

# The HEN Post

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Fall 2014

## Holes in the Safety Net: Real Faces of Childhood Hunger in America

by Sarah Trist, MS, RD

I pulled up behind the Summer Meals bus into a parking lot of a run down and broken motel tucked behind greasy take-out restaurants and strip clubs. School food service staff set up the meal service while children milled around under the covered walkway. Slowly, one child ventured up to the van to accept a hot meal, perhaps the only meal they would eat that day.

Twenty minutes into the meal service, as children wandered back to their doorsteps to eat lunch, within the view of staff, per federal regulations, a taxi pulled up. Two children got out -one barefoot. The little girl pulled her brother, barely more than a toddler, wearing winter boots, into the muggy July sun. Their mother, avoiding interaction with foodservice staff, went straight on to the single room that lacked a microwave or refrigerator that the family called home.

As a dietitian with a background in food systems and policy, I studied hunger in classes. I volunteered at the food bank and afterschool programs. I understood the metrics, the definitions, the surveys used to evaluate different levels of food insecurity. I could academically cite statistics, but never truly understood the gravity the problem until I witnessed families in one of the richest zip codes in our nation standing in bare feet on hot broken asphalt to receive a meal. This is poverty I've seen in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Tanzania, and Nicaragua. I thought to myself, "This is America. This is not supposed to happen here."

Childhood hunger is a looming threat to our nation's health. Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RNDs) and Dietetic Technicians (DTRs) understand the impact of childhood food insecurity can lead to malnutrition with permanent effects on the health and development of our children. In a nation that wastes 30 to 40

percent of the food supply,<sup>1</sup> the problem is clearly not one of adequate food, but lack of political will.

Solving hunger requires accurate measurement of the problem. Nearly 12 percent of children live in households where one or more child worries about where their next meal was coming from, representing an estimated 8.6 million children. In 360,000 households, children go

hungry, skip meals, or go without food for a whole day due to a lack of resources. If that weren't sobering enough, the Economic Research Service acknowledges that these statistics gathered in 2012 likely underestimate the true number of children facing hunger because homeless families were not surveyed.<sup>2</sup>

Many families participating in food production are food insecure. From rural farming families under contract to grow animals for the only processor in their region, to fast food and food retail workers, the very people who help produce the food for most Americans -food workers -must use the second-tier food system of government assistance and non-profit charities to put food on their own table.

Contract farming largely entails families raising poultry or pigs for corporations where a farmer has a guaranteed buyer for animals raised under conditions dictated by the



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## Message from the Chair

by Dianne Lollar, MPH, RD, LD

This issue has a thought provoking article on hunger by Sarah Trist, MS, RD. It calls HEN members to action by reaching out and educating our members of Congress and donating to the local food bank. I remember ten years ago when I asked the public health nutrition staff at my office about their thoughts on omitting gifts at our December staff meeting and bringing healthy foods or money donations to the local food bank.

They were very receptive to the idea and wanted to have a representative from the food bank come and speak at our meeting. To hear the grim statistics about children and families going hungry in your town is not the most welcomed news during the holidays. But it does bring awareness to the problem and moves people to action. Since that staff meeting, our community has developed a Health Action Partnership to address hunger issues in our county. Let me know about your volunteer efforts to address hunger in your community at [henchair@gmail.com](mailto:henchair@gmail.com).

If you enjoy gardening and cooking delicious plant-based meals, then you will find the articles on Budget-Wise, Plant Strong Eating and Southern Roots a joy to read. Learning to grow your own food is an adventure in patience and perseverance. In the book, *Founding Gardeners: The Revolutionary Generation, Nature and the Shaping of the American Nation*, author Andrea Wulf noted how a trip to the great botanist John Bartram's garden helped the delegates

of the Constitutional Congress break their deadlock and continue productive dialogue. Amazing what gardens can do!

Our HEN FNCE events in Atlanta were enjoyed by all. Our thanks to HEN volunteers, members and sponsors (Organic Valley, Cliff Bar and Taylor & Francis) for making our events possible. HEN Post Co-Editor, K.C. Wright has an excellent article on our Urban Farm Tour and 8<sup>th</sup> annual HEN Film Feastival. Our congratulations to Ashley Colpaart, MS, RD, HEN Past Chair on receiving the E. Neige Todhunter Memorial Doctoral Fellowship at the Academy Foundation Gala during the Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo (FNCE)!

As you will be receiving this issue in December, best wishes to you and your family for a happy holiday season!

**Dianne Lollar, MPH, RDN, LD**  
Chair Hunger & Environmental Nutrition  
Dietetic Practice Group

### CALL FOR PAPERS

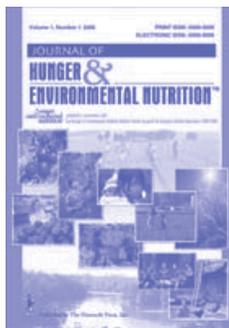
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Questions may be directed to Marie Boyle, PhD, RD, Editor, at [mboyle01@cse.edu](mailto:mboyle01@cse.edu).

(Holes in the Safety Net *continued from page 1*)

buyer. The conditions that these workers find themselves in are no accident. Efforts to make contract farming a more equitable practice have been squashed for decades. Workers organizing to form a union at the nation's largest food retailer, Walmart have been illegally fired or found their departments eliminated<sup>3</sup> more recently, fast food workers organized nationwide protests to bring attention to the rampant practice of wage theft and their need for a living wage.

Children who are food insecure are at high risk for overweight or obesity. Their families are less likely to have consistent access to healthy food, need to purchase inexpensive nutrient-poor foods to meet their budget constraints, and may have irregular eating patterns as a result of food insecurity.<sup>4</sup>

One of my first eating disorder patients as a very young child suffered periods of food insecurity. While hospitalized for her restrictive eating behaviors, she displayed hoarding practices unseen among her peers. As an adolescent, the past periods of food deprivation haunted her and were a complicating factor of her disordered eating.

Many states boast initiatives to end childhood hunger. At their best, they bring organizations from across communities to collaborate and share best practices. At their worst, the initiative is a political pawn and an outlet for companies to "hunger wash." The year after Sodexo reached a settlement with New York schools for illegally embezzling money that belonged to school food authorities as part of providing school lunch and breakfast,<sup>5</sup> they

offered Maryland money to help expand summer feeding programs, complete with a giant check and shiny photos for their press release.<sup>6</sup>

Food and nutrition assistance comes from both government and private sources. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) **Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)** oversees much of our nation's food and nutrition safety net. In fact, their programs reach 1 in 4 Americans over the course of the year.<sup>7</sup> The meals served in these programs follow evidence-based guidelines for nutrition and high standards for safety. The USDA has embraced making them fresh, healthier, and set out to incorporate **Farm to School** in creative ways through training and grant programs.

