

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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Things I Am Thankful For

by Jackie Morgan, President, SNA of Mass.

As I step into this new role of President I would like to thank all of you for caring so much about your profession and the children that you care for by being members. There are many things I am thankful for!

I am thankful for great employees and co-workers. The staffs in our kitchens are just amazing. Sometimes it is hard to explain to people what we do each day. I remember when my children were little and how hard it was to make dinner that all three would enjoy. Now we do that for hundreds even thousands in one day. Food Service employees have one of the most amazing jobs. They prepare with love and attention, they serve with a smile, they keep their kitchens sparkling clean and then they go home and do the same thing for their families. I will always remember the saying that hungry children can not learn. That is because of all of the wonderful staff that feed our children each day and for that I am thankful.

I am thankful for our annual meeting in Milford this past August. Volunteers are what made August 19th so amazing. Three chefs under the direction and leadership of our great President-elect, Lynn Petrowski prepared such wonderful and amazing fresh local farm recipes at our most recent meeting. The talented Carla Tuttle quickly agreed a year ago to host



our summer meeting. Her tireless work for SNA and for the entire community of Milford where she works is over the top. She prepared a beautiful breakfast and even served hot oatmeal. Her day continued with a demo of her famous pulled pork using government supplied pork roasts. Her secret ingredient is what always makes the difference. She is an outstanding food service director and I thank her for hosting our meeting and putting out a delicious lunch featuring the day's food demos.

Ken Miller once again showed his magic as he demonstrated his roasted carrots and assembled veggie pockets. All of the farm vegetables were delicious. He told us a quick tip of roasted carrots sticks are so easy to make just call them carrot fries and the kids will love them. He is correct because all of us big kids loved them. His veggie pockets would be a wonderful feature on your Vote for School Lunch menu in October as that is one of the contestants looking to win your vote. Ken's quick technique made it look so easy but we all know you need a little extra time if wraps are on the menu. Thank you to Ken Miller who is always there to support SNA.

Our new comer to volunteer to be our chef this summer and demonstrate her outstanding farm fresh potato salad was Donna Miner from Chicopee Schools. She was assisted by her director, Joanne Lennon, but you could tell Donna is a wizard in the kitchen. The children in Chicopee are lucky to have

Continued on page 8

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Things I am Thankful For	1
New Certification Program	2
High Cost of Healthy Food	3
Maximize Your Food Show	4
Lip Sync Contest	5
Mass. Harvest for Students Week	6
Did You Know?	9
What's In It for Me?	10

Certification Program Has A New Look

by Sheila Parisien, SNS

SNA's certification program has changed to meet the needs of today's school nutrition and foodservice professionals. Certification is now more attainable for all levels of personnel and the opportunities to earn CEUs to maintain certification have been expanded.

Why become certified? Our programs are constantly changing. All levels of staff are required to be aware of, trained in and practice government mandates and regulations. Food Safety certification and HACCP training are in every kitchen. Local districts are bridging the gap between education and a well-nourished child through the adoption of Wellness Policies. Time and financial pressures are putting a tremendous burden on our programs. With all the added demands and mandates to be trained in so many areas, it's time that we are all recognized as the professionals that we are. Lunch ladies are a thing of the past. Your kitchens are staffed with trained school nutrition and foodservice professionals. Becoming certified will give you the credibility you need and deserve to be recognized as a trained and skilled professional.

The new certification program took effect on September 1, 2008. To request a certification guide with complete details, contact SNA Service Center at 800-877-8822.

Highlights of the new program are:

- Certification is now annual. Members must earn CEUs annually and pay an annual renewal fee.
- Records of CEUs earned will be maintained by individuals. SNA will check proof of CEUs earned via a random audit. Only those selected for an audit will be required to submit documentation. The types of documentation accepted include certificates of completion, copies of rosters, transcripts, program agendas, confirmation letters, badges and payment receipts.
- There are expanded opportunities for required coursework for all levels.
- Opportunities to earn CEUs have been expanded to reflect participation in leadership roles, as well as real-life experiences and lifelong learning concepts.

