons of cucumber water, for example, we use four cucumbers, cut into large chunks."

SNAC Bites and MSNA Nibbles

Win Registration to ANC
SNA's 2011 Annual National Conference in Nashville is all about connecting and staying connected. How do you connect with key stakeholders like students, parents, teachers and administrators? How do you get their feedback to strengthen your program and meet their needs? Tell SNA how you connect and be entered into a sweepstakes to win one of three free ANC 2011 Nashville registrations. Enter at schoolnutrition.org/ancsweeps.

Social School Lunch
SNA is offering a downloadable guide: *Social School Lunch: A How-To Guide on Social Media for School Nutrition Programs*. Download the free guide at schoolnutrition.org. Just enter "social media guide" in the search bar when you get to the site.

Leadership Conference
Good luck to MSNA Board members Allison Bradford, Amy Thering and Mary Fish,

who will be joined by other at-large members at the National Leadership Conference in April in Colorado Springs, CO. National conference travel is an excellent way for elected board members to network and gain new skills.

Great Trays Training
The first of two Great Trays workshops, *Getting to WOW: Simple Steps to a Great Menu*, will be held February 21 in Cloquet, Hopkins, Marshall and St. Cloud and February 26 in Blaine, Detroit Lakes, Rochester and Thief River Falls. Up to two staff per district will be installed in July during

SNA Election Results

Our region will be well-represented in leadership positions next year, with Jean Ronnei (St. Paul Schools) winning the SNA Education Chair election. In addition, Gay Anderson from South Dakota was declared the SNA Midwest Regional Director. They

will be installed at the Association's Annual National Conference in Nashville, and will serve under the leadership of incoming President Helen Phillips. The new Vice President (next year's president) is Leah Schmidt of Missouri.

Buy Smarter
Join or renew your district's participation in MSFBG for 2011/12 and get \$200 off the administrative fee. With more than 90 participating districts, MSFBG saves districts an average of \$4 per student per year.

Questions on Great Trays Training or the Minnesota Food Service Buying Group?

Email:
health.greattrays@state.mn.us

Website:
www.health.state.mn.us/schools/greattrays



Upcoming Events

January 16 - 18: SNA CNIC (Child Nutrition Industry Conference) in Seattle

January 24 - 28: Tray Talk Week. Visit www.schoolnutrition.org/traytalk for helpful ideas to last the whole week long. Most importantly, don't forget to visit www.TrayTalk.org to submit your school nutrition success story

March: National Nutrition Month: Eat Right with Color. Visit www.schoolnutrition.org for resources and event planning tips

March 1: Deadline for submitting Heart of the Program, Outstanding Director of the Year and Louise Sublette Award entries

March 6 - 9: National LAC (Legislative Conference) in Washington, D.C.

March 7 - 11: National School Breakfast Week, School Breakfast Detectives. Visit www.schoolnutrition.org for resources and event planning tips

May 2 - 6: School Nutrition Employee Week

May 3 - 4: Industry conference, Better Together, Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge, Deerwood, MN

June 14 - 15: Boot Camp, Coon Rapids High School and Middle School

July 31 - August 3: MSNA Annual Conference, Navigating the Waves of Change, St. Cloud Civic Center. Hotels under the MSNA Block are: Radisson Suite Hotel, 320-654-1661 (Rooms range from \$129 - \$179 + tax) and Best Western Kelly Inn, 320-253-0606 (Rooms are \$81.00 + tax) Current plans include entertainment by Bobby Vee and "Birthday in a Bag" service project.

Chapter Chatter



Photo Above: Mary Betlach covered "Certification 101" for Chapter 9's meeting.

Photos at Right: Left Column: Personal hygiene collection from Chapter 9. Center Column: Peggy Doten spoke to Chapter 31 about her recent visit to Sweden. She is pictured here, center, in a Swedish school cafeteria with staff. Right Column: Students in Sweden cleaning their own tables after lunch.

Chapters all over the state have been conducting informative and fun sessions for their members. North Suburban Chapter 9 invited Mary Betlach, who is SNA's Employee/Manager Representative, to present a helpful session on "Certification 101." The members also collected 55 pounds of personal hygiene items for donation to the Community Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP).

Chapter 31 was treated to a



presentation by chapter member Peggy Doten, who recently visited schools in Sweden. She told the audience that in Sweden there are no open campuses, so all students eat lunches that are fully funded by the state.

Members were amazed to learn that students serve themselves at meals. Even with no portion control, Doten reported that there seemed to be less waste, and that students even wash their own cafeteria tables

after eating lunch at school.

She observed similarities between student populations in Sweden and the United States, since both include students with diverse cultural backgrounds ranging from Somalia, Lebanon, Syria, Africa, and other Middle Eastern countries.

Doten noted (with a smile) that trying to please all students is just as difficult in Sweden as it is in Minnesota, however.



Red Wing Masters Whole Grain Baking

Welcome to 74 new MSNA Members and to these new Industry Members:

Great Northern Baking Company

Quantum Foods

Will kids eat actually more of what's good for them? At the Red Wing school district, the answer has proven to be a resounding "yes."

