SNAPAHAPPENINGS







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1

School Nutrition Association of Pennsylvania

2023-24 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Meals for All Task Force

This past spring the School Nutrition Association of PA created the Meals For All Task Force. We were inspired by states like Maine, California, Nevada, Massachusetts and Vermont who had already passed free meal legislation for the 22-23 school year. The task force was created to advocate for permanent free meals for all students through the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program in the state of Pennsylvania.

Our "asks" are small compared to the entirety of the PA state budget, and it is money well spent to invest in our student's future. We contacted legislators and found our champions. Since the PA Legislature was not back in session until the end of September, an Executive action had to be taken. State Senators wrote a letter to Governor Wolf, urging him to find the funds. SNAPA activated its membership and we called on our contacts in Harrisburg to express the concern we felt as School Nutrition Professionals. Our pleas were heard, we had succeeded in getting free breakfast extended into the 22-23 school year!

There are now two bills, one in the PA Senate SB1327 and one in the PA House HB2829 calling for Universal Free Meals. Contact your local representatives and tell them how important school meals are for the children in your area. Be sure to share your personal stories and visit snapa.org/mealsforall for more information on how to advocate, talk with your legislator and tackle the tough questions.

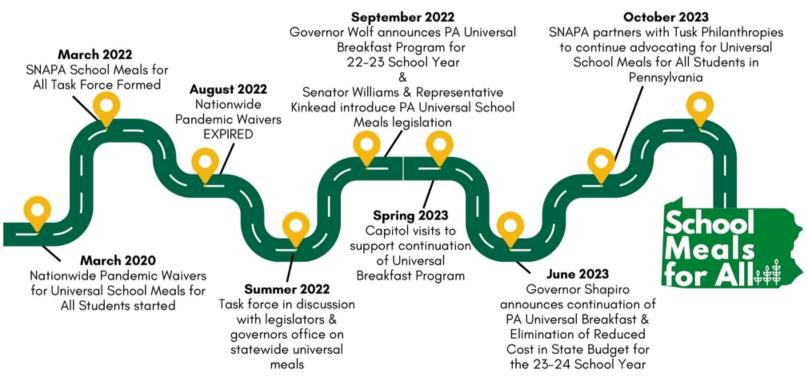
By: Nicole Melia MS, RD, LDN



SNAPA School Meals for All Task Force

During the pandemic, we saw first hand the positive impact Universal School Meals had on our families and children. When these nationwide waivers were set to expire, the School Nutrition Association of Pennsylvania (SNAPA) School Meals for All Task Force was created. A growing number of states across the country were beginning to pass Universal School Meal legislation to support child food insecurity and academic equity. The SNAPA task force formed the Universal School Meals Coalition in Pennsylvania which was instrumental in the inception of the Universal School Breakfast program and current proposed house & senate Universal School Meals bills. The work from this task force and coalition is not complete. We are advocating for all school children in Pennsylvania to have access to breakfast and lunch at no cost in school.

How Did We Get Here?



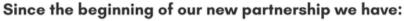
Pennsylvania Facts

- 1 in 8 children in Pennsylvania are food insecure. In rural areas, it is as high as 1 in 5 children.
- Currently, 60% of school students in the Commonwealth qualify for free or reduced meals.
 However, 23% of food insecure children still do not qualify for free or reduced meals.
- When Universal Breakfast was implemented, there was a 29% increase in breakfast participation across Pennsylvania.



<u>Partnership with Solving Hunger</u> <u>Tusk Philanthropy Group</u>

SNAPA entered into a partnership with Solving Hunger- a branch of Tusk Philanthropies, in October of 2023. Our partnership fuels our organizations' primary objective of ensuring all PA students receive breakfast and lunch at no cost. Solving Hunger, an organization founded on the belief that food is a fundamental right, collaborates with allied organizations to give them the real tools and support that they need to get legislation passed. This includes, funding for media campaigns to drive messaging, conducting public opinion polls to educate legislators, and guidance from experienced professionals.





UNIVERSAL

SCHOOL MEALS

Met with the Governor's office in Harrisburg, advocating for Universal Meals in PA and supplied resources demonstrating the positive impacts to our membership and the students of Pennsylvania.



Conducted a formal public opinion poll to understand beliefs and interests of voters around Universal School Meals.



Held an inaugural Universal School Meals for PA Coalition Meetinga collection of over 14 allied organizations, with 40+ participants. The meeting established a unified advocacy plan to reach the coalition goals.

Add no cost lunch to the Governor's budget proposal in addition to current Universal School Breakfast Program.

Support SB 180 & HB 180 proposed legislation to provide healthy school meals at no cost to all Pennsylvania students.

Coming Soon

- Polling results from Pennsylvania voters
- Information on how to reach out to your local legislators for support
- New Universal School Meals PA Website
- New Social Media Pages





Energize your students with milk, cheese and yogurt!

At breakfast, lunch and snacktime, our programs, resources and recipes help you deliver good nutrition in every school meal.

CLICK HERE to find the latest menu solutions, or contact us for support at **schools@milk4u.org**

















American Dairy Association North East Supports Farm to School Programs with Equipment & Resources



Pennsylvania Schools Receive over \$500,000 in Farm to School Grants

Pennsylvania's Farm to School Program provides schools with funding to improve access to healthy, local foods and increase agriculture education opportunities for pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. The program bridges the gap between children and the food system by connecting them to the fresh, healthy food available from Pennsylvania agricultural producers in their community. Over 44 percent of school districts in state of Pennsylvania have embraced Farm to School programs and the numbers are growing rapidly. with 87 percent of farm to school programs implemented within the past three years.

