Spring is Here and Conference is Coming!

Join us!

April Showers Bring May Flowers… and June Brings Summer Conference!!!

This year, my message to you has been about being “challenged to change” and I encourage you to join us this year for MTSNA’s 40 year celebration to complete that challenge.

You may have noticed a few changes in your registration packet that was sent to you in March. It was quite a challenge to inform you of all the wonderful things we are having this year – on just a few short pages – but we did it!

One of the changes you might have noticed, is conference registration will begin at 12pm on Monday, June 20 followed by a general session at 2pm. At the general session, you will be entered into a cash prize drawing! At 4pm join us for another exciting Vendor Show. The cash prize tickets handed out at the general session will be drawn at the Vendor Show and you must be present to win!

As we begin the MTSNA 40 year conference festivities, we are excited to share a change Tuesday, June 21 as we “Team Up for Success” with you, your peers and some fantastic instructors from the Institute of Child Nutrition.

On Wednesday, the challenge to you will be to choose only two (!) of the 4-hour workshop classes offered. These classes will allow enough time for hands on learning and plenty of time for discussion.

We’re hoping you won’t have to change your mind too many times while you make decisions about which 1-hour breakout classes to attend Thursday morning! Remember to enjoy the challenge of trying not to have too much fun!

Not sure if you’re coming to conference? Then change your mind and meet us in Great Falls for a great time! See you soon!

-Jayne Elwess, MTSNA President

If you need more information, contact me at jelwess@mtcityschool.net

Pictures and Auction Items Needed!

Spring is in the air and before we know it will be time for the MTSNA Conference. This year marks our 40th Anniversary and as MTSNA Historian I’m putting together a collage to celebrate School Nutrition in Montana through the years.

If you have any pictures on your staff at conference or in your lunch room I would love to include them. Vintage pictures or pictures taken yesterday are welcome. Please send them to schwarzbachlinda@gmail.com

I know its going to be a very special conference this year in Great Falls and I hope you can all attend.

One more little favor!! We are going to have a Silent Auction as well as a Live Auction this year so we would really appreciate any donated items or baskets. Please email me in advance of conference if you plan on bringing something so we can be ready to display your generous donation. Remember the money earned from the auctions go to the scholarship fund.

Thank you so much!!

-Linda Schwarzbach, MTSNA Historian

Need More Information About Conference?!

Visit our website at www.mtsna.org to find conference registration information and School Nutrition Association (SNA) membership applications! Becoming a member of SNA saves you $50 on conference registration costs so it is WELL worth your money to pay the annual membership fee, become a member of our affiliation and enjoy learning at conference at a discounted price!

- You are part of the national School Nutrition Association that lobbies for school nutrition legislation in favor of school Food Service Directors and staff nation-wide.
- There are resources available on the website to members only. Watch this video to find out more!
- You will receive the monthly magazine that provides updates about school nutrition and ideas to try with school meals.

Contact Ellen Mills at millse@libbyschools.org for more information on membership.

Contact Joan Karls at joan_karls@gfps.k12.mt.us for more information on conference registration.
Nominate Your Director for the Silver Spoon Award!

MTSNA is still seeking nominations for the Silver Spoon Award to be presented at this year’s annual conference in Great Falls, MT.

Write a letter to Maria Schwarzrock at schwarzrockme@plentywood.k12.mt.us describing how your Food Service Director has improved the School Nutrition Program at your school. Just remember, the nominee must have their SNA Certificate in order to receive this award.

Member Scholarship Recipients Announced!

We had some wonderful applications for the member scholarship to attend conference this year. It is never easy to make a choice as all were equally deserving. Those receiving the $500 scholarship this year are Ruth Ann Mehl from Plentywood and Chandra Plakke from Superior.

They were both mailed a certificate and that must be attached to their registration. The cost of the registration will be deducted from the $500 and they will be able to pick up the remainder of the money at the registration desk when they arrive at conference.

We are trying very hard to help people attend our conference and help them get their professional development credits each year. If you didn’t receive the scholarship this year or did not apply please go to our website www.mtsna.org and print off the scholarship application so you are ready to apply for it next year.

Looking forward to seeing you all in Great Falls in June. There are going to be many new things and I am sure everyone will come away with wonderful new ideas.

- Carol Simanton, Scholarship Chair

Legislative Conference 2016 Washington DC

Ellen Mills, Jennifer Spellman and I arrived in Washington DC on Feb. 26 to start our conference with a class that detailed the inner workings of our government system. It’s no wonder it takes so long to get anything through Congress!

Once a bill has been written and submitted to the Senate, it is sent to committee where it may not survive. It can be pass, be returned to the Senate with corrections or simply die. If a bill passes out of committee, it goes onto the House where it will be reviewed and voted on.

The 2016 Position Paper from SNA outlines a few of the following as important details for the pending Child Nutrition Reauthorization to address.

- Swiftly pass legislation so schools can responsibly plan for the upcoming school year.
- Increase reimbursement for breakfast and lunch by $.35 each so schools can meet federal requirements.
- Simplify program administration to develop a more efficient, unified, consolidated reporting system.
- Implement regulations that address debt arising from unpaid meal charges.

The Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) Act had made it through the Senate when we were there and was in que for the House to review soon. Senators Roberts and Hoeven praised SNA for their tireless efforts towards getting CNR passed.

