

Obesity Prevention success stories

Association
of State
Public Health
Nutritionists

Diane Golzynski, PhD, RD Bringing Salad Bars to Michigan's Schools

Diane Golzynski, PhD, RD is passionate about fruits and vegetables — and about getting kids to eat more fruits and vegetables. In fact, that's her job. As a consultant to the school nutrition programs with the Michigan Department of Education, one of Diane's roles is to help school districts get their students to eat more fruits and vegetables.

In fall 2013, the Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools initiative asked Diane to promote salad bars in Michigan's schools. Diane reached out to school food service directors around the state. She talked with them about why salad bars are important, how they fit with federal meal regulations, and how to apply to receive a salad bar.

Successes and Major Outcomes

One of the school food service directors that Diane connected with was Sara Simmerman, with the Dexter Community Schools. With Diane's help, Sara brought two new salad bars into her schools, one at an elementary school and one at a middle school. She previewed the new salad bars at a Farm to School Sampling Day. The salad bars featured local cherry tomatoes and other delicious local produce.



The salad bars are still too new for Sara to have measurable results, but she says that students are excited about the salad bar, and they are selecting more than one fruit or vegetable. Sara says, "The fruits and vegetables look so much better on the salad bar than what we had before — hotel pans, and not many choices. We are definitely ordering more fruits and vegetables than last year, and that is a good thing!"

Sara believes strongly in doing what is best for the kids in her schools, including encouraging them to eat healthy foods. Sara works directly with farmers to bring local foods to her salad bars. She puts on fun taste tests with the kids and also with parents. She has also gotten involved in



Pictured: Diane Golzynski, PhD, RD

About Diane

Diane is a nutrition consultant with the Michigan Department of Education. Before joining the Education Department in 2011, she was the Fruit and Vegetable Coordinator at the Michigan Department of Health. She was in that position for eight years.

Diane has three children, ages 5, 9 and 14. She loves to eat fruits and vegetables with them and to cook all sorts of delicious meals!

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***— Sara Simmerman,
Food Service Director***

a food policy council, and she attended USDA's week-long Produce Safety University.

Sara also mentors other food service directors on how to bring more produce into their schools. As Diane reaches out to more school districts, she often connects these food service directors with Sara. Sara shares her recipes with other directors along with her experience, know-how and can-do attitude.

Challenges

One of the challenges Diane is facing is convincing school food service directors that salad bars can work for them and for their schools — that they are safe, they fit with federal guidelines, and they are affordable. Even with inspiring ambassadors like Sara, many food service directors are still not open to pursuing salad bars.

Another barrier has been getting fresh, local produce into the schools. Finding interested farmers and other suppliers and then arranging to get the fruits



and vegetables to schools has often been challenging. Michigan has been one of USDA's fresh produce pilot states. Now in its third year, USDA is working to bring more produce into the state's schools.



The Important Role of the Public Health Nutritionist

In this project, Diane is a catalyst in getting school districts to bring salad bars into their schools. She provides school food service directors with all the information, resources and tools they need, and she connects them with directors who already have successful salad bar programs in their districts. She gets directors excited about fruits and vegetables, and she helps them see that kids really will eat fresh produce!

ASPHN in Action

ASPHN is a non-profit membership organization that provides state and national leadership on food and nutrition policy, programs and services aimed at improving the health of our population. Our vision is to create new environmental norms where healthy eating and active living are the easy and natural choices for all Americans.

At ASPHN, we build our members' skills as public health nutritionists by providing key resources and professional development.

To learn more about ASPHN, please visit us on the web at www.asphn.org.