In addition to the Federal programs, there is a growing private charitable network under increasing strain. As the Great Recession hit, many families found themselves struggling with food insecurity for the first time and turned to this private network. While the economy stagnated, the funds added to SNAP as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (often referred to as The Stimulus) expired and were closely followed by the challenges created under sequestration. As a result, food banks and other charitable organizations scrambled to do more with less. In 2013, Feeding America, the nation's largest network of food banks, fed 46.5 million Americans annually, up from 37 million in 2010. They estimate that over 28 percent of them are children.<sup>8</sup>

### Protecting our Vital Programs

The Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act, (CNR), is the legislation that authorizes many

## HEN MISSION

To empower members to be leaders in sustainable and accessible food and water systems

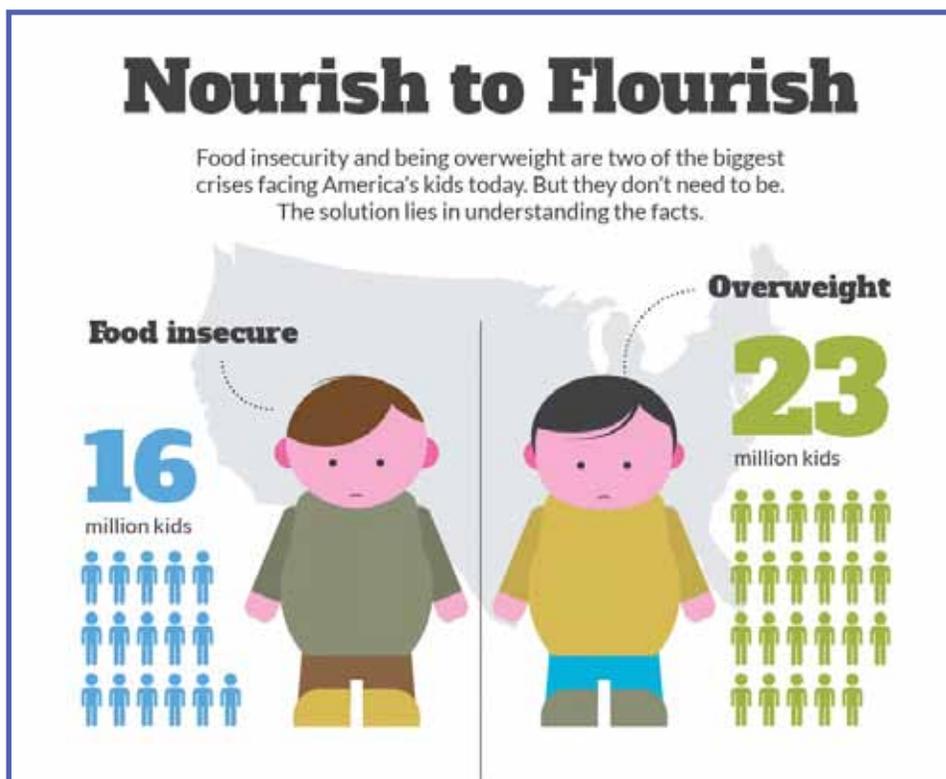
## HEN VISION

To optimize the nation's health by promoting access to nutritious food and clean water from a secure and sustainable food system

## THE BENEFITS OF HEN MEMBERSHIP INCLUDE:

- Quarterly newsletter with occasional CPE articles and reproducible fact sheets.
- Access to the HEN Electronic Mailing List (EML) that provides the latest information and relevant conferences.
- Subscription to the Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition published by Taylor and Francis.
- Member-only access to articles and resources via the HEN website — [www.HENdpg.org](http://www.HENdpg.org).
- Collaboration with food and nutrition professionals across the United States and the world.
- Opportunity to be nominated for HEN awards.
- Notices of related conferences around the country.
- Potential for national and international recognition when working on HEN projects.
- Eligible to vote in HEN Executive Committee election.

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Excerpt from the Academy's **Nourish to Flourish** infographic. To access the full infographic, visit <http://www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=6442478348>

## GET INVOLVED:

- 1. Complete the HEN Member Expertise Form:** The Public Policy Committee hopes to track the expertise of most HEN members in a way that allows us to quickly call on members with area expertise in critical districts to impact legislation and propose regulations. **Take a few minutes today to complete the form.**
- 2. Respond to all Academy Action Alerts and encourage your colleagues to do the same.** Did you know that less than 6% of Academy members respond to these important calls to action? That is like one person showing up to knock on doors. The letters to your Representatives make a difference. They need to hear from their constituents that the issue is important to them and deserves their attention and vote.
- 3. Get to know your Representatives now.** They work for you. Build a relationship and let them know you are a resource available to help appreciate the impact of legislation and importance of health and nutrition issues. Volunteer for their campaign, make a visit to their office, and invite them to yours! The Academy has **great resources** to get you started. The HEN **Public Policy Committee** is also available to mentor you through the process.
- 4. Donate to your local food bank.** The reality is that this is a necessary part of the safety net. **Healthy guides** to donating are a nice place to start – but know that cash donations will be used well and may help improve healthy offerings. Jenna Umbriac, Nutrition Education of the Manna Food Center in Washington DC adds, “At our food bank I can leverage funding donations to buy core healthy food items for our family and child-centered food assistance packages instead of having families struggle to make a balanced meal out of odds and ends that may be nutrient dense or not.”

of these programs. The Act is reauthorized every 5 years. Additionally, regulations in the Act impact programs which are not authorized through the Act, such as SNAP, and spell out how families who qualify for one program may more easily access other assistance programs. The current climate of Congress promises that the upcoming 2015 Reauthorization will be quite the fight.

While cutting government spending sounds like a winning campaign slogan, the impact of food insecurity is long lasting and costly to the nation. As nutrition professionals, we know that children who grow up food insecure are at risk for micronutrient deficiencies, such as iron deficiency anemia,<sup>9</sup> at critical points in development. Food insecure children face developmental delays, learning delays, and behavioral problems that are not only morally repugnant, but cost our nation in future productive and health outcomes.<sup>10-15</sup>

Legislation to raise the minimum wage and regulations to address the monopolies and monopolies that occur from seed to store have crumbled under political pressure. As professionals who understand the profound impacts of these injustices throughout our food system our representatives need to hear from us.

In Spring 2001, I participated in a living wage campaign in Syracuse, New York. Going door-to-door, I asked my neighbors to contact their representatives in support of a resolution that would require the city to pay a living wage to its workers. One morning I was the only volunteer who showed up for a door knocking assignment. A local union organized the campaign. While I choked down a bagel and bad coffee before my shift, the union representative asked me what I studied. “Nutrition,” I responded. He looked puzzled. “What does that have to do with a living wage?” Frankly? “Everything.”

We must address the rights of workers to adequate wages, access to education, healthcare, and housing to break the cycles of food insecurity and poverty. As a Program Specialist at the Maryland State Department of Education I was constantly pressured to encourage school systems to take grants to expand meal programs (whether they were needed or welcomed) from food companies whose labor practices result in food insecurity among their workers. This “hunger washing” is rampant in the food assistance community. Donations from food companies buy them positive advertising, tax breaks, and too often the silence of those working to help those in need in the same way they silence the representatives we elect to solve these problems.

