



Food for Thought

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MSFSA is now the School Nutrition Association of Massachusetts

The Massachusetts chapter is following the national association's lead. The American School Food Service Association, now the School Nutrition Association (SNA), changed its name to better reflect the Association's strong commitment to work with the education and health communities to provide nutritious school meals. SNA was established 58 years ago, the same year the National School Lunch Act passed in Congress.

The School Nutrition Association of Massachusetts' mission is to advance good nutrition for all children by making healthful meals and nutrition education available to all children. The association sponsors state conferences and exhibits each year with additional educational programs offering certification and credentialing opportunities for its members; over 800 foodservice personnel in Massachusetts. ■

Walk the Talk at the 53rd Annual Food Show and Conference

This year's conference offers 15 fantastic education sessions and features the Food Show. Be sure to sign up fast for the pre-conference workshops – space is limited. Visit our website www.maschoolfood.org to review the brochure and learn about the sessions and register today!

Sessions range from learning PowerPoint and tapping into the power of questions to developing your public speaking skills. Nutrition workshops examine the carb craze and new USDA recipes. Learn effective management skills in the customer service workshop and how to file DOE claims online. Learn more about the national program - Action for Healthy Kids and the Wellness Challenge from SNA.

It's not all work and no play. Join us on the wellness walk. New members can meet each other and the association board members at the new members reception. Plan on hooking up with old friends at the Industry Gala and Raffle and join in the fun. Take part in:

- ❑ Scavenger Hunt for a free trip to ANC 2005 donated by Pierre Foods. You will receive a card at registration and need to visit 10 booths in order to enter the raffle and be eligible for a free trip to the national conference in Baltimore, July 2005.
- ❑ Try your luck with the exciting 50/50 raffle. Take home 50 percent of the funds and help support Project Bread's Walk for Hunger, ALS, and SNA of Massachusetts!
- ❑ Bring your checkbook for the auction of baskets during the Gala Reception Thursday night 6-7:30. This year's reception will be prepared by our industry council and served to you by the board of directors.

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Nutritionally Speaking

Part two of a three part series on the Vitamin Litigation Grant

GET FRESH GET LOCAL

by Kelley Erwin

In December of 2002, MSFSA was awarded a "vitamin settlement" grant. A small part of that grant was dedicated to investigating the feasibility of Massachusetts public schools serving more locally grown food to its students. The grant called for choosing several interested pilot school districts and then working with each to attempt to integrate locally grown foods into their menus.

In September of 2003, MSFSA sent a letter and application to its food service director members, announcing a competitive opportunity to become a participant in the *Get Fresh Get Local* project. Participants were offered the help of a part time consultant, Kelly Erwin, in evaluating and implementing purchase of locally grown foods for their district. This assistance would include a review of the school's needs and wishes, locating possible farm product vendors, sharing "farm to school" resources, introducing front line staff to the "buy local" concept, and making promotional or educational outreach plans. Because this project was intended to evaluate general feasibility of the "buy local" concept for Massachusetts schools and to promote ongoing viability, no funds for purchasing food, equipment, trucking, or hiring staff were provided.

Ten school districts submitted applications. Information about the districts' current situation and reasons for applying was requested, as well as assurance that either a principal or superintendent was in support of the application. In October 2003 the MSFSA Grant Management Committee selected five districts to become the *Get Fresh Get Local* pilot project; Belchertown, Hudson, Maynard, Middleboro and Worcester.

The pilot districts worked to discover what their present buying habits were, including product volume, delivery sites and schedules, and food preparation capacity. Each district's particular vision and priority regarding locally grown food was explored. Geographically appropriate farm vendors were researched and possible farm vendors were contacted and appropriate information about the districts' purchasing was shared.

In addition to working with each district director individually, *Get Fresh Get Local* hosted joint meetings for the five pilot directors. Trainings were provided for front line workers in those pilot districts which requested them, and offered two informational workshops to the general MSFSA membership.

Printed material from *Get Fresh Get Local* with "how to" information about buying locally grown foods in Massachusetts, as well as highlights of the pilot districts' experience, will be sent to all MSFSA members during the 2004-2005 school year.

An innate difficulty of this project was its timeline. It was officially launched in September 2003 and scheduled to end June 30, 2004. Locally grown products are scarce in the late winter and early spring months. All five of the pilot districts are eager to begin a locally grown foods program but, to a large extent, the implementation experience of each district cannot be tested until fall, 2004. Although a definitive evaluation of the feasibility or success of *Get Fresh Get Local* cannot be completed until after the grant period ends, still it appears that great strides have been made.

