

Food & Nutrition Insight



Fall 2011

A quarterly newsletter for
Washington State
Food and Nutrition Council

Advocacy in Action: Make Your Voice Heard

By Kristen Rezabek, Meghan Lyle

Step Up to the Plate: Advocating Sustainable and Accessible Food Systems was the topic of the Washington State Food and Nutrition Council annual conference on September 9, 2011. Both at the State and Federal level budget cuts to vital programs are being implemented or are on the horizon. It takes a committed group of grassroots volunteers using their voice and their vote to communicate the need and importance of these vital resources to lawmakers and protect the safety net for so many families in Washington State and around the country.

Nancy Amidei of the Civic Engagement Project was the key note speaker at the conference. She encouraged the audience to get engaged in the legislative process and

turned advocacy from a somewhat daunting task into something all of us can do. She likened advocacy to a 3 legged stool in which legislators, community-grassroots groups, and Media are all represented in terms of how legislation is affected by advocacy. Amidei encouraged people to learn capitol math (25, 50, 1 and 1) which repre-



sents the 51% majority in the senate, house, the governor and lastly you with your vote.

In a testimony to how grassroots efforts can effect change, in the 1980's a small group of nutritionists prevented ketchup from being counted as a serving of vegetables in the school lunch program. Certainly with the National and Washington state budget deficits times look dire for many social programs, but we need to make sure our voices are heard and we speak up for those programs serving people desperately in need. Stated Amidei, "In a country this food rich nobody should have to go hungry... it's criminal not to use our voice, history tells us we can make a difference."

Amidei's 5 steps to advocating for causes you believe in:

1. Sign up for legislative alerts (Children's Alliance, Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition).
2. Communicate with your legislator – write, call, visit in person and ask them to support a piece of legislation.
3. Help others communicate – organize trips to Olympia with those utilizing these services, their voices are often the most powerful because it puts a face to the cause.
4. Advertise your issue – wear a button or conspicuous badge when you visit the capitol, write a short 2-3 word description in large letters on the folder you carry around and make sure it's visible to others.
5. Talk about your issue – on the bus, in line at

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President's Letter



WSFNC President, Hailey Mack



Happy Fall! I hope you are all enjoying the cooler weather

and beautiful Autumn scenery in your area! The Washington State Food and Nutrition Council has just welcomed it's new 2011-2012 Board and is gearing up for a productive year ahead!

As many of you know, this has been a difficult year to balance the budget in Washington State and our Legislative Chair, Breanna Oberlin, has been working tirelessly to keep you informed. As expected, the budget crunch has taken a toll on public health and anti-hunger programs, but due in part to your advocacy efforts, funds were preserved for the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program, Emergency Food

Assistance Programs (TEFAP and EFAP) and 75% of the funding for Maternity Support Services (over the proposed 50% cut). Thank you all for your hard work in helping us preserve funding for these programs! Unfortunately, the fight is not over as Governor Gregoire is calling legislators back for another special session beginning November 28th and many of these same programs are facing cuts. Stay tuned for more legislative updates from WSFNC!

Thank you to all who attended the Fall Conference entitled, *Step Up to the Plate: Advocating for Sustainable Food Systems*. Your WSFNC Conference Planning Committee worked hard to prepare an information packed day and I think those of you who attended would agree it was a success. My hope is that you left the conference feeling more confident about your advocacy skills and ready to communicate with your legislators about programs that are important to you. It can be an intimidating process, but as with all things, it gets easier with practice.

I am embarking on my term as President with great enthusiasm and am looking forward to working with all of you to make this a great year for the Washington State Food and Nutrition Council! Please don't hesitate to contact me with any comments or suggestion on how we can continue to improve.

Sincerely,

Hailey A. Mack, MS, RD,
CDE

WSFNC President

Contact us:

www.wsfnc.org
pres@wsfnc.org



The Washington State Food and Nutrition Council is an organization which advocates for food, agriculture, and nutrition programs, services, and education. The Council enhances its members' and the general public's ability to discern nutrition issues and related public policy issues which impact the lives of Washington state residents.