- There is a new Trainer Certification level. This was added to ensure quality training and course standardization across the country. Currently Massachusetts has one SNA Certified Trainer, our Vice President Janice King. For information on becoming a trainer, contact the SNA Service Center.
- If you are presently certified, you will keep your current renewal date and will be automatically transferred to the annual program at your next renewal date. You are however now required to keep a file of your CEUs earned.

Confused? Come to the fall conference and speak with a member of the membership committee or contact me at parisiens@mersd.org and I will put you in touch with the representative in your chapter.

SNA Fall Membership Drive Strengthen the Voice

SNA's Fall Membership Drive is in effect until October 31, 2008. This year's theme is **STRENGTHEN THE VOICE**. It is more critical than ever for SNA to have as many members as possible uniting as one voice. Issues such as rising food costs, nutrition standards, reauthorization and enhancing the image of our programs are all in the forefront. The more voices, the stronger we are and the louder we'll be heard. So we're asking you to recruit at least one new member and help to make SNA's voice heard.

Each time you recruit a new member between now and October 27, your name will be placed in a drawing for a one-year free membership. The drawing will take place on October 28 at the Fall Conference.

The High Cost of Healthy Food How Do We Make it All Work?

By Mary Joan McLarney, MS, RD, SNA Nutrition Chairperson

Food Service Directors are faced with the complex challenge of serving healthy meals while being battered by the “perfect storm” of energy, food, labor and material costs all increasing dramatically during the last two years. In June 2008 the Massachusetts Public Health Association Food and Nutrition Section sponsored a forum to discuss how to make fresh, healthy food available and accessible to all communities.

The panelists included Larry Dixon, adjunct professor at Simmons College who works on developing local sustainable agriculture in Western Mass. Meg Coward, Executive Director of Waltham Community Farm, which grows local produce and provides it at low cost to citizens in need as well as I, the Food Service Director of the Somerville Public Schools, servicing the Somerville Community, where 65% of the student population is eligible for free or reduced price lunch. One of the overriding concerns was that all of the panelists worked with populations in poor communities or with low socio-economic status, and this group of individuals, which traditionally is most at risk for poor health, faced the greatest barriers to afford healthy food.

All of the panelists concluded that providing healthy fresh food was more expensive to make available, however, all were successfully able to continue to provide fresh produce despite the many challenges. The continuous theme that emerged was that for the first time in many years, purchasing and serving local produce has become cost effective, and in many cases less expensive than purchasing produce from a large vendor receiving produce internationally.

The benefits of purchasing local products are many. Purchasing local products provides an economic stimulus for the local economy and helps to preserve local resources from development. It provides a known source of where products are grown, which is particularly important in light of the rash of outbreaks of Food Borne Illness. Local produce is fresh, delicious and often of superior quality when purchased in season. The dramatic rise in the cost of food has provided a “silver lining” to this “perfect storm” by providing a new focus on local produce, a resource that is readily available and only needs community support to be cultivated. Purchasing local products is one way that Somerville has been

able to reign in the high cost of healthy food. The Somerville School Committee, following the recommendation of Superintendent Anthony Pierantozzi, passed a preference to purchase from local vendors for contract awards allowing the City of Somerville to award contracts in excess of the State Contract limit of \$25,000 for the 2008–2009 school year. This allows Somerville to select vendors who are able to provide locally grown, fresher products without price being the sole determining factor.

Other strategies that Somerville has used to successfully meet the challenges of providing healthy fresh food to students include the following:

- continuous focus on improving the food and menu quality offered
- increasing system sales by developing new internal and external markets
- rigorously controlling system costs and expenses
- continuous staff education and training
- pursuit of grant funding
- continuous infrastructure and facility improvements
- computerization of the Food Service Department
- School District Support of department initiatives
- communication about department programs to staff, students, parents and teachers

All of these strategies have been necessary to help accomplish the goal of providing the best quality food for the students of Somerville and operating a financially successful program. However, as the demands of providing healthy food have become more financially challenging it is imperative that we continue to receive the necessary help and support of the Federal and State government in the form of sufficient reimbursement dollars to keep pace with rising costs and inflation. School Food Service Directors need the resources and tools to effectively make changes for program improvements, failure to receive the necessary funding to provide healthy food will derail the changes that so many Program Directors have worked to implement.

