



LET'S CONNECT

Nebraska School Nutrition Association Newsletter

Mission: To advance good nutrition for all children.

Vision: Healthful meals and nutrition education are available to all children.

Feeding Bodies. Fueling Minds.™

Fall 2017

A Note from the President – Mary Finnegan

“You Can’t Stop the Waves but You Can Learn To Surf”



As you may or may not know, Jeff Andel, NSNA 2016 state president, has taken a new career path as a salesperson with US Foods. With his new job and his family, Jeff’s statement to the NSNA was “I will not be doing a service to this great organization if I cannot give 100%. That is why, with a heavy heart, that I am resigning my position as president of the NSNA effective immediately.” We accepted his resignation with regrets but we wish him the best in his new career.

At the request of the board, along with our upcoming officers, I will be filling the position of association president for the remainder of this term. With the help of President Elect Lora Harders and Vice President Karee Nielsen, I promise we will do our best to keep our association moving forward and growing to the best of our ability.

Since we last met in June at State Conference in Kearney, a lot has been going on within the Nebraska School Nutrition Association. In July, Jeff, Lora and I hoped a plane to Atlanta, GA for National Conference. We heard some great speakers, wonderful entertainment and browsed through an overwhelmingly large food show. We met up with old friends and made a lot of new ones. In Georgia, they cook up some of the tastiest peach dishes I have ever had. We had a chance to tour the College Football Hall of Fame, the Atlanta Aquarium and the Coca Cola plant. We sampled Coca Cola from all around the world. Some very good and some not so good. Who knew the taste of Coke

changed from Russia to the tropics to the United States. If you every have the opportunity to take part in ANC, it’s an experience you will never forget.

Now on to the upcoming year. Some of your district meetings have already been held. I have heard great things about the procurement presentations. Can’t say I will make it to many of the fall meetings but look forward to seeing everyone in the spring for sure. I always enjoy reacquainting with old friends and making new ones. The art contest, membership drives, and SNA awards nominations are all important things to discuss at these district meetings. Remember, too, we are always on the lookout for candidates to fill our officer positions, both at the district and the state level.

I am very honored to have been asked to represent the State of Nebraska for another year. But, I can’t do this alone. It takes all of us working together to keep our association growing and becoming stronger. Mark your calendars for our annual NSNA State Conference, June 24th – 27th in Kearney, Nebraska. National ANC will be held in the exciting city of Las Vegas, July 7th – 11th, 2017. Come join us for fun and bright lights as well as the opportunity to congratulate our own Gay Anderson as she is installed as the 2018-19 National SNA President. Here’s hoping your school year is off to a successful start. It’s a great time to “SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS WITH SCHOOL LUNCH.”

Mary Finnegan



**NSNA ANNUAL
CONFERENCE DATES**



**June 24 – June 27, 2018
Kearney, NE**

**June 23 – June 26, 2019
Kearney, NE**

REPORTS FROM CHAIR MEMBERS....

---LEGISLATIVE CHAIR---

Thank You to those of you who have had the opportunity to reach out to your elected officials. The impact of having you visit, write or email your elected officials about your program is very valuable. It helps make the outcome of the legislation have a face. Invite them into your lunchrooms. If you have received grant money for equipment, show them what that money bought and how it has helped your program. Remember to snap a photo of your visit and share it with me.

I believe the visits we have had in recent years at LAC have had an impact with our Senators and Congressmen. Some of the “asks” in the 2017 SNA Position Paper have been introduced into bills. If we need to do a mass call or email, I will share the information through NSNA website and through NSNA District Chairs.

I think we all feel a little nervous about the conversation with the elected official, but if we don’t let them know about our programs, how can they vote for us. We need to tell them what is best for our program, in our school, in our part of the state. We all feed students, but after that many things impact what we do and how we do it, size of school, size of kitchen, number of electrical outlets, delivery opportunities, skill of workers, can you find employees, the list goes on. Let them know your successes.

Need help, SNA has great resources on the web site to help with you in your visit.

“Tuesday Morning” is an email update that you can sign up for on the SNA website. They share information on bills that have an impact on school nutrition.

Thank you for your voice in school nutrition

Judy Poehlman

---NEWSLETTER CHAIR---

Let’s Connect has a new Coordinator.

Becky Coatney has given Cathy Hoops a well-deserved retirement as newsletter chair and has assumed responsibility for Let’s Connect. She is in the process of developing some new options for getting the information out to our members so you may see emails and possibly a survey or two from her in the future regarding the Let’s Connect. If there is anything that needs to be included in the newsletter or if you have questions, concerns or suggestions for the newsletter please get in touch with Becky.