At its heart, childhood hunger is a symptom of poverty and a failure to offer an adequate safety net to the nation’s most vulnerable. For a system to live up to the idea that everyone has the opportunity to make something of themselves, we cannot simultaneously allow a significant portion of the population to suffer the health effects of

childhood hunger. It is not enough to say that we will provide a box of food for workers that make too little to purchase sufficient, culturally appropriate, healthy food. Given that the forces that drive food insecurity are multi-dimensional, our solutions must be as well. RDNs and DTRs are well positioned to lend their expertise and understanding of food systems to food security and anti-poverty efforts.

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# Budget-Wise, Plant-Strong Eating

by Brenda Davis, RD and Vesanto Melina, MS, RD

Many people who are on a budget believe that eating healthy is next to impossible. With the escalating cost of fruits and vegetables, they opt for processed foods such as boxed macaroni and cheese, ramen noodles or white rice and canned meat. Eating out usually means fast food such as burgers, fries, tacos, or fried chicken.

These are the types of foods most strongly linked with overweight, obesity and chronic diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and even some cancers.

Processed foods and fast foods concentrate potentially harmful dietary components such as damaging fats, refined carbohydrates (both starches and sugars), salt, artificial colors, flavors and preservatives. Such foods are often produced unsustainably, and tend to be over-packaged.

So how do we assist food insecure consumers in making the shift to a plant-strong diet? How can we help individuals and families design diets that maximize health protective components such as fiber, vitamins, minerals, protein, essential fats, phytochemicals and antioxidants? First, we need to help consumers see the bigger picture. Healthful eating leads to increased well-being, fewer sick days, better stamina, improved immune function, and vastly reduced risk of disease. Furthermore it means reduced health care costs, and more joy-filled lives.

Plant-centered diets can be simple or extravagant - just remember that the poorest people on the planet rely largely on beans, grains, and vegetables for their sustenance. These foods are not only economical but are earth-friendly as well. Here are 10 tips to help consumers make penny-wise, nutrient-rich choices, and a delicious, nutritious menu that will fit any budget!

**1. Grow your own food.** Grow vegetables, herbs, berries and sprouts. If you are able, plant a fruit tree. If you do not have room for a garden,

grow vegetables and herbs in containers on your balcony or doorstep, or rent space from a community garden. Always have sprouts on the go. Growing sprouts is easy, inexpensive and takes very little space. All you need are jars with sprouting lids (mesh bags and elastics also work on the jars), or sprouting bags, and seeds. Kamut or spelt berries, mung beans and lentils are all great choices. Sprouts contain a vast array of nutrients and are many times higher in protective phytochemicals than their unsprouted counterpart.

**2. Prepare your own food.** Learn basic food preparation skills such as cooking grains and beans. Make as much as you can from scratch - soups, stews, patties, loaves, healthy baked goods, breakfast cereals, smoothies, salad dressings and sauces. Cook in big batches and freeze portions for instant meals at a later date.

**3. Buy whole foods in bulk.** Unprocessed foods are less expensive and far more nutritious than their processed counterparts. A couple of potatoes might cost 50 cents but turn them into potato chips and the cost will be closer to three dollars. Buying in bulk is best for non-perishables such as grains, beans and canned or jarred goods as the cost per unit is usually significantly lower. If you have access to bulk fresh produce, dehydrating, canning or freezing can be very economical.

**4. Shop sensibility.** Make a week long menu, check to see which ingredients you'll need, cut out coupons and check flyers to see what deals are being offered. Check unit prices on foods. Shop at stores that are close to one another to save gas and time. Don't shop on an empty stomach, as you will be more prone to impulse purchases. If possible, go to farmer's markets (you can often get great deals at the end of the day) or directly to farms. Check out local ethnic stores as some have much lower prices on basic staples.

**5. Eat legumes for protein.** Legumes - beans, lentils, peas, and chickpeas are the least expensive, most nutrient dense protein choices on the planet. They provide high protein, iron, and zinc, but are low in fat and are cholesterol-free. In addition, beans are brimming with fiber and phytochemicals. They are the best nutrition bargain on the block. The easiest way to begin using beans is to add a few cooked beans into a soup or on a salad. Progress to bean-based main dishes such as spicy black beans over baked yams or lentil curry. Cook a big batch of beans and freeze in 1- or 2-cup bags. Lentils do not need soaking and are very quick cooking compared to other legumes. Dried beans are more economical than canned.

**6. Buy local and in season.** Find out where local, seasonal foods are available in your community. When you buy local you avoid the added cost (both financial and ecological) of shipping foods long distances. Also, you can find incredible deals on very fresh foods. Produce tends to be one of the more expensive parts of the food bill for those on a budget, so be sure to take advantage of less expensive options such as cabbage, carrots, onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes. Also, consider frozen options when fresh are just too costly.

**7. Drink water.** Do not waste money on soda or other beverages with no nutritional value. Stick to water (not bottled - tap water is fine; filter if you are able). Teas can be reasonably inexpensive.

**9. Minimize processed, packaged and fast food.** Think nutrients per dollar and you will quickly see why highly processed and fast foods are no bargain at all.

**10. Waste not, want not.** Do not throw food out unless it has gone bad. Eat leftovers for lunch or re-purpose them for dinner. Make a soup, casserole or salad with leftovers or freeze them for later use. Keep tabs on what is in your fridge so nothing goes to waste.



## SUPER SIMPLE PLANT-BASED MENU

This menu, from *Cooking Vegan* by dietitian Vesanto Melina and chef Joseph Forest is nutritious, economical and simple. There is just one meal to prepare – Stir Fry 101, with rice; stir fries allow for infinite variation. For lunch, either rely on canned soup, or save even more by cooking in quantity and freezing portions. Lentil soup or split pea soup are other high protein options; you'll find outstanding recipes in *Cooking Vegan*. Vary this basic menu according to your preferences, as much as possible relying on whole plant foods. When eating completely plant-based, include a vitamin B<sub>12</sub> supplement (such as 1000 mcg twice a week). Menu and recipe reprinted with permission from *Cooking Vegan* (Melina, Forest, Book Publishing Co., 2012)

### BREAKFAST

2 slices of whole grain toast, each with 2 tsp of almond butter or peanut butter, plus 1 cup calcium-fortified juice

or

1 bowl oatmeal with 1 cup calcium-fortified soymilk, your favorite fruit and 2-3 tablespoons of walnuts and/or seeds (pumpkin, hemp, chia, etc.)

### LUNCH

Black bean soup, 11 oz can  
Whole grain crackers, 4  
Apple, 1 (or other fruit)

### SUPPER

Stir Fry 101, 2 1/4 cups vegetables and chickpeas  
Brown rice, 1 1/2 cups

### SNACKS

Trail mix: 1/3 c walnuts, peanuts and other nuts and seeds, 1/2 c figs or other dried fruit

### Nutritional analysis of menu:

calories: 1992, protein: 61 g, fat: 68 g, carbohydrate: 305 g, dietary fiber: 55 g, calcium: 992 mg, iron: 18 mg, magnesium: 617 mg, phosphorus: 1269 mg, potassium: 3946 mg, sodium 994 mg, zinc: 11 mg, thiamin: 1.5 mg, riboflavin: 1.2 mg, niacin: 26 mg, vitamin B<sub>6</sub>: 1.9 mg, folate: 548 mcg, vitamin A: 744 mcg, vitamin C: 391 mg, vitamin E: 21 mg, omega-3 fatty acids: 3 g

Percentage of calories from: protein 12%, fat 29%, carbohydrate 59%

## Stir Fry 101

Makes 4 1/2 cups (2 servings)

If you only learn one recipe, this is a great choice! The process is fun, you can create your masterpiece alone or in company, and the combinations are unlimited. A traditional stir-fry is made over high heat in a round-bottomed cooking vessel known as a wok. This recipe can be made in a frying pan or wok and uses very little oil. Serve with cooked rice.