In summary, we all must work together to become better stewards of our precious local resources. When managing our School Food Service operations we must always plan and think how our decisions will affect not only short term interests but ultimately have a long term benefit for all.

How to Maximize Your Food Show Floor Visit

by David Nichols, Thurston Foods, SNA Industry Council Member

Whether you are a Food Show veteran or a Food Show rookie; I hope this article brings you some insight and perspective of a vendor's expectations of a Food Show. A Food Show can be overwhelming; think about it....over a hundred booths manned by a minimum of two sales people per booth....that's OVER 200 sales people in the building! That could make you run away before you get started. Hopefully I haven't scared you away with that thought. Stay with me....in the following paragraphs my goal is give you some ideas and plans to make the show more fun and less overwhelming.

I am a sales person...there I've admitted it! But guess what; I am NOT trying to sell you something you don't need, AND I am selling you something you will use over and over again. So what does this mean? It means we need each other. We provide you products and new ideas for your menu or program. We see you regularly during the course of the school year; sometimes more than our own relatives (which may not be a bad thing!). We plan on building long term, trusting relationships with you, our customer. We are people, doing our jobs and look forward to meeting ALL of you at our booth. (where we are being held captive for 4 hours!!). So....please stop by, say hello and let's see where this whole food show experience will take us.

A food show should provide mutual benefits for the vendor and the customer. So what are your benefits?

- New products for your menu; fresh ideas to keep the students coming back for more
- Products to improve your wellness programs; manufacturers understand your challenges and are producing products to meet these needs.
- Systems to streamline your programs; computer systems, equipment, POS
- Commodity information and product availability; manufacturer and broker reps are the experts!
- DEALS!! When it's buying show (as the upcoming show on Oct 27 is), opportunity for cost savings are tremendous
- Programs; some vendors can offer programs for the school year. Sometimes you just have to ask the question!
 - What's a program you might ask? It could be ongoing rebates, allowances, premiums or special pricing (Keep in mind; volume drives these programs)
- Developing relationships with your vendors – the better we know you; the more we understand your needs which leads to more effective sales calls in the future
 - How many times have you said, "That sales person is nice, but they waste my time with things I don't need!" (Admit it; I've heard you!) Educate us on YOUR needs

On to the vendors' benefits, but first a little background info to help you fit into our shoes. In case you don't know; vendors pay for their space at a food show. We all understand that this is an investment for an opportunity to show our products and programs; however we do have to justify it to our companies. Just like you have to answer to a business manager or superintendent, we have "bosses" too. Booth cost is just part of the expense of a show. Product samples, decoration, point of sale material, giveaways and personnel add to the cost as well. These costs are justified when you (our customers) stop by and introduce yourselves, allow us to show you some products and possibly set up an appointment for future opportunities.

Our benefits:

- The obvious – sell a product!!
- Meet prospective customers
- Educate you about products; the features and benefits

continued on page 5

Food Show from Page 4

- Educate you more about our company and the benefits of doing business with us
- Discuss programs that help meet long term goals
- Develop and expand existing relationships for the future
- Did I mention selling a product?? (okay, so we can be pushy sometimes....but it's only because we are passionate about what we do and believe in our products)

So now we know our mutual benefits, but how can you overcome the time consuming and tiring walk through the show? Remember this is a work day; but it's not your everyday routine. You are in a different environment and working with different people. Rejoice in getting out of your box!! There are a lot of booths and vendors to visit; the show floor is big; so wear comfortable clothing, especially footwear. Think of it as killing two birds with one stone; working AND exercising all at once (I've seen some of you wearing pedometers; make it a contest, see who walks the most at the show).