At Sunnyside Elementary in Red Wing, MN, typical bread consumption was six loaves per day. But over the summer, the team moved to a whole grain product that brought all bakery items up to the standard of the school Wellness Committee. With whole grains now on the menu, consumption has actually increased. Robin Nelson-Williams, Sunnyside's Head Cook, reported, "This year we are serving 8 to 10 loaves per day."

There are a couple of secrets behind this success, according to Julie Haase, Red Wing's

Food Service Director. First, there is the matter of getting the recipe right.

The bakers (Tamie Guenther, Rhonda Johnson, and Jan Jordahl) conducted a number of tests in the kitchen, using samples provided through www.superkidssampling.com, a site that allows K-12 food-service directors to sample whole grain products made with Ultragrain whole wheat and Sustagrain, the ultra-high fiber whole grain.

After running into some roadblocks, especially in achieving a good rise, Haase reached out to Kurt Becker, a senior scientist with ConAgra. He visited the kitchen, worked with the staff, and helped them get a recipe that, according to Kim Mensinger, Head Cook at Burnside Ele-

mentary School, has been described by students as being "as good as Grandma's home-made bread."

The product has earned top ratings from the bakers as well as the students. Nelson-Williams said, "The bread is a golden color, soft texture with a 'white bread' type flavor. Our children didn't know there was a change. They just know it tastes good!"

And that's the second secret to whole grain success - don't tell the kids. Haase has a "no news is good news" policy in regards to whole grains, which means that if students aren't complaining, and they're continuing to select items made with whole grain breads, then she's made a difference in diets that makes everyone happy.

Read This Before You Buy From the Farm

We all know about the many benefits of buying food from local growers. But Jeanette Johnson-Reed, a supervisor in the Minnesota Department of Education and MSNA's State Agency representative, wants to make sure that while our passion for local buying should remain strong, we must also maintain our commitment to food safety.

Johnson recently attended a USDA Produce conference, sponsored by NFSMI (National Food Service Management Institute). At the conference, she learned how

to identify growers who maintain safe agricultural procedures. She said, "You should go out and visit a farm before you buy, and ask questions about their written food safety plan to be certified for GAP (Good Agriculture Procedures)."

Johnson-Reed noted that the University of Iowa has an excellent checklist to help when visiting a local grower. It can be found at: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM2046A.pdf>. The checklist includes topics to cover such as production practices, product handling,

transportation, facilities, worker health and worker hygiene.

The workshop also included information on how to order produce correctly. Johnson-Reed reminded food service directors that "it's okay to refuse produce that is not what you specified." She also learned storage tips on which produce to avoid refrigerating, such as potatoes.

Finally, she told MSNA members to be looking for upcoming "train the trainer sessions" on farm procurement and other topics.



Top Photo: AMS Grader and session trainer inspecting a case of peppers and demonstrating the difference between USDA grade A or Fancy. Bottom Photo: Using a chart to assist in grading and evaluating bananas.

Foodservice News in the Spotlight

If you've ever attended a MSNA conference, chances are you were greeted at the door by a friendly, outgoing woman who introduced herself to you as "Nadine." That energetic and involved volunteer was Nadine Kasel, the Advertising Sales Manager for *Foodservice News*, which is the MSNA Industry Member in the spotlight.

Foodservice News, which is sent free to foodservice managers, has created what she calls a "foodservice community" for this region. It's mailed ten times a year to 8,000 subscribers who include restaurants, schools, hotels, country clubs, casinos and more. There are regular articles on "School News," as well as an August special edition on schools.

A strong supporter of the members and mission of MSNA, Kasel has volunteered at the Commodity Food Expo, Industry Confer-

ence, Annual Conference and Nutrition Conference. A firm believer that "the best way to meet people and know their needs is to volunteer," she has built a strong network of connections with MSNA and many of its members.

As someone who interacts with foodservice professionals from many venues, she is highly complimentary about MSNA's membership. "This group is forward thinking and way ahead of most other states. For example, I see many more MSNA schools buying from local farmers than our regional restaurants currently do."

These days, Kasel is excited about the Great Trays grant activities and said, "This year, I hope to hear in advance when schools and managers are having training days connected with Great Trays. I'd like to visit a knife training for a staff or cook-

ing with herbs session to feature in *Foodservice News*. The whole foodservice industry (schools, vendors-distributors, manufacturers, brokers and newly graduated culinary school students) needs to know that schools are making great things happen."

She says that industry members enjoy working with MSNA because the members are passionate and hardworking. "They really believe in good nutrition and do anything they can to deliver that to their students. MSNA is helping move manufacturers in a nutritious direction because we know if there is a demand, someone wants to be the first with the correct supply."

Kasel says that MSNA's members "are so dynamic, and you're helping move industries in the direction they need to go to help Minnesota schools."

Janet to insert TIF of FS News Cover here; I will send as separate file. Include the masthead from the image and as much of the body as looks good — no need for whole thing.



Nadine Kasel, Advertising Sales Manager of *Foodservice News*, is always ready to lend a hand for MSNA.

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