- 1 tablespoon canola oil, olive oil or other vegetable oil
- 1/2 onion, large diced
- 1 cup sliced carrots, cut diagonally
- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 1 cup cooked chickpeas
- 1 cup sliced red peppers
- 1 cup trimmed snow peas
- 1 cup sliced bok choy
- 1/4 cup stir fry sauce  
(made with 2 tbsp fresh minced ginger, 2 tbsp tamari or soy sauce, and 1/4 cup orange juice concentrate)
- or
- use commercial stir-fry sauce to taste

Heat the oil in a wok or large skillet over medium-high heat; heat to 400 degrees F if using an electric frying pan. Add the onion and cook until it begins to turn brown. Add the carrots, broccoli, and chickpeas and cook until the carrots and broccoli are almost tender crisp. Add the peppers, snow peas, bok choy, and sauce and cook for 1 minute or until the vegetables are warm and wilted.

Per serving (2 1/4 cups): calories: 378, protein: 16 g, fat: 9 g, carbohydrate: 61 g, dietary fiber: 11 g, calcium: 180 mg, iron: 7 mg, magnesium: 115 mg, phosphorus: 311 mg, potassium: 1329 mg, sodium: 605 mg, zinc: 2.3 mg, thiamin: 0.5 mg, riboflavin: 0.5 mg, niacin: 7 mg, vitamin B<sub>6</sub>: 0.9 mg, folate: 322 mcg, pantothenic acid: 2.25 mg, vitamin B<sub>12</sub>: 0 mcg, vitamin A: 749 mcg, vitamin C: 308 mg, vitamin E: 5 mg, omega-3 fatty acids: 0.2 g

Percentage of calories from: protein 15%, fat 23%, carbohydrate 62%

### Stir Fry Variations:

1. Replace any of the vegetables with seasonal, economical options - sliced celery, green or yellow beans, green onions, green or yellow peppers, zucchini, eggplant, mushrooms, Napa cabbage, green or red cabbage, okra, mung bean sprouts, sugar snap peas or frozen peas all work well. Be creative!
2. Add 2 cloves garlic, minced and/or 1 tablespoon minced ginger.
3. Replace the chickpeas with cubed firm tofu, marinated tofu, tempeh, veggie "chicken" (such as Gardein), or sliced seitan.

*Brenda Davis is a registered dietitian and HEN member from Kelowna BC Canada. She is the co-author of nine books, including the award-winning Becoming Vegan: Express Edition (2013) and the newly released Becoming Vegan: Comprehensive Edition (2014)(both by Brenda Davis and Vesanto Melina, Book Publishing Co.) Website: [becomingvegan.ca](http://becomingvegan.ca)*



# Childhood Malnutrition in Ecuador

by Megan Patton-López, PhD, RD

Childhood malnutrition in Ecuador has been a public health concern for at least the past two decades. In 1986, national health and nutrition surveys found that 40% of children under five years of age had childhood stunting.<sup>1</sup> A follow-up survey in 2004 revealed that the level of national stunting decreased to 34%.<sup>2</sup> The most recent nationally representative survey documents that chronic malnutrition is still a concern with 25% of children ages five and under.<sup>3</sup> This proportion of children with stunting is almost two times higher than in Latin America in general (14%), and in South America in particular (12%) in 2010.<sup>4</sup>

Child growth is internationally recognized as the best global indicator of physical well-being in children.<sup>5</sup> A child's growth is influenced by a variety of factors including lack of material resources,<sup>6</sup> poor feeding practices (both in quantity and quality), and infections.<sup>7</sup> As a result, limited nutrient availability and/or utilization at the cellular level impair physical growth and brain development in children that can lead to long-lasting disadvantages.<sup>8</sup>

In Ecuador, similar to other low- and middle-income countries, disparities in chronic malnutrition among children exist. Descriptive analysis of the most recent national survey, ENSANUT-ECU 2012, reveals that a higher than average proportion of children from indigenous families (42%) fail to reach international benchmarks for height for age.<sup>9</sup> There are 14 distinct indigenous populations in Ecuador, which make up approximately 7% of the total population.<sup>10</sup> Poverty, measured according to income as well as physical and human capital, continues to affect indigenous peoples in Ecuador disproportionately.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore,

indigenous people in Ecuador, as throughout Latin America, face structural inequalities, such as lack of access to quality education, health services, basic water/sanitation services, environmental degradation, and forced displacement, that impact overall children's health and well-being, including their nutritional status.<sup>12</sup>

Most growth retardation occurs very early in life. The two periods of highest vulnerability are during intrauterine development and during the transition from exclusive breastfeeding to the addition of other foods to the diet, generally beginning in the second six months of life.<sup>13</sup> In Ecuador, 33% of children ages 12 to 23 months fail to meet WHO growth standards for age.<sup>14</sup> Deficiencies in key nutrients—iron, zinc and

vitamin A are observed in infants 6-11 months of age with 64%, 44%, and 28% respectively. Deficiency in iron and zinc among infants may be due in part to maternal deficiencies of these nutrients. In 2012, 11% of women ages 12-19 years and 17% of women ages 20-49 years exhibited iron deficiency anemia. The proportion of women with zinc deficiency is even



Child in the Sierra region, 2013



A poster in a local health clinic in an Indigenous community of the Sierra, "We all have responsibilities and rights," 2013

higher, from 51% among women 12-19 years to 58% among women 20-49 years. Analysis of food consumption reveals that, nationally, the major source of both protein and iron in the diet comes from rice.<sup>15</sup> The low bioavailability of zinc and iron in rice, combined with overall inadequate consumption and infections/parasites of the digestive tract may explain the higher than average rates of micronutrient deficiencies.

Substantial public investments in nutrition programs over the past 8 years have not yet produced expected results.<sup>16</sup> Since 2006, millions of dollars have been directed towards cash transfers, micronutrient supplementation, and comprehensive nutritional programs. However, the prevalence of stunting remains at very high levels among indigenous children, one of the highest in Latin America.<sup>17</sup> In addition to financial resources, national researchers/scholars suggest that more attention to meaningful engagement of the indigenous population in the developing and implementation of nutrition, health, and education programs will increase effectiveness of current and future policies.<sup>18</sup>

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## HEN POST DEADLINES AND SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

**Submission Guidelines:** The *HEN Post* features viewpoints, statements and articles that provide perspective on domestic and international food security, food production and environmental food issues. We also publish descriptions of programs, community intervention, research, legislation, websites or curriculums of interest to our members. We especially seek submissions from our members. These viewpoints, statements and other information do not imply endorsement by HEN and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Articles may be reproduced for education purposes only after obtaining written permission from HEN, the copyright holder of all published materials unless prior agreement was made.