Here is a suggestion I have learned over the years from your peers; include your staff in the show and assign them specific tasks or goals to accomplish. Depending on the number of staff you have attending and the number of goals you have will help you determine your "food show game plan". Allowing the managers to pair up with another staff member (much less scary to approach us "sales people") and more fun too! Assign them a specific menu item; pizza, chicken, deli bar items, snacks, etc. People love to be empowered; providing a staff member an important menu item makes them feel like more of your team. This ultimately allows you to spend more quality time at fewer booths.

Pre-show planning is a must; determine prior to the show what your needs are. Have staff meetings to find out what the students are asking for. Read the trade magazines to learn about trends; look at the advertising, it will give you a heads up to the products you should expect to see. Seek out your brokers; they are a wealth of information on the newest trends and new products. Maps are available from SNA of Mass.; preview them to have an overview of where your key suppliers are located. Time slips by quickly; so organize your booth visits according to your priorities.

Above all; know that we (your vendors) are at the show to help you with your needs. We know that if we can supply answers to you, we will make our sales. We are all people doing our jobs, trying to help you do yours. That means a mutual benefit for all of us; otherwise known as a "win - win" situation. So come on by, start by saying hello and let the food show experience begin! See you there!

SNA of Mass. Has Talent!

Come and Show Us Yours at the Lip Sync Contest!!!

by Martha Murray, Campbells, member SNA Industry Council

Are you fun? Do you have a wild side? Can you dance and wear a costume? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you need to include yourself in the lip sync contest. Make a dream come true- you know you've always secretly wanted to try it! This year, immediately following the SNA Annual Conference Dinner there will be a lip sync contest judging the most talented individual or team performance with prizes being awarded for the top three acts. Our very own Mike Marrocco from Cranston, RI will be officiating the ceremonies as our host DJ for the evening. He accepted the job with pleasure knowing just how much fun this night will be! We all know that we have some pretty creative individuals among us that can't wait to perform in front of their peers! Please submit the following information to Martha Murray at 978-337-6006 or Martha_murray@campbellsoup.com prior to October 17 for entry into the contest:

Name - Team Name and Team Members - Two songs with artists

Mike will provide the actual music to be played that evening for your act. Performances will include 1 song per team/individual but we need two submitted in case of a tie breaker- so be ready with two- just in case! Be Creative! Make it a District vs. district contest...Chapter vs. Chapter Contest or Committee vs. Committee Contest or show your talent all on your own. Practice, Practice, Practice! Wear creative costumes. It will certainly play a role in the judging criteria. (HINT, HINT) We look forward to seeing you there and watching your act take the stage!

Mass. Harvest for Students Week September 22–26, 2008

A Trip Around the State

Friday, September 26, at a special ceremony on campus, Ken Toong, Executive Director of University of Mass. Amherst Dining Services, was honored by the Mass. commissioner of Agriculture and State Representative Ellen Story for his outstanding achievements as a supporter of local goods and local farms. – **Kelly Erwin, Mass. Farm to School Project**

The Mass. Farm to School Project was honored to be the recipient of the *5% Day* donation of the **Whole Foods Market in Hadley** on Wednesday, September 17. In addition to selling many products from local farmers in their store, the staff at the Whole Foods Market in Hadley has been very supportive of the farm to school movement and wanted to contribute to Mass. Harvest for Students Week in particular. An informational table at the store resulted in great conversations with shoppers about farm to school activities in their communities. – **Kelly Erwin, Mass. Farm to School Project**

Oxford Public Schools is menuing new recipes from the Mass. Farm to School cook book just recently published. They have used many of these recipes over the last year and have made many repeat items. "We use lots of fresh produce daily. The Mass. Harvest for Students Week posters will be up as well as special information about local foods on our menus." – **Angela Scolaro, Food Service, Oxford Public Schools**

We are serving locally grown roasted vegetables, local tomatoes, local pears, cucumbers and salad fixings on our menu. We are also featuring broccoli and cauliflower during the week because these are our vegetables of the month. We have displays of the vegetables explaining the nutrition, history and features of each vegetable. The schools are setting up baskets of these vegetables so students can identify them whole and not processed. We also sent a nutrition newsletter to all the elementary parents that features broccoli and cauliflower and a recipe that goes with it. One of the recipes is low fat broccoli alfredo. We are serving that to our seniors this week. We will be displaying lots of Harvest Week posters. – **Joanne Lennon, Food Service, Chicopee Schools**