American Dairy Association North East (ADANE) is proud to work with schools to enhance their farm to school offerings with equipment and resources. Last year, ADANE awarded the Pittsburgh Public School District with a Hometown Grant that funded the purchase of a "Grab and Go Breakfast Cart" for the Obama Academy ensuring that students have access to fresh, locally produced dairy foods.

Kaleigh Tussert, RD and Health and Nutrition Specialist at Pittsburgh Public Schools noted, "The students love the new breakfast cart, they are excited about the addition to their daily breakfast options. We have a 22% increase in breakfast meals over last year with this student favorite addition to the breakfast menu."

To learn more about ADANE's Farm to School resources, visit our <u>website</u> which provides <u>recipes</u>, <u>classroom lesson plans</u>, links to <u>virtual farm tours</u> and grant information. You can also connect with an American Dairy Association North East Youth Programs Specialists at <u>schools@milk4u.org</u> to get started!

Pennsylvania offers \$500,000 annually in Farm to School grant opportunities. Grants can be used to procure local foods for school cafeterias, classroom curricula, experiential learning, and field trips to local farms or other agricultural operations. To find out more visit Pennsylvania's Farm to School Grant website.



JANUARY 22 nd 2024 DONEGAL HIGH SCHOOL

1025 KOSER RD. MOUNT JOY, PA 17552



NEW EVENT! 2024 SNAPA Commodity Food Show

SNAPA will be partnering with the PA Department of Agriculture to showcase commodity products and conduct tastings. In the afternoon, join us for a food show dedicated to all processed commodity items!

This is your opportunity to explore the finest in school nutrition commodities before allocation. Don't miss it!

AGENDA

9:30am	Registration and Coffee Talk	Free for
10:30am	Brown box cutting and Ag meet	SNAPA
	and greet	Director Level
11:30am	Networking Break	
12:00pm	Processed Commodity Food Show	Members
2:00pm	Show Ends	

PDE/Project PA Farm to School Update

The Pennsylvania Department of Education and Project PA (Penn State) invite you to participate in exciting farm to school-related opportunities in the coming months.

Farm to Child Nutrition Summit

Building on the success of the first statewide Farm to Child Nutrition Summit offered in June of 2022, plans are underway to offer a second statewide summit in 2024. Date and location are to be determined.

Hands-on Culinary Training Sessions Focused on <u>Pennsylvania Harvest of the</u> Month (PA HOM)

Three 2-day hands-on culinary training sessions led by Chef Bill Scepansky were offered in the summer of 2023. Sessions will be offered again in the summer of 2024. These sessions will focus on PA HOM. Attendees will receive PA HOM signage and have the opportunity to apply for up to \$1,000 to conduct taste-tests in their schools featuring PA HOM items. Travel scholarships will be available for a select number of attendees. Dates, locations, and additional details will be posted on the <u>Project PA website</u>. Five ½-day sessions are also planned for Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program sponsors.





PA HOM Student Contests

Congratulations to the schools/school districts that are receiving funding to implement PA HOM student contests. A list of awardees can be found on the <u>PA HOM website</u>. Contests include coloring contests, recipe contests, photography contests, poster contests, and more. Winning entries will be featured on the PA HOM website. Funds will be made available again for the 2024-2025 school year.

PA HOM Standardized Recipes

Through a USDA Team Nutrition grant, eight PA school districts were awarded funds to work on development of standardized recipes featuring PA HOM items. These newlydeveloped recipes were added to the "Recipes" section PA HOM website and are also included in the Institute of Child Nutrition, Child Nutrition Recipe Box, Recipes for Schools.

PA HOM Materials in Spanish

PA HOM newsletters and fact sheets have been translated into Spanish and will be made available in the "Downloads" section of the PA HOM website.

To learn more about farm to school and farm to early care and education activities, resources and opportunities check out the PA Farm to School Network (PFSN) at <u>pafarmtoschool.org</u> and don't miss the other article in this edition of SNAPA Happenings, submitted by Sam Gibb, Coordinator for the PFSN.

TRIPLE THE FUN PROMOTION

Qualifying Purchase Dates: 7/1 - 12/31/231

PIZZA

SKU	DESCRIPTION	POINTS
BIG DAI	DDY'S™ PRIMO RISING CRUST PIZZAS	
All	16" Cheese, Chicken, Meat, and Pepperoni Varieties	4
BIG DA	DDY'S™ BOLD 51% WHOLE GRAIN ROLLED EDGE PIZZAS	
All	Cheese and Pepperoni Varieties	4
BIG DA	DDY'S™ ORIGINAL ROLLED EDGE PIZZAS	
All	Cheese and Pepperoni Varieties	4
TONY'S	* 5" DEEP DISH PIZZAS	
All	Cheese and Pepperoni Varieties	2
TONY'S	* FIESTADA* WHOLE GRAIN PIZZA	
68523	Beef	1
TONY'S	S* 4" GALAXY PIZZA* PRODUCTS	
All	Cheese and Pepperoni Varieties	3
TONY'S	5* 4"x6" THICK CRUST PIZZAS	
68521	Cheese	1
TONY'S	5*4"x6" THIN CRUST PIZZAS	
All	Cheese, Pepperoni and Turkey Sausage Varieties	1
TONY'S	5* CLASSIC WEDGE PIZZAS	
All	Cheese and Pepperoni Varieties	1

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Make a new purchase of eligible items during the qualifying purchase dates



Submit qualifying purchases to THE KITCHEN CIRCLE"

DUMPLINGS WAS

	A Committee		
9	SKU	DESCRIPTION	POINTS
	CHEF O	NE® 0.8 OZ WHOLE WHEAT DUMPLINGS	
1	60585	Chicken and Vegetable	3
Ŵ	66970	Vegetable ²	3