### Submission Deadlines

March 15, 2015 –  
Spring 2015

June 15, 2015 –  
Summer 2015

September 15, 2015 –  
Fall 2015

For more specific guidelines on article format, length, referencing and additional information that must accompany articles, see the HEN website – [www.hendpg.org](http://www.hendpg.org). Log in as a member, click on HEN Post and click on Submission Guidelines.

# HEN in Atlanta

## Urban Farm/Food Systems Bus Tour and Film Festival Events

by KC Wright, MS, RDN, LD

It's shortly after 8:00 a.m. on an October Saturday morning – a time when many HEN members might typically be enjoying a leisurely start to the day, checking the late harvest in the garden, or heading out to a farmers' market. Yet on this morning in Atlanta for Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo (FNCE), 31 HEN and other Academy members have boarded a bus, and are engaged in lively conversations as we arrive at our first stop on the HEN Urban Farm/Food Systems Bus Tour—the **Atlanta Community Food Bank (ACFB)** where just the day before, they held the largest food drive in the world, raising an estimated one million dollars.

But it's not the 50 million pounds of food and groceries distributed to more than 600 nonprofit partner agencies that serve close to 30 regional communities that is so impressive. Rather, as HEN member and ACFB Registered Dietitian, **Janice Giddens, MS, RDN, LD** explains, it's the food bank's community projects for their clients and agencies, as well as its adoption of a food nutrient ranking program, that helps to empower people in need toward better food security, health, and well-being.

The ACFB strives to give their clients a "hand-up" with the development of community gardens; new school supplies through a free store for educators from schools where students' academic success is threatened by poverty; and by connecting people who qualify with public benefits. Nutrition education has also been greatly enhanced through the diverse efforts of Giddens, hired by the ACFB last year as their first-ever nutrition and wellness manager.

Beyond providing food pantry offering solutions to clients, or doing a cooking demo on the food bank's grocery floor, Giddens has trained 140 ACFB staff members to rank foods received, on their nutritional content through a simplified, easy-to-understand, 3-point scale. Implementing the **Choosing Healthy Options Program (CHOP)**—developed by the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank), Giddens works to promote the acquisition, distribution, and consumption of healthier food. Foods ranked 1-*Choose Frequently*, are the most nutritious, such as fresh produce; while foods ranked 2-*Choose Occasionally*, and 3-*Choose Rarely*, help people to make quick, informed decisions about what to eat.

At the end of the ACFB facility tour, Giddens treated our tour to refreshing apple cinnamon smoothies made with seasonal fruit and locally produced yogurt. She then hopped on the bus to join us for our next stop at **Truly Living Well, Center for Natural Urban Agriculture**, thriving in the shadow of Ebenezer Baptist Church where Dr. Martin Luther King Sr. once preached.

After arriving in downtown Atlanta's historic fourth ward, Truly Living Well's CEO **Rashid Nuri** greeted us, and explained that the dynamic urban agricultural site is a reclaimed housing project. Now in their ninth season, produce is grown to provide enough food for their own farmers market and CSA. Truly Living Well supports urban education and training, and engages in

both economic and community development. Nuri refers to food as not only sustenance, but as a "leverage for education," through which Truly Living Well provides outreach programs.

Our group was amazed at the diversity at this urban agriculture site, as an AmeriCorps intern gave us a tour. Truly Living Well is home to an apple orchard, an aquaponic house for tilapia (in conjunction with the biology department at Georgia State University), a permaculture garden, complete compost production, and even a banana tree to demonstrate climate change (as Atlanta has begun to show signs of a subtropical climate.)

The next stop on the tour took us north of Atlanta to **Kennesaw State University (KSU)** where a comprehensive and successful organic **farm-to-campus** operation has earned the school an impressive eight ranking among the "60 Best Colleges For Food in America", according to *Newsweek*. Also in 2013, KSU won awards from the National Restaurant Association. As *Innovator of the Year*, KSU is the first educational institution to receive the prestigious award. They were also recognized with the *Operator Innovations Award for Sustainability*, citing their closed-loop waste management program and LEED

Gold certification dining facility.

KSU's farm-to-campus program was launched May of 2010, with two-acres of farmland and an apiary. A year later, KSU acquired another 40 acres including 6,000 square feet of greenhouse space. The farm's heirloom vegetables and honey are both served in their main dining hall. Two years ago, KSU created a growers only, campus farmers market with the purpose of providing support for healthy growing practices, strengthen the local economy, encourage healthy lifestyles, and educate the college community about sustainable agriculture.

We met our KSU tour guide, assistant director of marketing, Melissa McMahon, at the newest and largest of the college's three food production farms, consisting of 16 plantable acres. McMahon explained that the dining services strives to procure at least 40% of their produce from local sources—20% provided from their own farms. We took a short walk into the woods to view the shitake mushroom garden that produces enough to fulfill all orders for the dining hall. McMahon then guided us to the hot houses where hundreds of hydro-tomatoes flourished. She explained that taste is a high priority for their tomatoes grown. Yet fertilizing the plants



with ocean minerals, yielded a significant increase in the nutritional value of their juicy fruits, as reported by an independent lab.

Goats have recently been introduced to the farm with plans to produce cheese from their milk. Chickens too, are an integral part of the biodiversity of the farm and benefit from the unique blend of feed made by the staff. The hens contribute more than 300 eggs a week to the campus dining larder. Forty-two honeybee hives on the farms pollinate the fruit, vegetable, and herb plants. In collaboration with KSU's farm-to-campus mission, it now offers a degree program in *Culinary Sustainability and Hospitality*, integrating food science, nutrition, and sustainability management.

Approaching lunchtime, we were escorted to the KSU's main dining hall, *The Commons*, which boasts a collection of global cuisine across nine unique venues. Around the perimeter of the dining hall, hydroponic growing units were installed in 2012 with educational displays, and visually demonstrate where some 700 heads of lettuce are harvested about every three weeks. Choosing among the many appetizing food selections was a bit of a challenge—from pizza and bread made from scratch daily without artificial leaveners (an onsite grist mill provides fresh grits and cornmeal)—to locally sourced meat, fish, and poultry, to homemade soups and sauces, to vegan and vegetarian options. As we settled at our tables for more conversation with McMahon and a delicious meal, we came to fully appreciate how KSU received national recognition for both its food and operator sustainability.

HEN External Relations Committee Chair, **Jessica Avasthi, MS, RD, LD**, teaches nutrition and exercise science at KSU, and is on the board of Truly Living Well. We were fortunate to have her guidance and insight throughout the day.