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2016-17 BENEFACTOR CONTRIBUTORS

The benefactor program is an award/scholarship program for members of the Nebraska School Nutrition Association to enhance their education. Thank you to the following contributors to the NSNA Benefactor Program. We had another successful campaign.

BRONZE LEVEL

SILVER LEVEL

Mary Ann Brennan
Cathy Hoops
Mary Liermann
Joann Gadekin
Nancy Buettner
Karr Nielsen
Jennifer Mangold
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Mary Finnegan
Judy Poehlman

DIAMOND LEVEL

Tammy Yarmon
Beth Haas
Aurora Snack Shack
John Ahlers

What is a BENEFACTOR.....

A benefactor is a person or school that pledges funds to help offset the costs of registrations and scholarships for the Nebraska School Nutrition Association members.

Past donations have sponsored members to attend Action for Healthy Kids workshop in Washington, D.C., and the annual SNA conferences just for example.

To learn more about becoming a benefactor or applying for an award or scholarship, please contact any board member.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CHAIR

I know it’s hard to believe but here we are, beginning another new year welcoming many old faces into our lunchrooms and welcoming a few new faces as well. It’s also time for the Nebraska School Nutrition Association to search those old faces we know as well as many new ones, to find qualified candidates to help lead this great organization in the coming years.

Have you considered joining us as an officer of your leadership team? Or perhaps you know of someone who would be a good candidate. This year we will be looking for a vice president elect candidate as well as a candidate to fill our secretary position. Now’s the time to *SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS WITH SCHOOL LUNCH* and make those dreams come true.

To be eligible for any Association office, a member shall:

- Agree to hold office until the end of the Annual State Conference during the final year of their term
- Have held membership for at least four consecutive years preceding the nomination.
- Have demonstrated leadership ability by serving on the NSNA Executive Board or as an officer at the District level.
- Be regularly employed in an eligible field. Have attended Annual State Conference.

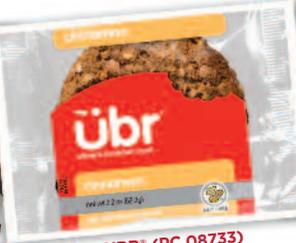
If you meet these requirements, WE want YOU to become part of our leadership team. Contact me, Mary Finnegan, or any of our NSNA Executive Board members.



2017 NSNA CONFERENCE



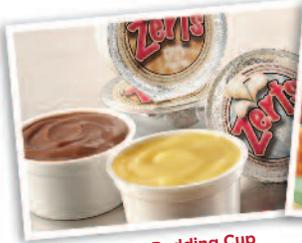
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Zerts Pudding Cup



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for Supporting



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The Nebraska Department of Education Introduces Nebraska Thursdays!

Farm to school efforts are sweeping across the country and taking root in local communities. This is largely in part due to national support provided in 2010 by Congress, establishing mandatory funding for a farm to school competitive grant and technical assistance program through the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. This year, the Nebraska Department of Education is one of 65 projects spanning 42 states and Puerto Rico receiving funding through the USDA Farm to School Grant Program.

Grant funds will help develop Nebraska Thursdays, a program that brings schools together to serve a Nebraska-sourced meal in the cafeteria on the first Thursday of each month. Nebraska Department of Education Nutrition Services is partnering with the Center for Rural Affairs to roll-out a pilot program in five school districts across Nebraska in the 2017-2018 school year. The five participating districts, Wayne, Litchfield, Thayer Central, Overton and Omaha Public Schools, all bring to the table some experience in sourcing and serving local foods.

Each pilot school kicked off their Nebraska Thursdays program in September or October 2017, also in celebration of National Farm to School Month. A variety of local foods were showcased on each piece of the plate, like roast pork, school greenhouse grown tomatoes, Norfolk melons, and Nebraska milk.

This program will roll out statewide in the fall of 2018. All schools serving meals to Nebraska students will be invited to register for the program. Participating schools will receive access to resources, promotional materials, technical assistance and opportunities to connect with other Nebraska Thursdays schools.

Nebraska Thursdays helps to educate on accessing, using and promoting local foods, creating a pathway for these foods to be available on school menus. Schools will receive resources and materials to take a step forward in purchasing, processing, and promoting local foods in schools.

According to the 2015 U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm to School Census, nationally farm to school programs have invested more than \$789 million in local communities; offered 17,089 salad bars with healthy options to students and staff; and grown 7,101 school gardens. Approximately 1,039 school districts serve local foods during the peak season in the summer months and 1,516 school districts start farm to school early in their pre-K programs. Here in Nebraska, 29% of school districts surveyed said that they participate in farm to school activities. That's 71 districts with 458 schools and 188,637 students.

