



Food for Thought

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August 2004

MSFSA Newsletter

Susan Sacks, Executive Director

This is the first issue of Food for Thought, the MSFSA newsletter. We will be producing three issues throughout the year to keep our members informed of upcoming events, scholarship and award opportunities, changes in legislative issues, and sharing information to help the school foodservice workers of Massachusetts.

Mark your calendar – August 17 is the Annual Meeting at Wachusett Mountain. We will have a demo from DOE on filing reimbursements online, a keynote on the language of leadership, followed by a clambake and awards ceremony. Sign up now. (see page 3)

Be sure to check out our website www.maschoolfood.org as we work to make it more informative, interactive and helpful to our members. We would love to hear from you on how we can better serve you – so please share your thoughts with us.

Note our new address: 258 Harvard St., PMB 283, Brookline, MA 02446. Telephone 617-734-8822 or 800-351-3139
Fax 617-734-7772. As we move toward the new school year let's keep in mind our mission: to advance good nutrition for all children. We think food because they cannot think without it. ■

Welcome New Members

Judy White-Orlando, Member Services

MSFSA welcomes over 225 new members this year. We will be holding several events targeting our new members and encourage you to save the following dates:

**MSFSA Fall Conference
November 18 and 19, 2004
Sheraton Hyannis**

Join us at our exciting fall conference and food exhibit show. We have two sessions designed for new members:

**Benefits of MSFSA Membership
Thursday morning, November 18**

This session will describe the benefits in joining MSFSA including educational opportunities, career growth, and becoming part of the state and national school food service organization.

**New Members Only Social Hour
Thursday afternoon, November 18**

Come and meet new members, receive special prizes and have fun.

Attend Your Area Meeting

Every town or city belongs to an area that hosts meetings throughout the year. To find out what area you belong ask a Food Service Director, call Judy White-Orlando at 508-384-5430 extension1070, or visit our website www.maschoolfood.org.

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Nutritionally Speaking

Nutritionally Speaking will be a regular column. This is the first of a three part series on the MSFSA programs funded by the Vitamin Litigation Grant.

Improving Nutritional Quality

MaryJo Cutler, Nutrition Committee

The Nutritious School Meals Project had a goal of increasing the number of school districts using Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP) to plan school meals.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) gives school districts four options for planning school meals. Traditional Food Based Menu Planning and Enhanced Food Based Menu Planning are based on food groups. NSMP and Assisted NSMP are computer-based menu planning systems based on the nutrient values of foods. USDA has approved a number of software programs for use in planning school meals.

Through an application process, eighteen school districts were selected to participate in The Nutritious School Meals Project. These districts were provided software, training, staff to enter data and on-going support throughout the school year. Each district was required to commit to planning meals using the NSMP system in at least one school for the entire school year.

The training included a full day of The Nuts and Bolts of NSMP during which participants learned how the NSMP process works and the regulatory requirements. They also learned what data (ingredient information, recipes, detailed menu information, etc.) would be necessary for the process and how to organize the information prior to using the software.

The second day of training was hands-on use of Nutrikids software, conducted by Lunchbytes Systems. Participants learned how to enter ingredient and recipe information into the software and how to use the software for menu planning. We were able to train staff from 20 more school district during May 2004.

This group did not receive software or NASP assistance. The results reported below are for the first group of NSMP school districts.

The biggest challenge faced by the group was balancing calories and fat. Once the high fat foods were removed from the menus, the calories dropped. USDA's standards require a certain level of calories to ensure that students' energy requirements are met. Nutritionally dense, low fat food items were recommended to help resolve this problem.

Several group meetings were conducted at Shrewsbury High School. These gatherings were a terrific opportunity for the food service directors to share their experiences and their expertise. They taught each other creative ways to post nutrient information on school district websites, shared public relations tips and supported each other throughout the project.