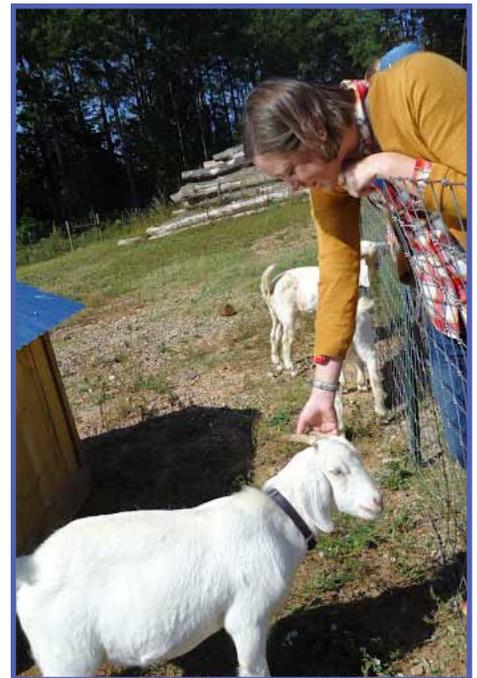
Energetic activities continued on Sunday evening with **HEN's 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Film Festival** which was held at **Southface**, a LEED Platinum Eco training center that promotes green jobs, clean energy solutions, and sustainable communities. Attendees were greeted by members of the HEN leadership and welcomed to enjoy local and/or sustainably produced beer and wine, along with a bountiful buffet comprised of many

local and seasonal foods. Following a lively social hour, HEN Chair, Dianne Lollar, MPH, RD, LD, presented the exciting annual HEN Awards (see page 14 for more).

The film "**Resistance**" was screened—a stimulating documentary about the role of microbes and antibiotics in food and health. Afterward, public and global health journalist **Maryn McKenna** along with PEW Charitable Trust Veterinarian **Gail Hansen**, both in the film, joined other panelists, author **Sandor Katz** (*The Art of Fermentation*) and **Stacia Clinton, RD, LD** from Health Care Without

Harm, for a dynamic discussion with those in attendance. The entire evening offered a sense of restorative resolve for HEN's diverse and growing network, charged with fostering sustainable and accessible food and water systems.

Thanks to the HEN FNCE Planning Team and our sponsors, Cliff Bar, Organic Valley and Taylor and Francis for their support of our successful HEN events during FNCE!



# Igniting Your Career

## Highlights from HEN's Spotlight Session at FNCE 2014

Presented by Angie Tagtow, MS, RD, LD, Stacia Clinton, RD, LD, and Barbara Hartman, MS, RD, LD  
 Moderated by Dianne Lollar, MPH, RDN, LD

Session overview by Bettina Tahsin, RD, LDN, CDE

How do you fine tune your skills and experience levels so that you become an effective advocate for sustainable, resilient, and healthy food and water systems? How do you take your career to the next level?

**Healthy Food and Safe Water: A New Era of Dietetic Practice**, the HEN spotlight session presented at FNCE in Atlanta, GA, on Sunday, October 19, 2014, targeted exactly these questions. As presenter Angie Tagtow, MS, RD, LD, reminded us, HEN's mission is to empower members to be leaders in sustainable and accessible food and water systems. She also reinforced that sustainability is a process, not a prescription. We need the skill sets and competencies to change with an evolving environment, ready to expertly address and constructively adapt to whatever arises. With that mission in mind, the Standards of Professional Practice for Registered Dietitians Nutritionists (RDNs) for Sustainable, Resilient, and Healthy Food and Water Systems (SOPP) were created by a work group comprised of HEN members and published in the March 2014 issue of the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*.

As Tagtow emphasized, the value of the SOPP competencies lie in the fact that RDNs play a unique and pivotal role in promoting healthy food and water systems and that we can all make a difference. Now is the time to take our place as leaders as there is growing interest among the public, government, industry, and institutions in promoting and protecting healthy food and water systems.

How RDNs are making a difference by implementing the SOPP competencies was described by Stacia Clinton, RD, LD and Barbara Hartman, MS, RD, LD.

Clinton explored how environmental nutrition has advanced the definition of what constitutes healthy food and how RDNs are responding to this evolution.

Clinton specifically showcased how individual RDNs have incorporated the SOPP competencies into their careers, highlighting the contributions of Susanne Robertson, MS, RD, LDN, Lead Registered Dietitian at Community Servings in Boston, MA, Lynn Larson, RD, LDN, Clinical Nutrition Manager, Food and Nutrition Services, Lahey Health System Beverly Hospital in Beverly, MA, and Lisa McDowell, MS, RD, CSSD, Director of Clinical Nutrition, St Joseph Mercy

**Environmental Nutrition**  
 Redefining Healthy Food for the Health Care Sector

**Not All Apples Are Created Equal**  
 Environmental Nutrition Redefines What Constitutes Healthy Food

TRADITIONAL NUTRITION	ENVIRONMENTAL NUTRITION
Focuses on biochemical components of food and individual food consumption	Accounts for social, political, economic, and environmental factors related to the food system as a whole
Asks:	Also asks:
How much Vitamin C?	Was it grown with harmful pesticides or synthetic fertilizers?
How many calories?	What labor standards were used?
How much fiber?	Were toxic chemicals used in packaging?

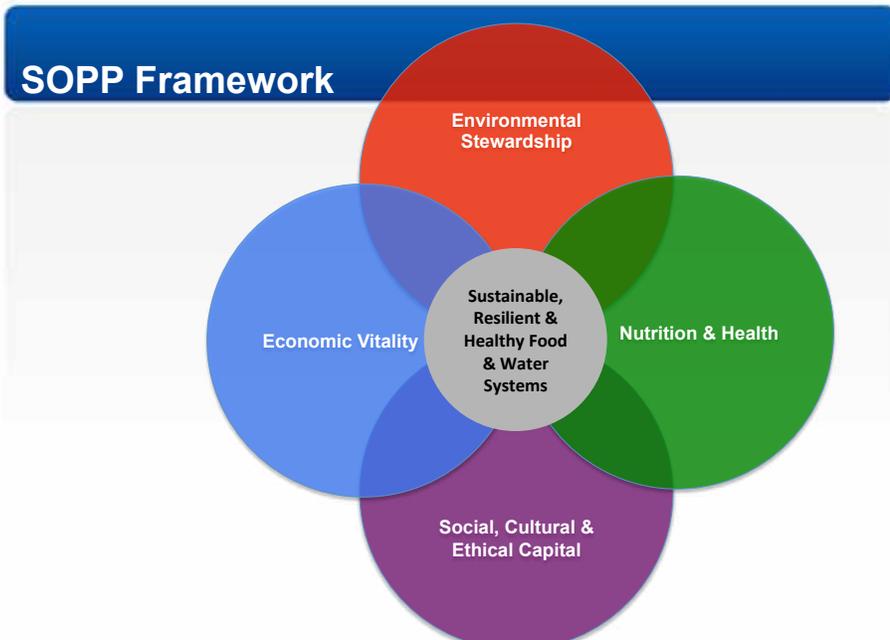
ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS FOOD & NUTRITION CONFERENCE & EXPO™

Health System and Farm Manager, The Farm at St Joe's, Ann Arbor, MI. She also detailed her own career evolution and how SOPP competencies are reflected in her own career growth.

Clinton's primary message was that each of us, regardless of where we work, can enhance the services that we provide and the contributions we make to promoting healthy food and water systems through the application of the SOPP competencies.