Receive Bonus Points deposited into your Kitchen Circle account



Shop for rewards with all the points you've earned at SchwansKitchenCircle.com/premiums/

HANDHELD CON

SKU	DESCRIPTION	POINTS			
	BIG DADDY'S™ WHOLE GRAIN STUFFED SANDWICHES - INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED				
55237	Cheese	3			
55290	Pepperoni, Bulk	3			
55291	FIESTADA™ Beef	3			
55292	Buffalo-Style Chicken	3			
55293	Turkey Pepperoni	3			
TONY'S	TONY'S® BREAKFAST BAGELS - INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED				
67625	Cheese, Egg & Meat	3			
67626	Cheese & Egg	3			

For a full list of product descriptions and details, please visit: SchwansFoodservice.com/Product-List











Requests must be postmarked or submitted online no later than 2/28/24. May not be combined with any other Schwan's Food Service, Inc. offer or rebate. Minimum purchase of 150 cases to qualify for bonus points. Minimum purchase of 20 cases per category to participate in double or triple points. Maximum Payout 10,000 points per district. Available SY 23-24.

Mobile Hydroponic Garden Provides Education and Healthy Foods to State College Elementary Schools

By Travis Folmar

It is safe to say I do not have a "green thumb". I have never grown anything in a garden and kill basically all the house plants I have ever owned. However, I like to build things and I also like to educate students. I have been fascinated with hydroponics for several years and decided to jump in when I found a metal book shelf being thrown out behind our central kitchen. It created a perfect start to what I like to call our mobile garden.

The garden contains four, five-foot-long PVC pipes, a large water reservoir, a water pump, air pump and four large LED grow lights. The water pump pushes nutrient-filled water through the pipes and allows the roots of the plants to lay in the flowing water. As many as 24 plants can be grown at the same time in as little as 8 square feet of space.

I have also created another shelf that shows the entire plant life cycle with signage and an explanation on how to grow hydroponic plants from seed to harvest.



With this method, lettuce varieties can be fully grown in as little as four weeks. Additionally, because everything on wheels, we can showcase the garden in a different cafeteria every few months.

Providing students with a hydroponic garden, even a homemade one, can highlight to our students several things. First, gardening really can be fun! Building something and creating edible food from it was a great experience. Second, it shows students where our food comes from, how it grows and can be incorporated into several STEM lessons.

Hydroponic gardens are a great tool to not only educate students, but provide a fun atmosphere to grow delicious and healthy food right in front of them. I encourage everyone to explore how you can incorporate hydroponics into your programs. Tower gardens are easy to use and built to be all inclusive, or you can create your own!







U.S. CHILDREN ARE GETTING THEIR MOST NUTRITIOUS MEALS AT SCHOOL

Kids who eat school meals get more whole grains, milk, fruits and veggies during meal times AND have better diets overall compared to kids who don't eat school meals.1



The most nutritious foods kids eat are from schools!2

School meals are essential to the health of the children in our country. Compared to foods from the grocery store, restaurants and other sources, school meals give kids more whole grains, fruits, greens and beans, and less sugar sweetened drinks, refined grains, added sugar and saturated fat.



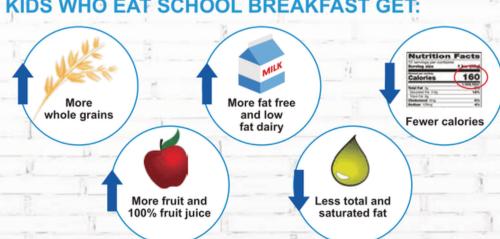


CLOSER LOOK

The USDA's School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study compared dietary intakes of kids participating in school breakfast and lunch to students not participating. Here's a look at a few key findings.3

SCHOOL BREAKFAST

KIDS WHO EAT SCHOOL BREAKFAST GET:





SCHOOL LUNCH

KIDS WHO EAT SCHOOL LUNCH GET:





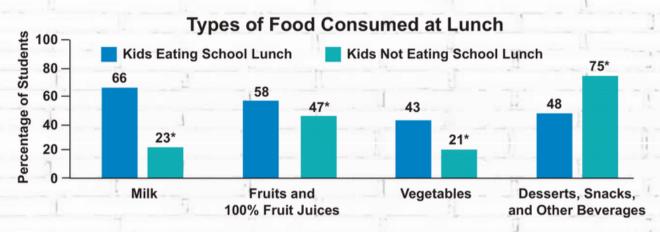












Source: USDA, SNMCS Final Report 4, Table 7.1. *Difference between school lunch participants and nonparticipants is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level.



Regularly eating school meals can boost diet quality & nutrient intake!4

- Kids, age 4 15, who ate school breakfast every day vs kids who ate it 0 to 4 days had more fruits, vegetables, fiber, whole grains, dairy and calcium.
- Kids who ate school lunch everyday vs those who ate it less frequently consumed more dairy and calcium.