Nebraska is a state rich in agriculture. Beef, hogs, eggs, dairy products, dry beans and potatoes all rank as top leading agricultural products in the state. School

greenhouses and gardens are growing in numbers, and as they grow, education and nutritional benefits are as diverse as the fruits and vegetables being produced. There are multiple streams for accessing local foods.

There is value in farm to school for the cafeteria, the classroom and the community. Each dollar invested in farm to school stimulates an additional \$.60-\$2.16 of local economic activity. Income increases for individual farmers on average by 5% in sales and establishment of a long-term revenue stream, according to the National Farm to School Network.

The Nebraska Department of Education Nutrition Services is receiving support from the Nebraska Edible Bean Commission, Midwest Dairy Council and the Nebraska Beef Council to undergo this project, as well as Omaha Public School Nutrition Services. Stay tuned for success stories at pilot schools, and in 2018-2019 as the program rolls out statewide!



Coming Soon... Harvest of the Month

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service offers a grant program, Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined as "fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture." The Nebraska Department of Education, and partner organization Buy Fresh Buy Local Nebraska, received funding through this program in September 2017 to design and implement a Nebraska Harvest of the Month program.

Nebraska's schools have an opportunity to engage local agriculture, farmers and ranchers, and bring local foods to our school tables. The Nebraska Department of Education recognizes this opportunity and supports efforts to expand local production and increase access of local foods to our Nebraska communities.

The Nebraska Department of Education Harvest of the Month program will provide a toolkit for school food service staff highlighting recipe development, promotion and activities featuring at least nine specialty crop items, and will provide

technical assistance in implementing the program. Buy Fresh Buy Local Nebraska will provide training and technical assistance to specialty crop producers on connecting with schools and offering specialty crop products to schools during the school year.

Research from the National Farm to School Network demonstrates that farm to school activities enhance overall academic achievement in K-12 settings, provide children with an understanding of agriculture and the environment, and improve life skills, self-esteem, social skills and behavior.

Implementation of this program will provide Nebraska's students with ripe opportunities to expand their palates with specialty crops. Beginning in school year 2018-2019, pilot schools will implement the Harvest of the Month program by procuring the highlighted monthly item and offering taste tests for students to try the food, either in its raw or prepared form. School year 2019-2020, we anticipate the program to be available statewide to schools that register to participate in the program. Stay tuned for more details and opportunities to be involved!

FARM TO SCHOOL, NEBRASKA DAY

This year, I was a little stressed planning meals and finding a day I could get all Nebraska products. What would I get? What if it hailed, froze, rained? Then I realized I needed to relax and do what I could. We have worked with a farmer with Norfolk melons for several years. Before that, a community member sold us melons. I didn't think of it being farm to school. In fact, when I started this career, I could not accept produce from a local garden. We did buy eggs from the local feed store.

Last year, we contacted the local apple orchard about getting apples for apple crunch day. This year, they delivered apples each week on their way to farmer's market. Someone else who sells produce at the farmer's market asked what produce I was looking for, which led to buying beautiful green peppers and tomatoes. We have already discussed what we might buy from them next year.

I bought six butternut squash. Four butternut squash served 600 students and staff. Guess what? Not everyone took it, but those that did were happy to see it. They told those in the lunch line with them it was squash and it was good for them. I could say that we offered a farm fresh butternut squash as a red orange vegetable. To prepare it we steamed it for 5 minutes to soften the skin. Then we peeled it, sliced and seeded it. Finished steaming it and sprinkled 1c of brown sugar on top of it.

There are other opportunities for NEBRASKA products to explore. Talk to each other at NSNA District meetings and state conference on what is working for you in your program. Share ideas. Tammy Yarmon, with Omaha Public Schools, has shared many ideas with me.

I think some of the most successful things in our job start small, like a seed, and grow. Isn't our job to encourage students to eat and explore good nutrition? I think many of you already do Farm to School or Nebraska products. Just remember to share with others the great local happenings in your lunchrooms.

Next fall, I want to display different types of tomatoes, and ask the students what products in our lunch program have tomato products in them. Good thing we are in buildings where education is to take place, because I want our lunchroom education to impact our student their whole life.

Judy Poehlman

DISTRICT 4 & 5 FALL MEETING

District 5 held their fall meeting September 9 at Blue Hill. We were joined by District 4 for a day of food, fun, and learning.

Beth Haas and Shannon Fowler from the Nebraska Department of Education led a training on procurement that was very informative. It seems that many questions were answered. Mary Lou and her staff served a wonderful lunch of chicken salad with brownie sundaes for dessert. After the training, our raffle was held and everyone headed home in time to watch the football game.

The spring meeting will be held at Sandy Creek with a planting activity led by their FFA, in their (what I hear is marvelous) greenhouse. It should be an extra fun day and the date will be announced as soon as we know. Plan to join us.