Legislative Update



By Breanna Oberlin

Due to budget shortfalls the Governor, Chris Gregoire, has called a Special Session to start November 28th, 2011. Though the legislature passed a budget earlier this year, our lawmakers are being called back to Olympia to make budget cuts. We want to ensure vital public health and anti-hunger programs don't face additional cuts beyond the reductions made during the January-April 2011 Legislative Session. Below are the WSFNCs priorities for this Special Session:

- **Preserve matching funds for the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program.** This program provides food assistance to over 54,000 low-income mothers and children in vouchers to be used at farmers markets in communities all over the state of Washington. In addition to providing fresh, healthy food to families, the WIC FMNP also provides economic support for Washington farmers (767 participated in farmers markets in 2010). To continue to receive federal matching funds of over \$600,000, the state must provide a minimum of \$50,000. This solution is simple and won't cost the state anymore money. Though this reduces the total amount of money going to this program, it is important to keep it going. Once we lose federal match funding it is not guaranteed that Washington State will ever get it back.
- **Maintain funding to the School Lunch Program.** It's a difficult task to feed the

state's children on an already limited budget. In the state of Washington 425,000 children qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. Reduced funding directly and indirectly impacts school meals at the same time Congress has approved new legislation to improve school meals. Help to restore school meals in Washington State to keep our children healthy and eager to learn.

- **Maintain funding for Maternity Support Services.** This program provides support for pregnant women and mothers with babies with nutritionists, social workers, community health workers and public health nurses ensuring proper nutrition and support. Maternity Support Services has reduced the high risk of long-term disabilities due to low birth weight, lower infant mortality rates and promoted health equity. In many locations, WIC nutrition benefits are provided at the same clinics and each program refers clients to the other for additional support. These connections make MSS funding vital to ensuring access to WIC and promoting health and wellness to Washington's most vulnerable residents.
- **Preserve the State Food Assistance Program.** The State Food Assistance Program extends the benefits of food stamps to low-income, lawfully residing immigrant families who were previously eligible, prior to federal law change. In the state of Washington 31,000 people receive State Food Assistance benefits, directly or indirectly by living in a household where another fam-

ily member receives it, half of which are children. Eliminating this program would worsen hunger in Washington. Causing 14,000 individuals to lose these benefits and deplete \$105 million of economic activity in the state over the next two years, impacting hungry families as well as business owners. State Food Assistance benefits go directly into the community grocery stores, making \$9 in local economic impact for every \$5 in benefits spent on food, according to the USDA. The WSFNC believes that Washington must continue to provide benefits to hungry people no matter who they are.

- **Maintain Funding for Emergency Food Assistance Programs.** Protect full funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program. This program provides crucial funding to local food banks around the state and is in danger of having its grants reduced at a time of record need. Food banks receiving EFAP grants saw a 22% increase in unduplicated visits from 2007 to 2009. Unemployment today hovers around 9% in the state, and is over 10% in rural counties. In addition to contract cuts to EFAP, WA's Food Assistance Programs are seeing a reduction of about 50% from current levels of federal support over the next two years, placing a greater strain on local food bank resources. As other basic safety net programs are cut or eliminated, more people rely on their local food banks for assistance and food banks must be able to respond to these needs.

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the grocery store, with friends and family. Help create awareness in others why this is important and what they can do about it.

Carolyn Gleason, a Public Health Analyst with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) which includes the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), Office of Rural Health Policy, HIV/AIDS bureau, Bureau of Primary Care and Bureau of Health Professions spoke at the morning breakout session on **What's Public Health Got to Do With It?** She spoke about the triple aim of healthcare reform with the goals being; provide quality services, improve patient and family experience, and manage cost. She used the example of the Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) to show where the money comes from and how advocates can target various agencies and divisions to determine how that money is allocated and spent.

According to Gleason one way advocacy works is to target a law to set aside a percentage of money to go to a specific program. In the case of the CSHCN, the funds comes from a block grant to Washington State and the State decides where and how to spend the money. Leadership at the grassroots level informs all levels up the chain what the needs are.

The mission of Public Health

stated Gleason is "The fulfillment of society's interest in assuring the conditions in which people can be healthy." There are three core functions of Public Health. The first is to assess and define the population/community, determine their needs, how well those needs are being met, and where are the gaps. The second is to develop policy and program planning to prioritize and find best solutions to meet those needs. Lastly is assurance and evaluation that programs and policies are effective in their implementation. As a leader in policy it's important to communicate up the ladder what is and isn't working.

Jennifer Hall, a community food builder in Spokane spoke about organizing at the grassroots level in one of the morning breakout sessions.

In the afternoon, Ingrid Daffner Krasnow, MPH, explored the importance of considering the **Media in Advocacy** efforts. Daffner Krasnow is a Strategic Communications Specialist with Berkeley Media Studies Group (BMSG) with experience in media advocacy training and strategic consultation to health advocates nationwide. Her dynamic session developed the idea of "layers of strategy" when involving the media in advocacy. These four layers begin with overall strategy, then progress to media strategy, message strategy and access strategy.

