

President's Message Spring 2018

Good Morning! Every morning I start breakfast at Canyon Park Middle School with this greeting. The students are busy waking up and getting ready for school, and they are hungry. There are students whom I know by name, what they eat, and some students that just want to eat and go talk to their friends. It has been a wonderful opportunity to get to know these children. We tell each other jokes and share smiles; and I tell them, "Thank you; have a wonderful day."

Touching children's lives with a smile and nutritious food are super powers school nutrition professionals possess. WSNA is here to help you grow and strengthen those superpowers. It has been my opportunity as WSNA president to participate and observe our professionals as they serve the children of Washington State.

The first part of 2018 has been busy on the legislative side, visiting our representatives in Olympia and in Washington DC. WSNA's Public Policy and Legislation (PP & L) team has been hard at work. The governor signed Senate House Bill - Breakfast after the Bell. WSNA has been working with our representatives for several years on getting this bill passed with the correct language. Our PP & L committee and Mitch Denning, our lobbyist, have worked hard on this bill. It is not just one individual but a talented team that guides WSNA, and I thank them all for their demanding work.

During the first of March I had the opportunity to join nearly 900 school nutrition professionals, industry partners, and other supporters of K-12 school meal programs for several busy days in our nation's capital, participating in SNA's 46th annual Legislative Action Conference (LAC). At the top of the agenda was prepping for the annual Charge the Hill, a day of visits to members of Congress to advocate for the priorities of SNA's 2018 Position Paper by sharing our individual stories from the front lines in America's school cafeterias. General sessions and breakouts alike offered opportunities for attendees to dig into facts and figures, perspectives and perceptions, strategies and tactics.

But even before we headed to Capitol Hill, we got an unexpected boost of support when Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Stephen Censky spoke at the Closing General Session and used the opportunity to announce a greater flexibility for small, rural school districts challenged to meet the current education and training requirements for school meal program directors. The rule would provide relief for districts with fewer than 2,500 students. Censky also announced the roll-out of a suite of customizable resources from USDA that are designed to help districts improve access to and accuracy of meal applications.

Thank you to Ed Aylesworth and Leeda Beha for organizing appointments to meet with the representatives of Washington State. We had a full day of meetings with several representatives. I had the opportunity to meet with Congresswomen Suzan DelBene and Cathy McMorris Rogers to educate them on the needs of our children in Washington State.

WSNA's Spring Workshop was held in Wenatchee at the end of March. Vice President Pam Milleson planned a day of current educational sessions for our professionals. Spring Workshop is a wonderful place to reconnect with other professionals and reenergize ourselves to provide nutritional meals to the children.

Preparations are in full swing for the 57th Annual State Conference of the Washington School Nutrition Association. This is the premier learning and networking event for Washington State! President-elect Vickie Ayers and WSNA's conference committee have been busy making sure every detail is ready to welcome you to Tacoma August 6 – 8, with pre-conference classes scheduled for August 5. Here is a peek at all the opportunities that await your arrival: education sessions, intriguing new products, and innovative solutions. We are fortunate to have two dynamic presenters, Logan Weber and JoAnne Robinett, MSA, SNS for our general speakers. You will be inspired, motivated and educated with their presentations. It is also an opportunity to network with your peers from across the state. The Night of Entertainment will be a Sock Hop with the band Wally & the Beaves. Get ready to dance!. The Presidents Banquet will be an evening to remember with comedian Kermet Apio entertaining us. See you there!

We all have the capacity to be a superhero. In order to become one, you just have to find your unique power or ability and exploit it for the greater good. The cape and mask are optional accessories, but a kind heart is essential. Robert Clancy