

## Summary of the Nutrition Consortium's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual School Breakfast Summit

On February 26<sup>th</sup> in Syracuse, the Nutrition Consortium held its second annual School Breakfast Summit designed to encourage dialogue about School Breakfast Program operation and access issues and solutions. Twenty-five school food service directors, principals and business managers attended the event, as well as a representative from the State Education Department and Consortium staff Lisa Allison, Child Nutrition Program Specialist. The Summit agenda included presentations by one school principal and three school food service directors, Child Nutrition Program Reauthorization updates, and a brainstorming session facilitated by Consortium staff.

### ***Panel Presentations:***

The presentations by food service directors dealt primarily with the challenges faced in operating classroom breakfast programs, how they've made it work, and their difficulties and victories in garnering support for the program among school staff.

All of the speakers' school districts currently receive ABC Pilot funding from the Nutrition Consortium, and are monitoring the pilot's impact on the following factors: breakfast program participation; absenteeism; tardiness; disciplinary office referrals; visits to the school nurse; and academic performance. The goal of the ABC (Academics and Breakfast Connection) Pilot is to create model classroom breakfast programs that improve academic performance and reduce childhood hunger. *Funding for the Academics and Breakfast Connection Pilot was secured by the Nutrition Consortium of NYS from the Indirect Vitamins Purchasers Antitrust Litigation Settlement administered by the New York State Attorney General.*

- Brian Belknap, Edmeston Central School District: Brian delivers hot breakfasts to all K-4 classrooms in this K-12 school building, with K-4 enrollment at approximately 215 this year. In order to get this program up and running, Brian first piloted free classroom breakfast during National School Breakfast Week in March 2003. That pilot helped overcome some teacher and staff resistance to the idea and, during that one week period, increased participation from 75 to 246 per day. In addition, Brian stressed the need to actively promote the program through school newsletters, special events and announcements sent home to parents. With ABC Pilot funding, the 2003-04 classroom breakfast program has given Edmeston students more time to participate in School Breakfast, and average daily participation continues to be about 190. Due to the positive results, Edmeston plans to continue its classroom breakfast program next year. For more information about Edmeston's classroom breakfast program or to set up a visit to the school, please contact Brian at (607) 965-8931.
  
- Hadley Luzerne Central School District: Sandy Fishbough, Food Service Director and Charles Noe, Building Principal: Sandy operates classroom breakfast at the Stuart Townsend Middle School whose enrollment is at 517 this year (grades 3-8).

Townsend's food service staff delivers breakfasts to each of the 30 classrooms, with a combination of hot and cold items served throughout the month. Sandy reported that average daily participation increased from 57 in 2002 to 330 in 2003. Charles Noe discussed the important role nutrition plays in a child's ability to learn, and conveyed the message that teachers are essential to making classroom breakfast successful. He stressed that teachers must be included in the classroom breakfast planning process, and that food service directors need to address teachers' concerns throughout program implementation. The district hopes to continue operating the classroom breakfast program next year, and would like to expand the program to grades K-2 and 9-12. For more information about Stuart M Townsend's program or to visit the school, please contact Sandy at (518) 296-2112 ext 117.

- Nancy Younglove, Clyde Savannah Central School District: Nancy and her food service staff deliver breakfasts to each of the 22 classrooms at Clyde Elementary. 418 students are enrolled at the school and participation has increased from 75 in 2002 to 275 in 2003. Unfortunately, this classroom breakfast program is not likely to continue next year due to a lack of support among some of the school's teachers. To discuss Nancy's experience, please contact her at (315) 923-2411.

### ***Child Nutrition Program Reauthorization Update***

Lisa Allison provided an overview of the status of federal Child Nutrition Program Reauthorization. The status changes frequently. If you would like to receive email updates regarding reauthorization, please send an email request to [HungerCHLN@aol.com](mailto:HungerCHLN@aol.com)

### ***Brainstorming Session: Generating Support for the School Breakfast Program***

Consortium staff facilitated this small group, seven-step brainstorming session. During the first phase, each group developed a list of all of the negative comments/complaints they've received about the School Breakfast Program. While creating this list, they also indicated who made the complaints and discussed the situations surrounding the comments. In the second step, each group shared one of their comments and situations with the rest of the groups (which reinforced the fact that all food service directors are "in the same boat"). In step three, each group reviewed their own list of comments and took the time to discuss which of the complaints were valid and which ones were not valid. Then in step four, each group developed their arguments to address the invalid complaints, and in step five, discussed steps that could be taken to address the valid concerns. Step six involved reporting the results of steps three through five, and step seven involved brainstorming ways to get food service directors' voices heard.

Exciting ideas resulting from this workshop include the following:

- ✓ Educate teachers and parents: Publish nutrient analyses of breakfasts in school newsletters, along with basic information about USDA nutritional requirements that schools must meet.

- ✓ Enlist local media in spreading the word about the program: Invite reporters into the kitchen; show them how the program operates, what is served and discuss the importance of the program.
- ✓ Let students be the voice of the program: Many schools have student newspapers. Invite them to interview the food service staff and students.
- ✓ Create a school nutrition committee made up of students, teachers, food service staff, nurses and administrators.
- ✓ Participate in the “Choose Sensibly” campaign, encouraging health meal/snack choices.
- ✓ Be proactive with the PTA: Parent Teacher Associations occasionally invite food service staff to address PTA concerns with school meals. Food service directors need request that school meals be put on the PTA agenda so that their messages can be heard.
- ✓ Be part of the Open House: When schools hold their open house events, open the kitchen and invite parents to try the food and hand out promotional items to students
- ✓ Use Nutrition Consortium staff and Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) coordinators to help with media efforts and program promotion. (Please see attached list of NOEPs.)

**Thank you very much to our speakers, to those of you that helped with set-up and take-down, and to everyone that participated in this year’s summits!**