

Lexington-Richland Schools Nutrition Director Wins Regional Recognition

The national, non-profit School Nutrition Association (SNA) has named Todd A. Bedenbaugh, Child Nutrition Director for Lexington-Richland School District 5, SC, the Southeast Regional *Director of the Year*. The award recognizes the extraordinary contributions of school nutrition directors who manage effective school meal programs providing healthy, appetizing meals to students.

As a child nutrition professional for the past 25 years, Todd A. Bedenbaugh works tirelessly to ensure that his district is providing quality food and customer service to students. Leading the only district to receive back-to-back \$100,000 USDA Farm-to-School grants, he implemented the new “Farm to Five: Communities Thrive” program in 2016 that focused on gardens and greenhouses at three schools. Students have planted kale, broccoli and cucumber seeds and then harvested crops to be incorporated in school menus. Bedenbaugh received funding from the State Department of Agriculture to send teachers and staff on field trips to local farms and make upgrades to several school gardens. Continuing to grow his department’s local sourcing efforts, Bedenbaugh will work with an agricultural educator and students to start a small farm this summer to begin growing broccoli for the district.

The Farm to Five program has also supported initiatives like the district’s Pronto Taco food truck, a summer food truck that travels the district in search of hungry students out of school for the summer. He also secured grants that paid for 24 of his district employees to attend a one-week culinary training camp at Trident Technical College, where they learned new culinary skills to enhance school menus.

Bedenbaugh started the District Education Foundation Golf Tourney to raise funds for the District Snack Pack Program that provides nutritious food for students who do not have enough to eat through the weekend. For the last four years, he organized a district-wide Chopped contest to introduce students to the culinary field. Bedenbaugh also coordinated culinary demonstrations with staff and students at the South Carolina State Fair to show off to the public what the school nutrition department does. He also recently held the position of South Carolina SNA President for the 2016-2017 school year.

“Todd A. Bedenbaugh’s passion for his job, his students and his district are represented in the number of positive programs and events he has spearheaded over the years,” said SNA President Lynn Harvey, EdD, RDN, SNS. “He is a great example of a school nutrition director invested in the well-being of his students and high quality service.”

The regional *Director of the Year Award* was created to recognize school nutrition directors who exhibit an extraordinary commitment to their school meal programs. The directors are responsible for maintaining the quality of the program through student interaction, menu planning and a commitment to serving nutritious, tasty and well-balanced school meals. Through effective oversight of all aspects of foodservice operations, including budgeting, staffing, training, marketing and community outreach, school nutrition directors ensure the overall success of school meal programs.

In July, Bedenbaugh will be honored during the Red Carpet Awards Ceremony at the School Nutrition Association's Annual National Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.

About School Nutrition Association:

The School Nutrition Association (SNA) is a national, non-profit professional organization representing 57,000 school nutrition professionals across the country. Founded in 1946, SNA and its members are dedicated to making healthy school meals and nutrition education available to all students. For more information on school meals, visit www.SchoolNutrition.org/SchoolMeals.