Universal free school meals provide nutrition benefits and more for students!5

A recent study found that universal free school meals were associated with:

- Increased school meal participation
- Improved diet quality and food security

- · Fewer behavioral incidents

· Improved academic performance

Healthier body weights



- 2. Na M. Disparities in Diet Quality in School-Age Children—Opportunities and Challenges. JAMA Netw Open. 2021;4(4):e215358. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.5358
- 3. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support, School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study, Final Report Volume 4: Student Participation, Satisfaction, Plate Waste, and Dietary Intakes, https://fns-prod.azu
- 4. Au LE, Gurzo K, Gosliner W, Webb KL, Crawford PB, Ritchie LD. Eating School Meals Daily Is Associated with Healthier Dietary Intakes: The Healthy Communities Study, J Acad Nutr Diet. 2018 Aug;118(8):1474-1481
- 5. Cohen, J.F.W. et al. Universal School Meals and Associations with Student Participation, Attendance, Academic Performance, Diet Quality, Food Security, and Body Mass Index: A Systematic Review. Nutrients 2021, 13, 911





An on-the-go way to serve our top K-12 cereal brands!1

- Our biggest cereal bars yet, sure to excite students of all ages
- 2 oz. equivalent grains in each serving make for easy, one-handed eating
- A portable and shelf-stable solution for breakfast, lunch and snack without a mess!







Let's Welcome the New Director's Cohort Class of 23-24!

The room was buzzing with excitement as school nutrition professionals from throughout the state gathered in a conference room for breakfast on the first day of this year's annual state conference. While chatting over coffee and muffins, this group did not appear unique, however these nineteen SNAPA members were assembled to celebrate the launch of the School Nutrition Association of Pennsylvania's first ever New Director's Cohort. After completing an application and meeting the criteria of being a new, or soon to be new, school food service director this cohort was selected to spend the year meeting monthly to discuss topics that are relevant, and often confusing, for novice directors.

At this inaugural meeting, the cohort had the opportunity to make networking connections with their fellow participants. They also heard advice from SNAPA board members and received a brief school nutrition history lesson. Going forward, the cohort will meet monthly to hear from speakers and discuss topics such as

V. I. P.S. at Farm to School Week

Learning never Stops!

verification, menu planning, and commodity processing. Members are also given access to a shared folder of resources and networking lists.

When asked why she applied to this year's cohort, Nichole Coin, from Avon Grove Charter School, said "I joined this Cohort to surround myself with a network of food service leaders that I can go to for information sharing, brainstorming, and mentoring. Food Service is an essential part of school operations. When questions arise there are few, if any, other people within the district that have an understanding of the ins and outs of food service to bounce ideas off of."

Food service director Michael Jones from Lewisburg Area School District, said "I joined the cohort due to being a new director with a background as far away from food service as possible - Music Education and Human Resources. My very first year I was a member of SNAPA and learned an incredible amount of information that proved invaluable. Along with that information, I made friends and colleagues who have assisted me to become a successful director. This cohort is going to help equip me with the knowledge and skill set needed to continue to run an outstanding, nutritious and delicious, and compliant food service program."

If you're a new director, or soon to be one, be on the lookout this year for more information about the New Director's Cohort and how you can participate next year!





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 Our made-in-the-USA potato products will help you manage food costs while serving up a full portion of vegetables that kids are sure to eat.

Microwave to Reheat and it will still hold its crunch!

3 Suitable for any establishment needs! Cook and serve or hold these fries in any type of serving container for 30 minutes or more. Results you and your students will enjoy!

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- -INCLASSROOM
- -TAKE HOME
- -FOODCARTS

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VULCAN



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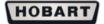
HOBART

Food Preparation









Warewash









K-12 Specialists Caralynn Reddig 717.475.3124 caralynn@4starreps.com **Steve Heraty** 610.721.2440 steve@4starreps.com

Keeping it Rolling! Pennsylvania's Universal Free Breakfast Update...

Pennsylvania (PA) entered its second year of universal free breakfast, joining a growing number of states offering universal free breakfast/lunch programs. Research shows the importance of a wholesome breakfast for students to learn and succeed during their school day. Some of the benefits are:

- Students perform better academically, have higher standardized test scores, are more attentive, have fewer nurse visits for stomach issues, and have fewer behavioral problems when they are wellnourished.
- Students have improved math and reading grades, improved cognitive performance, and better visual perception, spatial, and short-term memory.
- When students can depend on receiving nutritious meals at school, it relieves the whole family from the burden of the morning rush.
- A free breakfast for all students establishes a level playing field. No students are stigmatized as needing breakfast at school because their family is poor.
- Student meal debt associated with breakfast is non-existent. Ultimately, staff are saved from tracking down students and families for the funds, and the general fund is saved from bearing the cost of the unpaid debt.
- Greater participation leads to efficiency in meal production and service, and a per meal cost savings, and more revenue from meal reimbursement.

Governor Shapiro has shown support for the School Nutrition Programs, and again, part of Pennsylvania's state budget for this year was the inclusion of a breakfast initiative where all students attending schools that participate in the federal School Breakfast Program are eligible to receive a free breakfast during the 2023-2024 School Year. With the unwavering support of the importance of all children being able to start the day with a nutritious free breakfast, Governor Shapiro seeks to promote Universal Free Breakfast. The 2022-23 School Year saw tremendous gains in breakfast participation. Keeping the momentum going is important for the longevity of Universal Free Breakfast. Ensuring students have enough time to eat, the meal is easily accessible to students, and the breakfast is healthy, are all factors that contribute to a successful breakfast program.



There is an abundance of resources available to assist School Nutrition Directors with implementing or expanding their breakfast program. Project PA is one of those resources. Project PA | Home This collaborative powerhouse website has a designated page for breakfast, where school nutrition personnel can find promising practices from peers, articles, toolkits, training, and more to support their endeavors in increasing breakfast participation.

While most School Nutrition Directors are becoming accustomed to the growth in breakfast participation, there are common stressors associated with keeping the momentum. Offering an alternative breakfast model is one proven way schools can tackle this mission. The Journal of School Health published an article in March 2023 (available on Project PA's website) that analyzed the benefit of increasing breakfast participation with alternative breakfast models, particularly breakfast in the classroom, grab and go, and second chance breakfast, compared to traditional breakfast programs. Information can be found in the Project PA, Breakfast resources sections "Explore Alternative Breakfast Models" and "Tools and Resources for Faculty and/or Administrators."