We will be promoting our second annual Harvest to Students Week in the North Attleboro, MA schools this year. We are serving local red bliss potatoes, watermelon, mixed field greens with croutons, baked potatoes with cheese and broccoli and pasta primavera. We have been serving our teachers and administrators fresh local produce as part of their catered meals this summer and promote it with a little sign next to the salad or vegetable trays which says "New England grown." – **Missy Hope, Food Service North Attleboro School**

All our school will be featuring farm fresh items on their lunches that week. I feature farm fresh items on the menu the last week of each month during the year, also. – **Joan Huhtanen, Food Services, East Longmeadow**

Fresh local peaches, tomatoes, squash, broccoli, and watermelon will be on the menu in the Wrentham public schools. During Mass. Harvest for Students Week Representative Richard Ross will join the students in Wrentham for lunch. – **Judy White, Food Service, Wrentham Public Schools**

During Harvest Week we will be featuring locally grown pears, apples and peaches. If available we will also feature local vegetables. – **Carol Judd, Food Service Blackstone Millville Regional School District**

Seeds of Solidarity Celebrates Massachusetts Harvest for Students Week: On Friday September 26th, Seeds of Solidarity Education Center staff will travel to gardens located at their seven partner schools in the Orange Elementary, R.C. Mahar Regional, and Athol Royalston Regional Districts, as well as Swift River Elementary to: Plant 2008 Seeds in One Day!! ...like cool weather tolerant Spinach, Asian Greens, Pea Greens, Chard, Kale and Garlic-- that will result in salads enjoyed by hundreds of students, teachers, and cafeterias in late fall. – **Deborah Habib, Seeds of Solidarity Farm Education Center**

Waltham Public Schools, has prepared a menu that highlights produce from Waltham Fields Community Farm and other local sources. Throughout the week, student lunches will include locally sourced apples, cucumbers, summer squash, and fresh salad ingredients. The Waltham Public Schools Food Service Department has partnered with Healthy Waltham to feature a different vegetable each month, with a goal of serving the chosen vegetable each week throughout the month. Waltham

Fields Community Farm is helping with this effort by supplying the Food Service Department with harvests of summer squash in September, sweet potatoes in October, and Waltham Butternut squash in November, a popular variety of winter squash developed on the very land now leased by the farm, when it was being used for agricultural research by the UMass Extension Service. Studies have shown that students served fresh locally grown items often eat significantly more helpings of fruits and vegetables. With groups like the Massachusetts Farm to School Project working to make more connections through technical assistance and events like Massachusetts Harvest for Students Week this number is sure to increase! A highlight of the week in Waltham will be a special celebration on Wednesday, September 24th, from 3:00 – 5:00 pm. Waltham Fields Community Farm will host a farm-to-table event in partnership with the Waltham Public Schools and Healthy Waltham, engaging students and special guests in harvesting butternut squash, cider pressing local apples, recipe preparation and healthful eating. The event will be a great chance for Waltham to show support for maintaining a strong farm economy in the state and promoting fresh fruit and vegetable consumption in our community. – **Rhonda Spigel, Food Service, Waltham Public Schools**

Students at the Leverett Elementary School will celebrate the Week by picking apples from school trees for the food service manager to make into applesauce; having an all school “garden recess” in which potatoes will be harvested for lunch; and hosting a speaker from Riverland Farm. Additional farm fresh products from Czajkowski Farm in Hadley will be featured on the menus. – **Susie Chang, parent, Leverett Elementary School**

In the Boston public school system, we have ordered local corn on the cob for the 7 schools that we will be working with throughout this year to introduce more local foods into our school lunches. Mass. grown corn will be served at: English High School, South Boston High School, Jeremiah Burke High School, Edwards Middle School, Hennigan Elementary School, Mission Hill Elementary and High School during Mass. Harvest for Students Week. – **Kim Szeto, Food Project staff person working with Boston Public Schools**