Hartman highlighted how "the SOPP serve as a magnifying glass concentrating the sun's rays to catch a piece of paper on fire – and therefore igniting our careers." As she stated, her new Earth Day activity is now an annual reckoning of where her skill sets stand vis à vis the SOPP. Her own SOPP assessment helped her see her own career strengths and opportunities for more growth in the upcoming year, indicating where she'd be the most impactful.

Hartman also detailed how such assessments and milestone measurements have guided the growth of her own hospital's efforts to improve their food and water systems practices, including the procurement of more local and organic food and reduction of food waste. Most impressive in Hartman's presentation was the positive impact of roadmaps such as the SOPP and other tracking tools on empowering staff and creating positive change that can be quantified, winning system-wide support and sparking change in other healthcare facilities. Hartman's work at the Martinsburg Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital in Martinsburg, WV has won numerous awards.



Tagtow A, Robien K, Bergquist E, Bruening M, Dierks L, Hartman B, Robinson-O'Brien R, Steintz T, Tahsin B, Underwood T, Wilkins J. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Standards of Professional Performance for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (Competent, Proficient, and Expert) in Sustainable, Resilient, and Healthy Food and Water Systems. *J Acad Nutr Diet*. 2014; 114(3):475-488.

More importantly, it has become part of a VA Nutrition and Food Services Green Environmental Management Systems (GEMS) across the entire VA system. A sustainability checklist and adding GEMS questions to the national annual report are among the tools used to both prompt adoption and assess impact of environmentally-friendly food and water system policy on the unit level.

Bottom line, knowing where you stand using the SOPP competencies as your career guide is your roadmap to success. The key to igniting your career is identifying your strengths

and your opportunities for growth as a change agent. Assess yourself using the SOPP today and watch your career and your influence light up.

To view the PowerPoint presentations for this session in their entirety, visit [www.hendpg.org](http://www.hendpg.org).

*The views expressed in this presentation and overview are representative of the Academy's SOPP work group and do not represent the views of the employers of any of the presenters. The presentation was organized in partnership with the Academy's Conference Planning Committee.*

*All three presenters are past HEN Chairs and the moderator is the current HEN Chair. Angie Tagtow, MS, RD, LD is Executive Director, USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. Stacia Clinton, RD, LD is Regional Director, Healthy Food in Health Care Program, Health Care Without Harm. Barbara Hartman, MS, RD, LD is Chief, Nutrition and Food Service, Martinsburg Veterans Administration Medical Center. Dianne Lollar, MPH, RDN, LD, is Nutrition Director, Alabama Department of Public Health.*

# Assessing Skills: SOPP as a Tool



## FROM THE ACADEMY

Indicators for Standard 2: Competence and Accountability			
Bold Font Indicators are Academy Core RDN Standards of Professional Performance Indicators			The "X" signifies the indicators for the level of practice
Each RDN:			Competent    Proficient    Expert
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Engages in evidence-based practice and utilizes best practices</b>		X    X    X
	2.7A	Critically analyzes and incorporates SRH food and water systems best practices and evidence-based research from multiple disciplines into decision making	X    X
	2.7B	Participates in committees, councils or task forces that shape evidence-based practice and/or best practices in SRH food and water systems	X    X
	2.7C	Presents SRH food and water systems topics at professional workshops, conferences, and meetings	X    X
	2.7D	Develops, directs, and manages SRH food and water systems professional workshops, conferences, and meetings	X
<b>2.8</b>	<b>Participates in peer review of self and others</b>		X    X    X
	2.8A	Incorporates SRH food and water systems criteria into performance goals and evaluations of self and others	X    X
	2.8B	Serves on review boards for SRH food and water systems organizations	X
<b>2.9</b>	<b>Mentors others in SRH food and water systems</b>		X    X    X
	2.9A	Mentors students, interns, or RDNs in SRH food and water systems	X    X
	2.9B	Serves as a preceptor for students, interns, or RDNs and integrates SRH food and water systems competencies into education competencies	X    X
	2.9C	Provides multidisciplinary education and experiential learning opportunities in SRH food and water systems	X    X
	2.9D	Collaborates with colleges, universities, and other organizations in developing SRH food and water systems curricula	X
<b>2.10</b>	<b>Pursues opportunities (education, training, credentials) to advance SRH food and water systems practice in accordance with laws and regulations and requirements of practice setting</b>		X    X    X
	2.10A	Volunteers in efforts that promote SRH food and water systems	X    X    X
	2.10B	Seeks SRH food and water systems leadership opportunities at regional, national, and/or international levels	X    X
	2.10C	Expands approaches to integrating SRH food and water systems principles into practice and contributes to professional development opportunities	X

goal

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goal?

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(continued on next page)

**Figure 4.** (continued) Standards of Professional Performance for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) in Sustainable, Resilient, and Healthy Food and Water Systems. Note: The term customer is used in this evaluation resource as a universal term. Customer could also mean client/patient, client/patient/customer, participant, consumer, or any individual, group, or organization to whom the RDN provides service. Sustainable, resilient, and healthy food and water systems will be referred to as SRH food and water systems.

## HEN Awards at FNCE 2014

### Sarah Trist, MS, RD, LD

HEN's award for **Excellence in Hunger and Environmental Nutrition Leadership** was proudly given to **Sarah Trist, MS, RD, LD** – a public policy workhorse! Sarah exemplifies innovative and outstanding leadership at its best.



A graduate of the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, she has extensive, formal policy education, and translates her expertise into smart and strategic actions. Sarah has served as a member of HEN's Public Policy Committee since 2009 where she helped research and author our white paper on *Antibiotic Resistance and the Role of the RD*.

The foresight and commitment Sarah demonstrates for important policy issues has helped the Academy to be a leader on emerging food and nutrition policy topics, and allowed invitation to the table on important systems related debates. In this way, her work has helped to establish HEN as a highly regarded and respected DPG. She has served as a liaison between HEN and the Academy DC office, organizing key opportunities for HEN members to provide input and support for Academy policy actions.

Sarah has assisted in leading innovative engagement opportunities for HEN members with the creation of a member survey to identify areas of expertise for future targeted policy action—the 2013 SNAP challenge to bring practical awareness to the limitations of the SNAP program. Additionally, she is a frequent contributor to the HEN outreach tools in newsletter, e-zine, and EML in order to ensure all members are current and connected to the policy priorities of the Academy. To boot, Sarah's peers attest that working with her is a pleasure!

### Christine Rivera, RD

The first of the **2014 Awards for Excellence in Hunger and Environmental Nutrition** identified **Christine Rivera, RD** for her impressive work that demonstrates great commitment to the field of hunger and food insecurity, and support for its hopeful end.



The accolades of her accomplishments are limitless, paralleling her commitment. Christine serves as the Nutrition Manager for Feeding America, where she works to increase awareness of food insecurity and to help educate health and wellness professionals to resolve the issue. She has implemented nutrition focused changes that have helped to increase access to nutrient-rich foods, deliver effective nutrition education, and provide more nutrition and food safety resources to Feeding America agencies across the country.