"Victory is in the quality of the competition not just the final score." -Mike Marshall.

The real victors in Universal Free Breakfast will be more students receiving a healthy school breakfast. There is no doubt the exemplary school nutrition programs in Pennsylvania will provide amazing outcomes in support of school breakfast for their students. At the end of the day, feeding kids is why we show up to work each day!





1 YEAR 1,100 DISTRICTS HUNDRED\$ OF THOUSAND\$ IN REBATES



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Redeem use your Cool School Points and cash rebates to enhance your meal program



RECEIVE up to <u>3X</u> MORE POINTS and a <u>25%</u> INCREASE in cash rebates with COOL SCHOOL *Prime*

Keeping It Fresh and Local!

Tulpehocken Area School District kicked the school year off with fresh, juicy locally grown watermelons in the cafeteria. Our next on our local foods delivery will include purple and cheddar cauliflower along with orange and red peppers. A new local distributor in our area called Dirt2Dinner has made receiving local foods an easier task. Dirt2Dinner has partnered with local farmers to offer a wide selection of seasonal produce, local meats and other products. They offer free delivery and easy invoicing. We are really excited to be working with them and can wait to see what the future holds with more local food items!



Check out Dirt2Dinner's Facebook page <u>here!</u>

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WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

- Contribute to pivotal decisions on state-level food service operations.
- Network with key food service leaders in the state.
- Strengthen your resume with leadership roles, enhancing eligibility for title upgrades and promotions.
- Have a better opportunity to attend state conferences and have input of topics, activities or events that take place at the conferences



If any of these opportunities resonate with you, seize the moment to Sign your name on the ballot! We can't wait to work with you! Email: executivedirector@snapa.org with your interest







To Celebrate "National School Lunch Week" we held a coloring contest featuring all our of district's fall sports. We also invited senior athletes from each or our fall sports teams to visit the elementary school cafeterias and help serve lunch.

We put our own spin on the "level up" theme and focused on the sports instead of video games.

By Jillian Bergman







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Paradise Elementary School Levels Up!

We served up Mario Meatballs with Garlic Bread one day and our Lead and Head Cooks got in to character! By Melissa Freestone







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2023 - 2024

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OF PRODUCTS 3 TIMES

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QUALIFYING STEPS

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STEP 2 Send your proof of purchase to support@coolschoolcafe.com by JANUARY 15^{TH,} 2024!

OPTION: Submit your proof of purchase via mail to: COOL SCHOOL CAFE, PO BOX 535 BECKER, MN 55308

STEP 3 Receive your Cool School Points!

COOL



SCAN YOUR PHONE HERE FOR MORE





Region 6 Directors tour Delgrosso's Sauce Factory

Region 6 Directors took a tour of Delgrosso's Sauce Factory; a family-owned producer of pasta sauce since 1947. Our tour guide took us on an impressive walk through the production and warehouse facility. We learned that approximately 450-500 jars of sauce are produced per minute, that's 200,000 jars per day! In addition, 3 million pounds of cheese, 1 million pounds of cream and 100,000 pounds of butter are used per year!





Pictured: Travis Folmar, Jennie Miller, Betsy Littlefield, Jenna Russel, Jesslyn Anslinger, Peg McNitt, Jillian Burge, and Meredith Bailey

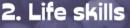
Cooking Club! STARTING A CLUB AT SCHOOL



1. Start Small

1 TIME PER WEEK: 45 MIN LONG

- Our cooking club was started with 15 students.
- Each student was assigned to a group and they work with the same group throughout the semester
- Clubs are held from 1:45-2:30
 PM



DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COOKING

 Students learn about measurement conversions, plate presentations, proper use of equipment, food safety, and proper sanitation practices.





3. Short & Sweet

QUICK AND EASY RECIPES

Clubs are 45 minutes we needed to make sure our recipes can be made in about 20 min.

- -10 minute presentation
- -Handwashing
- -20-25 min recipe
- -10 min clean-up/wrap up

4. Field Trips

BEEF FARM TOUR

Expanding learning to outside the building was a huge success! The PA Beef Council helped us set up a local beef farm tour with the students and we continued building on the lesson with making meatballs during club.



Kelly R Price, MS, RD, LDN **DONEGAL SD**





Questions:

Contact:
Kelly Price
717-492-1221
Kelly.Price@donegalsd.org

Lessons from a Newbie about "farm to school" in Pennsylvania

Hello! My name is Sam Gibb, and I coordinate the Pennsylvania Farm to School Network, but I only joined the "farm to school" scene a year ago, after spending 13 years as a community organizer working on a variety of public health, environmental, and democracy-related issues. It took me a while to find a job where I was working directly on increasing the quality and availability of local fresh food in schools, but there were many influences in my life that led me to this point.

I grew up in Wisconsin surrounded by farms with a father who was a chef by trade and regularly picked up produce and ingredients from our local coop and farmers markets for our home-cooked meals. Though this was a regular occurrence for me at home, I realized as I grew up that many of my friends in my neighborhood did not have similar experiences with food. This, and many other systemic issues compel me to help support people across PA to implement farm to school activities and programs to ensure kids across the state are meaningfully connected to and nourished by a thriving food system.

Like some of you who may be wondering what exactly "farm to school" even means, I



had never really heard the term before starting in this role. In the last 12 months, I've learned so much, and every day I get to share my knowledge and tips with people across PA - including you all!