Ellen, Jennifer, Gary Wycoff (a representative from Winston Industries) and myself had successful meetings with staff from all Montana Congressmen and we were even able to meet with Representative Zinke in person! It was powerful to have the three of us there representing different school sizes showing how we all have very different yet important needs. Having Gary with us to share the perspective from the industry was wonderful too.

Please consider reaching out to contact your Congressmen as it is important they hear from us. The best way to get their attention is through many of us speaking up.

- Carol Simanton, Legislative Chair
Send Farm to School: Registration is Open for New Montana Harvest of the Month Program

Montana school and afterschool programs can now register for the Montana Harvest of the Month program! The Montana Harvest of the Month showcases Montana grown foods in Montana schools and communities.

Each month, the schools participating in the program focus on promoting one locally grown item (e.g., winter squash) by serving it in a meal, offering taste tests to students, and doing educational lessons and activities surrounding both the nutritional and agricultural aspects of the food. Montana Harvest of the Month is a perfect way to launch or grow a farm to school program as it provides an easy framework to follow and ready-to-use materials.

Montana K-12 schools and afterschool programs can now register for this innovative program, which will begin in September 2016. Participating schools will receive a full packet of materials at no charge as well as guides, additional resources, and training.

For more information or to register your school or afterschool program visit www.montana.edu/mtharvestofthemonth or contact Aubree Roth, Montana Farm to School Coordinator ataubree.roth@montana.edu or (406) 994-5996.

Three $500 MTSNA High School Scholarships Awarded

Tristan Rhodes, Gardiner High School will attend Carroll College majoring in Nutrition Science and Nursing
Ashely Howell, Shelby High School will attend Flathead Community College majoring in Culinary Arts and Small Business
Megan Bahnmiller, Charles Russell High School in Great Falls will attend Montana State University, Bozeman majoring in Nutrition Science

- Carol Simanton, Scholarship Chair
Get ready for some fun this year starting **MONDAY**! Don’t be late!

See below for a short overview of what we have in store for you this year at conference!

**Motivational Monday** will start with registration at noon and our opening session at 2pm featuring Walt Stasinski, a nationally acclaimed motivational speaker who will kick off conference and get us fired up. Immediately following the opening session join us for the 2016 vendor show. Enjoy some snacks! **The vendor show isn’t on Thursday this year, you don’t want to miss it Monday!**

**Team Up Tuesday** will be a new format of classes with hands on training from peer mentors from around the state. It is an exciting change to conference this year that you will want to be a part of! The Team Nutrition luncheon will be at noon where we will learn about Harvest of the Month. Our Open House, meet and greet is back! It will start in the French Quarter area of the hotel at 6:30pm. Appetizers and drinks will be provided by Montana Cooperative Services.

**Team Nutrition**

**Workshop Wednesday** is a day of 4 hour and 8 hour classes that will help you all comply with the new professional standards. Many must be registered for in advance, so be sure you communicate your top choices to us with your completed registration. Previously referred to as pre-conference classes, with the new format they are a **bonus**, you don’t pay extra for any of them! Just register and attend. FSA will host a lunch Wednesday afternoon and Wednesday evening will be our fantastic fine dining banquet with live and silent auctions! Enjoy 50/50 ticket sales and lots of networking with friends new and old.

**Get Inspired Thursday** will be a morning of break out sessions, including our regional peer sharing groups. We will have a light breakfast at 10am from No Kid Hungry and a closing session at noon, ending by 1:00pm. This will give all of plenty of time to travel safely home.

**You MUST register for conference in order to attend ANY class offered during June 20-23.**

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**Apron Contest at Conference!**

To celebrate MTSNA’s 40th anniversary, aprons created by YOU will be entered into this year’s silent and live auctions. Money earned from sale of these aprons will support our scholarship fund! Contest Rules:

1. Make an apron of your choice/style. Seasonal or from a certain era. They can be wild and scary or cute and fancy.
2. Include a small write up about your apron as to why you chose the theme, style and why you were inspired you.
3. Send your apron in advance or bring it to conference registration. 12pm Monday, June 20.
4. Be prepared to model or have someone model your apron for you.

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**Professional Standards are Here to Stay. Have you got yours?**

The time is nearing and everyone is thinking about ending the school year and starting the summer! Whether you are working with a summer program feeding children during the warmer months, or off on vacation there is still something to consider each year for your profession.

Professional Standards are a requirement for all school nutrition employees. The Montana School Nutrition Association Conference partners with the Office of Public Instruction to insure the topics pertain to the Key Areas outlined by USDA. Key areas include: Nutrition, Operations, Administration and Communications and Marketing. Key topics follow key areas so everything fits in somewhere! Whether you are a SNA Member or not, you are required to fulfill the Continuing Education Units (CEUs) each school year.

There is a tracking tool for ensuring you and your employees or coworkers meet these standards. Any training that lasts 15 minutes or longer counts! “Teachable Moments” in your kitchen can be counted towards Professional Standard training hours. Just remember it has to be documented or it didn’t happen!

Creating a monthly exercise in one of the categories that employees complete is a great way to meet some of the hours you and your staff need. You are able to find resources for activities from your local distribution company, your servsafe books, or create your own to review of common areas that need attention in your program.

Find more information [here](#).

Remember, coming to the MTSNA Conference June 20-23, 2016 in Great Falls, MT will help you complete all the requirements and keep you up to date on any and all new requirements. Hope to see you there!

- Wendy Shreeve
- Jennifer Spellman, SNS