THE FIVE PILOT SCHOOL DISTRICTS AT A GLANCE

	Belchertown	Hudson	Maynard	Middleboro	Worcester
Location	western	central	central	southeastern	central
Type	rural	rural/urban	suburban	suburban	urban
# lunches	1500	1300	700	2000	15,500
# schools	6	5	3	6	51
# delivery sites	3	1	1	4	23 & 28 sites ea. 1x/wk
# onsite kitchens	4	5	2	4	23
\$\$ spent per wk. on raw produce (approx.)	\$450	\$300	\$300	\$350	\$8,000

Commodity Connection January 13, 2005

We will be sponsoring the Commodity Connection, Thursday, January 13, 2005 at the Sturbridge Host Conference Center in Sturbridge, MA.

The day will begin with two sessions on commodity processing. The first session will include a panel with speakers from DOE and food service directors to answer your questions about forms, transportation, and trends in commodities. The second session will focus on the logistics of processing. A special food demo for managers will feature a chef from Johnson and Wales.

Exhibits will run from 1:00 – 4:00 and give you an opportunity to taste the various offerings using commodity items. In addition DOE will be present to meet with attendees individually to answer questions.

Watch your mail and our website for more details and save the date!

Credentialing Exam at Spring Conference

A sitting to take the SFNS (credentialing) exam will be offered as a pre-conference session during the Spring 2005 Conference.

Study groups are being formed now to begin preparing for the exam. Contact Sheila Parisien, 978-526-2049 or email parisiens@mersd.org for more information.

SNA offers a credentialing exam handbook and study guide. See their website www.schoolnutrition.org or call 800-877-8822 to request a study guide. Applications must be received by SNA at least 6 weeks prior to the exam date.

The spring conference will be at the Hotel Viking in Newport, RI March 31 – April 1, 2005. The SFNS Exam will take place Wednesday, March 30 from 1 – 5 pm.

Save the date and join a study group today!

LAC SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The association will be awarding five \$500 scholarships to be used toward attending the Legislative Action Conference March 13-16, 2005 in Washington DC.

Each area will award one member a scholarship for attending area meetings this fall. The winner will be awarded by an entry in a raffle. Any member who wishes to enter this raffle will be able to sign a "Letter of Intent sign up sheet" at the area meetings. The drawing will be held for each area the end of January. Each person who signs the sheet will receive a name slip in the drawing. Each meeting that the person attends and signs the "Letter of Intent sign up sheet" allows that person an entry in the raffle.

A member must attend the conference in order to receive the \$500 prize. The check will be awarded as a reimbursement after the member submits the proper receipts i.e. registration, hotel, meals and/or travel.

To find out what area you belong to visit our website www.maschoolfood.org.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FALL CONFERENCE

SHERATON HYANNIS

HYANNIS, MA

November, 18 & 19, 2004

Register on line www.maschoolfood.org

or fax registration form to 617-734-7772

or call 617-734-8822

COMMODITY CONNECTION

STURBRIDGE HOST CONFERENCE CENTER

STURBRIDGE, MA

JANUARY 13, 2005

LEGISLATIVE ACTION CONFERENCE (LAC)

WASHINGTON DC

MARCH 13–16, 2005

SPRING CONFERENCE

HOTEL VIKING

NEWPORT, RI

MARCH 31 – APRIL 1, 2005

Did You Know?

- ❑ You can earn CEUs online at the SNA website? See www.schoolnutrition.org for details.
- ❑ The fall membership drive continues through October. Join or renew your membership before the rates go up next month.
- ❑ As of December 1, 2004 membership processing will be handled by the national office. Simply follow the instructions on your renewal or membership application form that you receive as of that date.
- ❑ We have a new page on our website called "In the News" featuring media mentions of our association and members. Please notify Catherine Donovan, 978-468-5327 or email donovan_c@hw-regional.k12.ma.us with any news coverage in your area.
- ❑ There is an exhibit only option for this year's food show in Hyannis. \$35 for members and \$50 for nonmembers.
- ❑ Judy White-Orlando, Member Services, wants new members to join her for dinner. Sign up at the fall conference for dinner Thursday night. Dinner will be at 8 pm at a local restaurant and cost \$25.
- ❑ SNA no longer uses Trexco for official SNA products and merchandise. The new EMPORIUM information is: phone 800-728-0728, fax 703-564-3001, www.emporium.schoolnutrition.org and the new vendor is PromoCorp and Tony Hite is the new contact.
- ❑ Make sure your accounting department is aware of our new mailing address: 258 Harvard St., PMB 283, Brookline, MA 02446| Telephone 617-734- or 800-351-3139, fax 617-734-7722. ■



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