Here are my top 3 lessons learned about "farm to school":

- 1. Farm to School typically involves three core components:
 - a. Procurement: Local foods purchased,
 promoted, and served in school settings
 - b. School gardens: Students engage in hands-on learning through gardening
 - c. Education: Students participate in educational activities related to agriculture, food, health, or nutrition, including cooking lessons and farm field trips.
- 2. School cafeterias are a major hub of activity and can be an integral space for children to engage with and learn about food, nutrition, and their local food systems, especially when they gain hands-on experience with gardening, farming, and nutrition in other spaces like the classroom and in their local community.
- 3. Collaboration and community support is critical! The more that people, groups, and producers within a community are working together to increase "farm to school" experiences for kids, the more likely it is that these activities are sustained and have a lasting impact.

I have also heard many people express concern about overcoming the challenges that get in the way of implementing "farm to school" activities; staffing shortages, underequipped kitchens, lack of technical skills, financial restrictions, processing raw materials from local farms - to name just a few.

Luckily, there are a ton of resources available for those interested in addressing these issues. The PA Farm to School Network (pafarmtoschool.org) is here to support communities to overcome these barriers and we provide a plethora of resources including:

- Professional development opportunities for school food service personnel
- Information about grants and other opportunities to fund your activities
- Resources to help connect school food service directors with farmers, producers, and local food aggregators
- Activity guides and recipes featuring PAgrown produce
- Opportunities to network and connect with other school food service personnel to share stories, lessons learned, and successful strategies
- Training on how to advocate for systemic policy changes for local food purchasing incentives



Attendees pictured in the East Wing Rotunda at A Day at the Capitol with SNAPA and The National Farm to School Network.

Pictured from left to right: Nicole Melia, Melissa Froehlich

Green, Sam Gibb, and E. Nichole Taylor.



The best way to stay informed about all of these opportunities is to subscribe to the Monthly Harvest newsletter at pafarmtoschool.org/getinvolved/. For those who are looking to get even more involved, come to a virtual open house! The next one is on Thursday, December 7th, and will be focused on Local Food Purchasing Incentives registration info will go out in a future newsletter. If you have experience with farm to school and are willing to share your story or expertise, we would love to have you as a panelist during an open house or invite you to join working groups where we discuss how to continue supporting farm to school across PA.

In the coming months, we have big plans to expand our outreach and deepen the level of support for local communities so we can increase farm to school activities in the cafeteria, classroom, and community. If you are interested in getting more involved with our plans or simply want to pick my brain about farm to school related topics, I'd love to hear from you!

Feel free to reach out to me by email sgibb@thefoodtrust.org or call me at 215-383-2196 so we can get to know each other. I look forward to hearing your story and supporting you in your own farm to school journey!



Working to ensure that

EVERY CHILD in Pennsylvania is

meaningfully connected to

and nourished by thriving

and resilient community

food systems

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Harvest newsletter, or
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SNAPA Tray of the Month Campaign

A year-long school meal promotion activity that highlights the consistent high quality meals served in our Pennsylvania schools!

How does it work?

Each week SNAPA will select and share, via social media & email, photos of Pennsylvania school meal trays served that week, and which meet the following criteria:

- 1. Meet the USDA National School Breakfast or National School Lunch Meal Patterns, clearly showing all components (i.e. including fruit, vegetables, grains, meat/meat alternate and fluid milk as applicable)
- 2. Include a description of the meal menu items
- 3. Indicate the location and date of service
- 4. Be attractively plated and photographed
- 5. Carry the hashtags #FuelingPA and #SNAPATrayoftheWeek or has been submitted by email to communication@snapa.org

SNAPA social media followers will be asked to select their favorite photo each week. The image with the most weekly engagement (likes & comments) will go into a running for the SNAPA Tray of the Month!

The SNAPA Tray of the Month will be selected and awarded the first week of the new month!

Purpose of Campaign

The campaign is intended to amplify all work that goes into meals served in Pennsylvania schools. SNAPA wants to provide a space where all School Nutrition Programs, regardless of size, location or presence on social media, will find an outlet to celebrate the work of your School Nutrition Professionals.

We also expect the campaign to provide replicable menus and menu presentation examples from local sources, from which other School Nutrition Programs may draw inspiration.

Winners

- Winners will receive a congratulatory award for winning tray of the month.
- Winning tray will be featured on SNAPA Social Media (Twitter, Instagram & Facebook!)
- List of winners and their photos will be linked on SNAPA website.
- Tray of the month winning trays will be highlighted and recognized in SNAPA Happenings.

Have fun and follow along!



NEW FOR YOUR BACK TO SCHOOL MENU

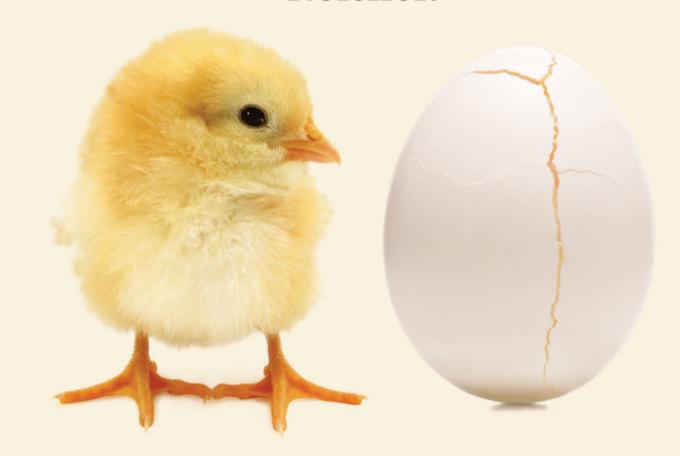
Whole Grain Iced Cinnabar



Item #804 IW 48/3.4oz 2.0 oz EQ per bar

Which came first, the chicken or the egg?