Overall strategy answers the "who" and "what" questions,

such as "What is the problem or issue?", "Who has the power to make the needed changes", and "What do the targets of the message need to hear". Overall strategy demands that health advocates first consider the bigger picture before shaping media advocacy efforts. In developing overall strategy it is often clear that a message needs to be reframed in the media. Daffner Krasnow gave the example of childhood obesity. Many news articles frame this health crisis more as the fault of parents than the environment in which children learn, play and grow, despite the many other factors at play.

Daffner Krasnow went on to say that in the next step, health advocates should consider whether they want to involve media in their efforts at all. This is an essential part of strategy, because some efforts may gain further ground without the issue being brought to media attention, particularly if the issue is controversial.

In message strategy, the advocate considers the ways in which the message might be framed. In order to do this, there needs to be a clear concept of the issue, why it matters, and what needs to be done to address it. Our presenter did an expert job of looking at how breastfeeding efforts have been framed in the media, giving contrasting examples of how to promote breastfeeding.

Finally, she closed with an explanation of access strategy.

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These are the elements of the story that bring it to life in the media. Access strategy involves finding authentic and believable voices, providing compelling visuals, and developing media bites or using "social math". As examples, Daffner Krasnow showed a media clip from *Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution*. In the clip, Oliver fills a school bus with the amount of sugar consumed nationally by American children in one week from flavored milk. This visual is far more compelling than any verbally stated statistic might have been.

Daffner Krasnow made a strong argument for the importance of considering media in advocacy efforts. The media can be a powerful partner in framing health messages to our communities, and should not be overlooked as an avenue of health advocacy.

Representative Eric Pettigrew from the 37th Legislative District addressed the **State of our State** in his talk. He warned that the budget crisis in Washington State is ongoing with budget deficits projected from 0.5 to 2 billion dollars. Many programs have already experienced cuts and now lawmakers may be faced with eliminating certain programs altogether. Certainly the Federal healthcare bill has focused on prevention so there may be funds going to those efforts.



Pettigrew spoke about the burden of certain constitutional requirements and the needs of education, so Health and Human Services programs are sometimes viewed as the easiest to cut. This has a disproportionate impact on feeding programs, food banks and the mentally ill. Advocates need to identify to their Legislators the direct impact these cuts have and really focus on the faces of those being affected and their personal stories. A special session is planned for November, but much of the work will be going on beforehand to make that session

productive, so advocates need to gear up now to help lawmakers prioritize cuts and be active in action on the ground for revenue increases.

Pettigrew also spoke about the Governor's race between Inslee and McKenna, the Attorney General's race and redistricting as other ongoing areas that might shake up the Legislative agendas in the Capitol.

The last session was a panel discussion on "**Put Your Knowledge to Work**" moderated by Brandon Born with Seattle City Council President Richard Conlin and Thurston County Commissioner Karen Valenzuela. Born discussed the Farm bill upcoming in 2012 and the emphasis being placed on fruits and vegetables and the goal of restructuring commodities. Conlin emphasized the economic and political struggles we're all currently facing and the long term vision of the kind of social change we want to become reality. He spoke about rural and urban food systems coming together in the Food Action Initiative. Seattle has in place six principles they'd like to see implemented in the Farm Bill and has been working with the National League of Cities to hopefully adopt a resolution in November. He encouraged grassroots advocates to engage constituents that are not yet engaged.

Valenzuela spoke about her experience as a WIC mom. She asked the question, "where do we grow food if there are subdivisions being placed on farmland?" She sees growing food as the most patriotic thing we can do and emphasized the importance of being more self-reliant. But, she also stated it's "Insufficient to merely elect good people, you have to keep showing up." She saw advocate's role as being problem solvers, stewards of resources in our communities, and keepers of the vision embodied in the comprehensive plans created at local, State and Federal levels.

A special thank you to Shoko Kumagai (Conference Planning Chair), Joyce Chen and Mari Obara (Conference Planning Committee) for their tireless work planning and executing this conference and making it a success.