We're doing a harvest dinner for the boarding students and families on 9/25. The Menu will be as follows: Lanni orchard apple cider, Idella's oatmeal molasses bread, Tomato basil salad (Lanni orchard), Corn chowder (Warner

Farm Sunderland), Turkey pot pie (Owen's Poultry Farm, Needham, Czakowski Farm, Hadley), Smokehouse knockwurst (Mattapan) on braised red cabbage and apples (Lanni Orchard), Boiled baby redskin potatoes (Czakowski Farm, Hadley), Macaroni and cheese (Cabot farms, Vermont), (Oakhurst dairy, Maine), Roasted butternut squash (Czakowski Farm, Hadley) with Fessenden made maple syrup Sauteed green and yellow squash (Lanni orchard), Ice cream cake (Richardson's Dairy, Middleton). – **Ken Miller, Food Service, Fessenden School**

Maynard is offering a locally grown product each day during the week of September 22nd, as we did last year. Starting with Monday we offer locally grown peppers and onions. Vegetables for our garden salad on two days, corn on the cob, peppers and tomatoes for our Welcome Back Cookout and fresh carrots. We put table cards in front of the product that we are using that day and tell the students what we are using that day and where it came from. The students like the fresh product and eat more of it when they know it's local. – **Bob Kinch, Food Service, Maynard Public Schools**

Our big event will be corn shucking. It was a huge success last year and we're planning on repeating the fun! Students will shuck ears of corn at breakfast (Thurs 9/25) which will then be prepared by the food service staff to be served on the lunch menu that day. And of course we'll be serving lots of local fruits and veggies from Lanni Orchards that week. I believe Groundwork Somerville will be doing a Food Miles relay at recess time with kids. – **Charlotte Stephenson, Nutrition Outreach Coordinator, Somerville Public Schools**

To celebrate Massachusetts Harvest for Students Week, the Cambridge Schools food service department will have 2 local foods on the menu each day in all 12 elementary schools. Each cafeteria has information on display about the local vegetables on the menu. Taste tests will be conducted during the week, and in the month of September, for a delicious fresh soup that features local root vegetables. The soup will be placed on the regular lunch menu this fall. School nutritionists from the Cambridge Public Health Department coordinated the celebration and partnered with CitySprouts school garden program for the taste tests. Many of the school libraries will participate with a display about the local vegetables served in the cafeteria. – **Dawn Olcott, Public Health Department, Cambridge Public Schools**

Fertile Ground and Hampshire Regional School District are continuing an effort to improve the nutritional value and

Thankful continued from Page 1

Donna as she told us how many pounds of potatoes she needs to use for one day of lunch. Donna has joined our executive board this year as a delegate–elect in Chapter One. She is someone to watch as she continues to share her many talents not only with the children but now with SNA.

We are all thankful for the wonderful past year that SNA enjoyed under the leadership of Joanne Morrissey who is the Director of Food Services for the Quincy Public Schools. She has just stepped down as our SNA President but her commitment to this organization continues as well as her legacy. She was an amazing president for our organization. She was recently awarded a tremendous honor at our national conference this past summer as the outstanding president of the year award. This is given each year at the national conference. She and her executive board worked very hard this past school year accomplishing great things by raising our membership, encouraging more members to earn the distinction of certification and becoming credentialed. Her continued commitment to SNA is very much appreciated by all of this year's executive committee as she continues to guide us, especially me.

We have had some amazing Directors apply and attend our Future Leaders conference that is held each April. This year we are once again hoping to have many people apply. This helps you understand how to be a leader for SNA and also a leader in your own program. Our members who have graduated from the program include Jane McLucas from Norwood, Janice King from Quaboag, Judy White–Orlando from Wrentham and Plainville and Melody Gustafson from Monson. They will all tell you what an amazing opportunity Future Leaders is and I would like to thank them for caring about SNA of Mass.