Neither.



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2024 SNAPA DIRECTOR WORKSHOP

APRIL 8-9, 2024





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Admiral 66 Rack Conveyor Dishwasher





maintenance of all body tissues, makes red blood cells and boosts the immune system. Sufficient protein is essential for children to perform their best both physically and mentally.^{2,3}

Schools can feel good about continuing to include high-quality protein, like beef, on the menu to help growing kids get all the essential nutrients they need for optimal health while still meeting the requirements for healthy school meal patterns.



- Schwarzenberg SJ, et al. Advocacy for improving nutrition in the first 1000 days to support childhood development and adult health. Pediatrics 2018;141:e20173716.
- Michaelsen KF, Greer FR. Protein needs early in life and long-term health. Am J Clin Nutr 2014;99:718S-22S.
- Black MM. Micronutrient deficiencies and cognitive functioning. J Nutr 2003;133:3927s-31s.

Find amazing school foodservice beef recipes here: pabeef.org/resources/school-foodservice























Ceramic Mug 11oz





Glass Cutting Board

SNAPA Store!

SNAPA store- the one stop shop for all your favorite SNAPA gear for conferences, everyday wear, and school! Proceeds from the store benefit the Pennsylvania School Food Service Foundation.

Scan the QR Code to visit the SNAPA Store!







Apple Crunch Delight



Ingredients:

- · I portion of yogurt
- I Zee Zees® Diced Apple Cup (any variety)
- I Zee Zees Graham Crackers pouch (any variety)

Instructions:

- Students choose at mealtime: yogurt,
 Diced Apple Cup and Graham Crackers.
- 2. Open all lids and pouch.
- 3. Spoon Diced Apples into the yogurt. Leave the juice behind. Mix.
- Break apart Graham Crackers and add top of yogurt.
- 5. Drink juice separately.
- 6. Enjoy!

Contribution: 0.5-2 M/MA, I/2c FRT & I GRN

Delicious Apples Spice Up Your Menu Planning With Education & Fun

Fall is in the air - from changing leaves to cinnamon with spice, back-to-school, and of course, apples! The PA Harvest of the Month program in October focuses on apples! Let's talk about ways to incorporate nutrition education, team up with local agriculture through some budget-savvy commodity processing items, and unleash the ultimate power-up: increasing participation in your fantastic programs!

An Apple Adventure In Nutrition

Get ready to embark on an apple adventure, where students become nutrition explorers! Apples are tasty, sweet, and made up of 85% water for easy hydration. Applesauce and diced apples have fiber, which promotes healthy digestion and heart-healthy benefits! They have a handful of essential vitamins and minerals and are highest in Vitamin C, which plays a vital role in immune function and iron absorption². There are so many fun options with apples, for example the **Apple Grunch Delight** recipe you'll find to the left, that students can create!

Local Agriculture & Cost Savings

Trim labor and food costs while supporting local agriculture by diverting **110149 bulk apples** into applesauce & diced apples with a USDA-approved processor. Apples are sourced locally and can boost the economy by supporting nearby farmers. Good use of your entitlement can save your program at least 12% of your food budget³.

Creative Hands-On Options

Engage your students hands-on learning initiatives that fosters excitement for healthy choices and are just plain delicious, all while driving more participation.

- Promote creative apple-related contests
- Share how the apples come from PA farmers & producers
- · Teach fun apple facts
- Host a taste test of apple items
- Highlight applesauce & diced apples on your October menus

An adventure awaits - with diced apples and applesauce stealing the spotlight, local agriculture using USDA direct diversions powering your menu, and education with PA Harvest of the Month sparking excitement, your school programs are primed for a great 23-24 SY!

References: I. Apples and more. University of Illinois Extension. https://extension.illinois.edu/apples/hutrition.cfm. Published August 2018. Accessed July 26, 2023. 2. Vitamin C: fact sheet for health professionals. National Institutes of Health website. https://ads.ord.nit.gov/factsheets/VitaminC-HealthProfessionaly. Updated March 26, 2021. 3. Ford J. USDA Foods: Its Role in Your Program's Finances. School Nutrition Association. https://schoolnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Best-of-SNIC23-Weblinar-Series-KIND-Snacks-Presentation.pdf. May I. 2023. Accessed July 24, 2023.

Looking for more information?

Please contact your PA rep, Taran Zackrison! tzackrison@nationalfoodgroup.com | 248.560.2343







JOIN THE GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL BREAKFAST CHALLENGE!

On December 7, 2023, Secretary of Education, Dr. Khalid N. Mumin announced the inaugural Governor's School Breakfast Challenge for the 2023-2024 school year.

Goals like increasing student participation and building in healthy options will be on the menu for this three-month challenge. The Department of Education will be reaching out to schools in the future with exciting updates on what's in store for the challenge winners.

Be sure to visit the Department of

Education website for more information about the challenge and ways to participate!

Schools will be encouraged and recognized for increasing breakfast participation while incorporating sustainable changes that incorporate more nutritious and local foods. Whether a friendly competition with buildings within your school district or with your neighboring school district, as school administrators, we encourage you to not only accept the Challenge, but to lead Challenge at your school.



FREE SCHOOL BREAKFAST NOW AVAILABLE FOR ALL STUDENTS

During the 2023-2024 School Year, every Student, regardless of income, will be able to receive a free nutritious breakfast.