An evaluation of the project is in process. One measure used to assess project success is a comparison of the nutrient values of the May 2003 menus with the May 2004 menus. Only 43% of the districts' May 2003 menus achieved the USDA Nutrient Standard of 30% calories from fat, while for May 2004 92% of the districts achieved the goal. Saturated fat proved to be a more difficult challenge. The May 2003 menus showed 41% of the districts achieving the 10% calories from saturated fat goal while in May 2004 76% reached the goal. ■

NSMP Program Participants Report:

- Positive feedback from school colleagues, students and parents
- School nurses delighted to have nutrient value information available
- Districts posting nutrient information on their websites made this valuable information available to parents and the entire community
- An effective way to communicate their commitment to providing students with nutritious meals

Online Reimbursement Demonstration

Kathleen Millett, DOE Representative

The Massachusetts Department of Education's School Lunch Reimbursement Claim Form will be online this fall!

The Department has completed testing of the newly designed reimbursement claim and will be offering school food service and nutrition directors the opportunity to see first hand how the claim form looks and discuss the procedures to access the form. School districts will be brought on line during the Fall of 2004.

Staff from the Department and developers of the form will be presenting this information at the MSFSA Annual Meeting at Wachusett Mountain, Tuesday August 17, 2004.

Register online for this meeting at www.maschoolfood.org or call 617-734-8822 or fax your information to 617-734-7772.

Area meetings bring together food service professionals like yourself to share ideas, solutions and best practices for working with children in the exciting field of nutrition and food.

Take advantage of all that your state chapter, MSFSA and your national organization, ASFSA, have to offer:

- ❑ 11 issues of School Foodservice & Nutrition Magazine
- ❑ 3 issues of Food for Thought newsletter
- ❑ Websites offering news, discussion of legislative issues, calendar of events, announcements of scholarships and award opportunities, a career center with job postings, and networking opportunities
- ❑ Discounts on products and programs including conference registrations, fees, certification and insurance plans
- ❑ Professional development opportunities and scholarships, trainings and demos, conferences and food exhibits
- ❑ Representation locally and in Washington DC to promote child nutrition-related legislation

FAME AWARD NOMINATION FORMS AVAILABLE

You are invited to nominate outstanding school foodservice professionals for one of seven prestigious national FAME Awards. For 16 years the FAME Awards have recognized school foodservice professionals who raise industry standards by stepping up to challenges within their school districts and communities. The next FAME Awards will be held in Austin, Texas, January 1, 2005 during the ASFSA Child Nutrition Industry Conference.

To be eligible for nomination, nominees must be school foodservice professionals or avid supporters of child nutrition who are members of ASFSA.

Nomination forms are due by September 10, 2004.

For more information about the criteria for each of the National FAME awards or to obtain a nomination form visit www.fameawards.net or call 1-800-879-7687.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUMMER ANNUAL MEETING

WACHUSETT MOUNTAIN

AUGUST 17, 2004 8:30 A.M.

Register on line www.maschoolfood.org

or fax registration form to 617-734-7772

or call 617-734-8822

FALL CONFERENCE

SHERATON HYANNIS, MA

NOVEMBER, 18 & 19, 2004

SPRING CONFERENCE

HOTEL VIKING, NEWPORT, RI

MARCH 31 – APRIL 1, 2005

Take a Legislator to Lunch

Jackie Morgan, Legislative Committee

During the school year 2004-2005 we will be hosting a "Bring your Legislator to Lunch Day" in October. Some districts may choose a "bring your legislator to lunch week" to accommodate elected officials schedules. This will give elected officials a chance to come inside the schools, meet with students, eat our wonderful food and see how important school food service is to the educational process. More information will follow regarding this event. Things you can do now:

- Check with your administration if the date is available in your district and communicate with them what you are planning and include them in the day.
- Invite your local selectmen or school committee to meet together that day as well.
- Invite the press.
- Check to make sure children can be photographed. Each district has policies regarding photos. Check what your policy is.
- Plan a colorful and attractive meal that day that appeals to young and old.

If you have any questions or concern don't hesitate to call Jackie Morgan at 617-696-4815. ■

ADVOCATE FOR CHILD NUTRITION

MSFSA

Massachusetts
School Food Service
Association

258 Harvard Street, PMB 283
Brookline, MA 02446

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