Fall Calendar

Events of Local Interest

October 27, 2011

UW Food Day Symposium

Contact Information:

[Anna Gabriel](#)

(206) 941-9007

[UW Nutritional Sciences](#)

October 29, 2011

4th Annual Nutrition Symposium: Clinician's Guide to Obesity Management & Treatment Options

Seattle Children's Hospital

7:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Pre-registration required

[Registration Information](#)

[Contact Information](#)

November 2, 2011

ADA Webinar: How to Eat Mindfully in a Mindless Eating World: Helping Clients Manage Weight Effectively

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Eastern

[Contact Information](#)

November 4-5, 2011

Nutrition & Exercise Workshop: From Science to Practice

University Washington in Tacoma

[Contact Information](#)

December 2, 2011

Have a Heart for Kids Day

2011 "Special" Session

United Churches of Olympia and the Washington State Capitol

9am to 3pm

[Children's Alliance](#)

(Legislative Update continued from page 3)

In addition to maintaining current funding for the listed programs, we would like to encourage the legislature to pursue other opportunities to generate revenue. Cuts alone will not fill the financial gap the state is facing. Additional revenue is needed to help preserve these programs and to ensure all residents, including children, families, and adults in the State of Washington have access to the food and basic needs to be healthy, productive members of our community.

Please contact your legislature before and during the special session. Preservation of funds for these programs are a priority of the Washington State Food and Nutrition Council. The lawmakers have a tough budget to balance this year so it's more important than ever to make your voice heard and ensure these programs receive the attention and funding they deserve. To help those in your community continue to put food on their tables contact your legislators and let them know you want them to support anti-hunger and nutrition programs. Find your legislators contact information through the State of Washington Legislature website: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>

For more information on legislative topics and sample letters to send to your legislators log on to the Washington State Food and Nutrition Councils website: <http://www.wsfnc.org/>

Sources for this article and trusted resources:

The Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition:

www.WSAHNC.org

Children's Alliance: www.childrensalliance.org

Washington State Dietetic Association and Greater Seattle Dietetic Association: www.nutritionwsda.org

News From the Farm

By Kristen Rezabek

Fall is in the air. The leaves are turning red and yellow and starting to drop. Apples and other root vegetables are being featured on menus. It's the time of year when you want to have a hearty stew or casserole warming on the stove and sip on hot cider. While many of us may have put the garden to bed there is still farm fun to be had outdoors. In fact this is one of my favorite seasons as across our state local farms turn into festivals celebrating the Autumn Harvest.



Pumpkin Patches are fun for all ages. There are tractor rides, corn mazes, pumpkin picking, jack-o-lantern carving and a variety of other family fun activities. If you're not sure where to find your local pumpkin patch visit [Puget Sound Fresh](#) and look up pumpkin farms. It's best to follow up and make sure the farm hosts different pumpkin patch activities and the days and hours of operation. In addition, weekdays may be just as busy at the farm

Prize pumpkins.



Picking the perfect pumpkin

with school field trips so call ahead to plan your visit.

Another web resource for tracking down the Harvest Festivals through out the state is the [Cascade Harvest Coalition](#). They have links to all different regions in Washington state and it's a great way to experience local agriculture.

Farm fun usually extends beyond Halloween into early November. Make sure you bundle up for your pumpkin picking activities. Enjoy some locally grown harvest treats and get ready for carving the perfect Jack-O-Lantern and Thanksgiving and homemade pumpkin pie.



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Carve the Perfect Jack-O-Lantern!

Pumpkin carving techniques have really stepped up with the ability to use pumpkin stencils or patterns. You can find these for free online. Just pick your favorite and size it according to the dimensions of your pumpkin. Tape the stencil on the pumpkin and using a pushpin follow the outline making dozens of tiny holes. Using a small serrated blade, cut a hole in the top of the pumpkin and scoop out the seeds. Once the inside is cleaned out, using the serrated blade carefully follow your pushpin pattern and trim away the pumpkin flesh until you see the design. Light with a candle and you're ready for All Hollows Eve!



Seasonal Recipe: Butternut Squash Soup Recipe by Kristen Rezabek *Locally grown or produced ingredients

Ingredients:

- 3-4 pound butternut squash – remove outer peel and scrape out seeds, cut into 1 ½ -2 inch cubes*
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 2 Tablespoons butter
- 2 onions, thinly sliced*
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup cream
- 1 ½ teaspoons parsley – minced*
- ½ teaspoon each of sage, rosemary, and thyme – minced*
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

In large roasting pan add cubed squash with 1 Tablespoon of olive and season with salt and pepper. Roast at 400F for 30-40 minutes or until squash is soft. In large sauce pan add remaining

tablespoon of olive oil, butter and thinly sliced onions. Allow to caramelize over medium-low heat until onions are golden brown, stirring occasionally, about 30 minutes. In blender or food processor combine cooked squash and caramelized onions with 1 cup of chicken broth. Puree until smooth. Add back to sauce pan with remaining 2 cups of chicken broth, bring to a simmer. Stir in 1 cup of cream and fresh herbs. Season to taste with salt and pepper. May serve with dollop of sour cream on top if desired.