We are all struggling both at our jobs and at home with the high cost of food. Our professional development committee, under the leadership of Kristen Morello from Reading Schools, has committed to provide training on this important issue at our next conferences. This is something you won't want to miss at Fall conference in Marlborough October 28–29. Our conferences also offer you an opportunity to learn from your peers, learn more about SNA educational opportunities such as scholarships both local and national, stay informed with the DESE and meet with industry partners. We are also having Dr. Walter Willet as our guest speaker on Tuesday morning. He is one of

the top sought after nutrition experts in the country and he is working together with SNA in offering guidance and advice to help all of us serve the food that children need to be healthy.

In closing I would like to remind each and every food service employee to be involved with child nutrition legislation. Remember that we represent all of the children who can not vote. We are working very closely with SNA national regarding the re–authorization this year. Every four years our congress and senate take the opportunity to review our national program and add items that need to be addressed. This is where HACCP and wellness policies came from in 2005. Never has it been more important to have our voices heard with the high cost of food, fuel and benefits. We are thankful for all they do and now they understand how important school nutrition is to a child regarding their health and wellness. The farm bill passed this year with many improvements to nutrition programs across the country. It is so important that all of our children have access to nutritional and affordable meals.

Thank you all for what you do each day to improve the life of a child.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

SNA of Mass. Fall Conference and Food Show 2008
October 28–29, 2008
Best Western Royal Plaza and Trade Center
Marlborough, MA

SNA Legislative Action Conference LAC
March 1–4, 2009
JW Marriott
Washington DC

SNA of Mass. Spring Conference 2009
Commodity Connection
March 18–19, 2009
Plymouth Radisson
Plymouth, MA

SNA Annual National Conference 2009
June 29 – July 2, 2009
Las Vegas, NV

SNA of Mass. Fall Conference and Food Show 2009
October 27–28, 2009
Best Western Royal Plaza and Trade Center
Marlborough, MA

Harvest Week continued from Page 7

appeal of lunches served in district schools by organizing a training session with Sherry Fiske, former Food Service Director in Orange, MA. Sherry has extensive experience serving local produce in Orange Public Schools and getting the students to eat the variety of foods served. Training participants will learn new kid-tested recipes, discuss time and cost saving strategies for using local produce, and make connections to area farms interested in selling to area schools. The training is scheduled at the beginning of Massachusetts Harvest for Students Week as a special way of celebrating our commitment to finding better ways to serve locally grown foods. – **Katherine Sands, Fertile Ground, Williamsburg**

We're serving Roasted Carrot Sticks with Oregano and Bosc Pears at every school in Springfield next week. – **Bill O'Brien, Area Manager, Springfield Public Schools**

We are offering the following in the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School next week:

Tuesday we will serve chicken, mashed potatoes and the harvest blend vegetables from Holden Produce. We will serve local apples all week. Friday is Johnny Appleseed's Birthday – applesauce, pasta with fresh basil, olive oil, & garlic grown in our science dept. posters are up and I have artificial fruits & veggies displayed nicely around with signs that say buy local produce. At the elementary level we purchase locally grown produce throughout the year when it is available. This month we have featured farm fresh peaches, farm fresh cucumber sticks, fresh stir fry vegetables to name a few things. This is a great program!

– **Kirsten Nelson, Food Service Director, Acton Public Schools / Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools**

Six students took part in a gardening mini-course at the school last May, with Conwell teacher Kathleen Mahoney and parent Janine Modestow leading the effort. "Our theme was planting items that could be eaten in school in June and September," explained Mahoney. "And we included some foods that kids might not be familiar with, including orange plum tomatoes, beets, swiss chard and kale." Its Conwell cook Kelly Wolf's job to prepare the foods that are still being harvested and serve them at lunch. Beets, mashed potatoes, carrots, tomatoes, and lettuce have all been served. "Stephanie, in first grade, just loves the orange tomatoes," Wolf exclaimed. "They're pretty and they're very sweet!" – **Wendy McCaul, Gateway Regional School District**