WHY WE'RE EXCITED



- When students can depend on receiving nutritious meals at school, it relieves the whole family of stress from the morning rush. No more drive-thru or convenience store lines making students late!
- Children enjoy their sleep and may not be hungry first thing in the morning. Breakfast at school gives their tummies time to wake up and their bodies a few more minutes to sleep.
- Sometimes children have long commutes to school and leave their houses early. Breakfast at school can be a mid-morning snack for some kids and hold them over until lunch.
- Students perform better on tests, have a better attention span, and have fewer visits to the school nurse for tummy and head aches. When their brains and bodies are well-nourished, they behave better in the classroom!
- Each breakfast is required to meet USDA nutrition standards. School breakfasts include nutritious foods like whole grains, fruits, and milk.

Have your child start their day right with delicious school breakfast!



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-Harriet Chiang



"SNAPA's Safari: The Place to be in '23!"

The 2023 SNAPA Annual Conference hosted a wealth of education, innovation, and culinary exploration from July 31 to August 3 at the Kalahari Resort. The conference kicked off with keynote speaker, Jon Colby, followed by a diverse array of sessions featuring engaging workshops and presentations. Workshops ranged from culinary demonstrations, to discussions of food trends, leadership-based seminars, and so much more. Interactive sessions allowed participants to track the latest trends, adapting their strategies to ensure that the nutritional needs of students were met in an ever-changing environment. The schedule was a roadmap for professionals seeking to enhance their skills and bring fresh, innovative ideas back to their school cafeterias.



SNAPA also hosted the President's Dinner and Reception, and opportunity to highlight some of the many accomplishments of SNAPA during the 2022-23 school year. Highlights included recognition of our 2023 Director of the Year, Carla Escribano and inducting the 2023-24 SNAPA Board of Directors. The evening's event was followed by a wealth of laughs as attendees enjoyed a Hypnotist Show.

On Wednesday, members took part in the Annual SNAPA Food Show. Attendees had an opportunity to visit more than 100 SNAPA partners to learn about and sample the latest foods in school nutrition. The food show was not only educational but also a feast for the senses, proving that healthy school meals can be both nutritious and delectable. SNAPA would like to extend a huge thank you to each of our partners for making this event possible!







As the safari concluded, participants departed with a wealth of knowledge and a renewed sense of purpose.
"SNAPA's Safari - The place to be in '23" wasn't just a conference; it was a call to action. Armed with innovative ideas and a network of like-minded professionals, Pennsylvania's school nutrition community is better equipped to continue its mission of providing healthy, delicious meals for the students it serves.

We are so excited to be back at the Kalahari for the 2024 SNAPA Annual Conference! Be sure to mark your calendars for July 29-August 1, 2024. We hope to see you there!



PROGRAM IMPACT

2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR



Who We are

The PA Beef to PA School (PBPS) program connects schools and their foodservice professionals to cattle producers to "beef" up school lunches. By doing so, schools are offering more beef more often and sourcing beef from PA farms. This effort helps to fight food insecurity as well as supporting local farms and the opportunity to share the PA Beef industry with the local community.



Program Partners

The program is spearheaded by the PBC with additional funding support from the PA Department of Agriculture through an Ag Commodity Promotion Grant. Additionally, local farmers have also provided generous donations, as it remains a priority and passion to feed the next generation.



Program Impact

- · 7 School Districts
- 5 Counties
- 9,000 Students
- · 6,410 pounds of beef sourced from PA placed within these



Return on Investment

- · For every S1 invested, it attributed \$2.60 back to the beef industry Source: PBPS Program Data from 2022-2023 School Year
- · One pound of beef feeds approximately 5.5 kids
- Fighting food insecurity and meeting nutritional needs one beef serving at a time



- Occalico School District
- ODonegal School District
- Northern Bedford School District
- OSpring Grove Area School District
- Tulpehocken Area School District
- Hempfield Area School District
- Colonial School District





From Spring Grove I can say Taco Tuesday has never tasted so good! Our students and staff have noticed the change from manufactured beef crumbles to local, fresh ground beef in our tacos and nachos.

Melissa Freestone RD, LDN Nutrition Services Manager at Spring Grove Area School District

Working with the PA Beef Council has launched our Farm to School initiative here at Donegal. The local farm and Beef Council have been amazing to work with and have helped guide us every step of the way. Our students have enjoyed and have commented on the fact they love that the beef is local right from their hometown of Mount Joy, PA. You can see the care they take in packaging the beef. The quality is outstanding and fres

> Kelly Price MS, RD, LDN Director of Food Services at **Donegal School District**











www.PABeef.org

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!

DIAMOND









PLATINUM















































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ES Foods
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Foster Farms
Hershey's Ice Cream
Highliner Foods
Hormel - Jennie-O
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Old Neighborhood
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Peterson Farms Fresh
Platinum Marketing Co
School Food Services Solutions, LLC
Smucker Foods
StarKist Foodservice
T. Marzetti CO
Tabatchnick Fine Foods
Tree Top
Trident
US Foods
Yangs 5th Taste

Calendar of Events

JANUARY 2024 SNAPA Commodity Food Show

Donegal High School

January 22

MARCH 2024 2024 National School Breakfast Week

March 4-8

2024 Legislative Action Conference

Washington, D.C.

March 3-5

APRIL 2024 2024 National Leadership Conference

Seattle, Washington

April 25-27

SNAPA Directors Workshop

Seven Springs Resort

April 8-9

MAY 2024 2024 School Lunch Hero Day

May 3

JULY 2024 2024 Annual National Conference

Boston, Massachusetts

July 14-16

2024 SNAPA Annual Conference

Kalahari Resort July 29-August 1

OCTOBER 2024 2024 National School Lunch Week

October 14-18