We are planning a fantastic and special meeting for the fall of 2018, it should be in mid September again, watch for further details as plans are finalized.



Do you have students who like to draw or doodle?

Do you have an art teacher looking for a project?

CHECK THIS OUT!

The NSNA Art Contest 2017 is HERE!

There are four grade categories for the contest:

K-1, 2-4, 5-8, and 9-12.

Four winner will be chosen and each will receive a \$50 check from the Nebraska School Nutrition Association.

Contest Rules:

1. All entries must be the student's original drawing on an **8 ½ x 11-inch** sheet of unlined white paper. Do not use white plain poster board because it is not allowed.
2. The theme **'Soar to New Heights with School Lunch!'** must be printed on the artwork.
3. The student's name, address, grade, and school must appear on the back of the artwork.
4. Each entry must be accompanied by a completed entry form signed by the principal and cafeteria manager.
5. Each school district will be allowed to submit four entries for the competition: one for each grade category.
6. Entries must be postmarked by **December 15, 2017.**
7. If any of the above rules are not followed, the entry will be automatically disqualified.
8. Entries will not be returned unless requested.

Send your school district's entries to:

Nebraska School Nutrition Association
Public Relations
P.O. Box 5204
Lincoln, NE 68505-5204



**NEBRASKA SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION ART
CONTEST ENTRY FORM**

*Soar to New Heights with School Lunch!
Celebrate School Lunch in Nebraska.*

Mail this entry form with student's drawing to: Nebraska School Nutrition Association, Public Relations, P.O. Box 5204, Lincoln, NE 68505-5204

Contest Deadline: December 15, 2017

Please type or print the following information:

Student's Name: _____

Home Address: _____ Home Phone: (____) _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Grade: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____

School: _____ School phone: (____) _____

School address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Principal: _____ Cafeteria Manager: _____

(Principal's Signature)

(Cafeteria Manager's Signature)

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Date Received: _____
Initials of Recipient

Check Entry Category: Grade K-1 (____) Grade 2-4 (____) Grade 5-8 (____) Grade 9-12 (____)

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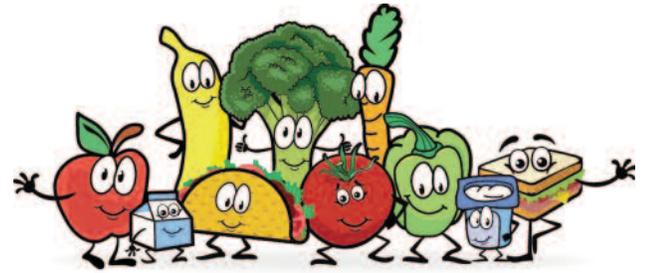
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Nebraska School Nutrition Association Newsletter Fall 2017



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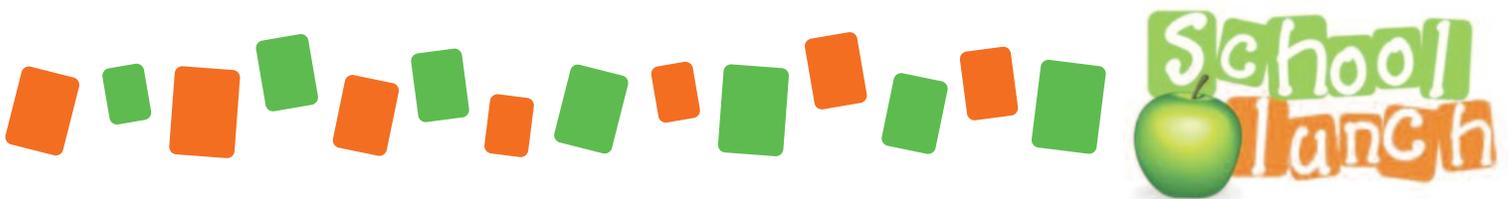
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Spring District Meetings Scheduled...



The Nebraska School Nutrition Association invites all school food service personnel to attend the spring district meeting in their area. This is an excellent opportunity to get together with other food service professionals, so mark your calendar now!

District	Date	Location	Registration Time
District 1	November 4	Fairbury	8:00-8:30 a.m.
District 2 & 3	October 28	Ashland-Greenwood High School	8:15-8:45 a.m.
District 4 & 5	September 9	Blue Hill	8:30-9:00 a.m.
District 6 & 8	November 4	McKinley Education Center - North Platte	8:30-9:00 a.m. CST



Throughout the 2017 - 2018 school year if anyone is planning on retiring, please let me know. We would like to pay tribute to those individuals at the Nebraska School Nutrition Annual Conference.

Becky Coatney, Newsletter Chair, rcoatne@lps.org.