On Wednesday, September 24, UMass Amherst Dining Services will feature Farmers' Markets at all of the Dining Commons. Local farmers will be on hand to talk with students and showcase their products. The menu for that evening will be: Carved Roast Turkey (local), Braised Pork Chops with (local) Apples, Broiled Wild Sustainable Salmon with Herb Butter, Portobello Mushrooms, Boiled New Potatoes with Fine Herbs (local), Mixed Grill Summer Vegetables (local), Corn on the Cob (local). From the UMass Bake Shop: Spice Cake with Maple Frosting and Pumpkin Bread Pudding. Local Honey products will be available for sale. – **Martha Monaghan, Dining Services, University of Mass. at Amherst**

Smith College will be celebrating Massachusetts Harvest week with candlelight dinners in their dining program on Thursday, September 25. The menu will feature pot roast, local sweet potatoes, butternut squash, turnips, homemade anadama bread and pumpkin pie for dessert. The vegan/vegetarian option will feature a homemade shepherd's pie which will include a soy protein and bountiful local vegetables and mashed potatoes. In addition to the special items for Mass. Harvest for Students Week, Smith is serving many different items from local farms and producers in the College's fall menus including honey from Apex Orchards, apples, apple cider, kale, peaches, swiss chard and green peppers from Outlook Farm. A variety of lettuce is served daily from PVGA, red potatoes from Szawlowski Farm, butternut and acorn squash from Czajkowski Farm, tomatoes and grape tomatoes from Harvest Farm, eggplant from Main Street Garden, zucchini and summer squash from Hibbard Farm and cabbage and onions from J&J Farm and Ziomek Farm. – **Kathleen Zieja, Dining Services, Smith College**

Did You Know?

- Katie Millett has joined the SNA national Board of Directors.
- Joanne Morrissey received the SNA President's Gold Award of Excellence at ANC presented by SNA National.
- Photos from ANC 08 and the SNA of Mass. Annual Meeting are posted on our website photo album www.schoolnutrition.info.
- Our conference handouts are posted on the member-only section of our website after each conference when available.
- SNA of Mass. offers two scholarships opportunities and applications are due in April 2009. Check our website for more details.

What's In It For Me?

by *Liz Wheeler, Chicoppee, MA*

I spent the first few years after high school finding a wonderful man, getting married, having children and working nights and weekends as a Nurse Aide. Long before it was fashionable to be a "working mom", I was. My wonderful husband and I wanted a house, so he worked days, came home took care of the three right in a row kids, and I went to work 4p.m. to 11:30 p.m. and got up early every day to take care of the three right in a row kids. How did we do this???? I honestly can't tell you, we just did it.

By the time our youngest was in Kindergarten, I was burnt out. Taking care of people that are sick is hard physical labor and to this day all caregivers have my deep respect. I took a year off to re-group and just be home. When I felt it was time to help out my sweetie with the finances of our life I thought I'd give school lunch a try. I could be a sub, work when the three in a row's were in school and have my summers off. I thought this would be a great way to buy time and figure out what I wanted to do JUST FOR ME. At some point in time, I wanted to have a job that I loved, a career, a la de da up tempo VIP position. I would influence the lives of hundreds !!!! But for now, I could scrub pots and pans, sub school to school, make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and have my summers free to dream of that great job.

Twenty eight years later, I have that great job. I found something JUST FOR ME !!!! I found a job I love, a career, a la de da up tempo VIP position. I am a cook manager in an elementary school. I can still scrub pots and pans, sub if I need to, and I still make a pretty mean peanut butter and Jelly sandwich. I am also working for a wonderful director who believes in education for all staff. I am serve safe certified, first aid certified, HACCP trained, and a card carrying member of both the School Nutrition Association of Massachusetts, and the National School Nutrition Association.

I've been to California, Illinois, Colorado, Florida to attend our yearly national convention. I found out that what was in it for me, was a chance to take pride in a job that really can influence peoples lives. Every once in a while, a student will return and tell me that some of their best memories of grammar school revolved around lunch. A lot of the staff in our school remind me frequently that they cannot teach a hungry child. I feel pretty good about myself and I still look forward to going to work every day. And those summers off, I gave that up twenty years ago when we started a summer feeding program. Now I tell people we're CSI Miami, WE NEVER CLOSE.

I finally found a place I belong, that's what's in it for me.



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