On a national level, Christine has been instrumental in guiding the development of the Healthy Food Bank Hub which serves as a resource to Academy members, and to food banks to educate their clients. Here she has worked diligently to procure resources in nutrition education, user-friendly recipes, and to position the Hub as a robust resource to help the food insecure.

Additionally, Christine manages the Future of Food Partnership with the Academy and National Dairy Council. She organized and developed educational sessions for food bank staff as well as for external conferences. She has spoken at state Academy conferences, provided calls to action for Academy members to get engaged in the issue of food insecurity, and communicated hunger advocacy issues in the media and in public policy venues.

### Eecole Copen, MS, RD

**Eecole Copen, MS, RD** was recognized with the second **2014 Award for Excellence in Hunger and Environmental Nutrition** for the many areas in which her rich influence has furthered environmental nutrition education and community programs.



At the Oregon Health and Science University Health Center, Eecole works as a national leader in the healthcare sector, launching a multi-farmer, farmers' market and onsite food store with items that are locally sourced and sustainably produced.

As a longtime HEN member, she served on the Sustainable Food in Healthcare task force, co-authoring the HEN resource, *The Food Climate Connection*. Currently, Eecole serves as the HEN representative to the Academy's EAL committee revising the position paper on biotechnology. In this role, she offers valuable research on genetically modified organisms from a food systems perspective.

Eecole brings deep rigor to the conversations about sustainable food systems—her reach is vast and valued. Her energy has been described as "contagious", while her passion for healthy food systems is known as "inspiring".

### Erin Kennedy, MPH, RD

**Erin Kennedy, MPH, RD** earned the **2014 Hunger and Environmental Nutrition Special Recognition Award** for spearheading the revision of HEN's *Organic Talking Points* with a democratic and encouraging style. Erin gathered a group of qualified and committed HEN members for six months of close communication, in-depth research, scientific writing, and high quality editing. She managed authors' deadlines, directed ideas into the pages, and kept all in focus when a spring broke in the final edits.



The *Organic Talking Points* are a unique asset for dietitians to learn more about the attributes of organic food based on the scientific literature. The shepherding of a large committee of dietitians is no small task—Erin's ability to envision, support, and lead was without equal. Her leadership created a structure where members could work within their interest, and enabled them to contribute their best to the final product.

In the words of one of her colleagues: "Erin deserves recognition for her knowledge of hunger and environmental nutrition issues, her ability to connect these with the current food system, and her commitment to the development of new leaders through the process that brought about the revised *Organic Talking Points*. Her mentorship will not be forgotten."

# The People's Climate March

by Pam Koch, EdD, RD and Gioacchino Taliercio, MS

Imagine a beautiful September Sunday in Manhattan with a special buzz in the air. Strangers passed easy smiles and gave high fives as we all headed to the People's Climate March (<http://peoplesclimate.org/>). For weeks the March's simple slogan could be seen everywhere: "To change everything, we need everyone." Participants from New York City and from around the world believed this March, in advance of world leaders coming to the United Nations for a summit on the climate crisis, could turn the tide toward real policy change to curb climate change.

The configuration of the March told the full story of the climate movement. The leadoff section was titled, "Frontlines of crisis, frontlines of change," which featured indigenous peoples who live in areas that are already experiencing severe consequences from climate change. Other sections were named, "We can build the future," "We have the solutions," "We know who is responsible," "The debate is over," and "To change everything, we need everyone." As the Food Justice group, we were part of the "We have the solutions" section. For months, Nancy Romer, PhD of Brooklyn Food Coalition, and Claire Arkin, food justice activist, worked alongside New York City's food justice movement to make our voice loud and clear.

In the hours leading up to the March, thousands gathered for our Food Justice rally. Romer began with a sobering yet hopeful message, "Why Food Justice?... because the food system accounts for about one-third of all the greenhouse gases, from the destructive ways that we grow food to the destructive ways that we process food and distribute food. What we



need are local food systems – with organic and agroecologic methods – that sink the carbon. We are one of the solutions." The rally continued with mother-daughter food activist pair, Frances Moore Lappé and Anna Lappé, MA. Anna Lappé enthusiastically proclaimed how proud she was to be next to her mother who had, 40 years ago, written the ground-breaking book, *Diet for a Small Planet*, which "raised the alarm of the environmental, social and ecological costs of an industrial food system." Mark Smallwood of Rodale Institute, widely known as "Coach" from his history of being a public school educator and basketball coach, came to the stage with a bold statement, "I have good news. We have produced a white paper that shows that regenerative, organic agriculture is the answer to climate change." He explained that if all agriculture switched to these methods, we could absorb all the carbon we are now producing. Then, to loud cheers, he announced that on October 1,

2014, he was walking 162 miles to deliver the Rodale White Paper ([http://rodaleinstitute.org/assets/RegenOrgAgricultureAndClimateChange\\_20141001.pdf](http://rodaleinstitute.org/assets/RegenOrgAgricultureAndClimateChange_20141001.pdf)) to the United States Department of Agriculture.

At 12:58pm, the most amazing part of the day occurred. Everyone — 400,000+ people — paused for a moment of silence. The eerie quiet symbolized the threat of climate change. Then, from the back of the crowd, a loud horn sounded and those by the horn screamed. The screams moved through the crowd as a wave. We heard the sound coming at us with unstoppable fury, just like climate change is coming on us if we don't act now.

To continue to advocate for a food system that will help curb climate change, the Food Justice Contingent produced a two-page handout ([http://www.tc.columbia.edu/i/a/document/33115\\_FoodJusticeContingentHandout-FINALSEPT19.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/i/a/document/33115_FoodJusticeContingentHandout-FINALSEPT19.pdf)) that explains how our current food system negatively influences climate change, how climate change will impact our ability to produce food, and what actions we can take for real positive change.

*Pam Koch is the Executive Director of the Laurie M. Tisch Center of Food, Education & Policy at Teachers College (TC) Columbia University. Gioacchino Taliercio received an MS from TC in Nutrition Education (2014) and is currently in the TC Dietetic Internship. He is creating a documentary film, Cultivation, (co-produced by Pam) about the teaching and influence of Joan Dye Gussow, Ed.D, who has been teaching the course Nutritional Ecology at TC since 1970.*

## HEY HEN, ARE YOU ANXIOUSLY AWAITING ANOTHER HEN WEBINAR?

Here is a preview of our upcoming 2015 HEN Webinar Series:

### ANTIBIOTIC STEWARDSHIP: A PRIMER FOR RDNS *(Day/time TBD, February 2015)*

Overuse and misuse of antibiotics in both humans and animals can lead to a host of problems including antibiotic resistance. This webinar will provide an overview of the challenges and concerns associated with inappropriate antibiotic use and current efforts at the national level to address this issue.

### THE ECOLOGY OF BREAST CANCER: EVIDENCE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR RDNS *(Wednesday, March 25, 2015, 3:00-4:00pm ET/ 2:00-3:00pm CT/1:00-2:00pm MT/12:00-1:00pm PT)*

A growing body of evidence has linked diet, nutrition, and chemical contaminants with breast cancer risk and prognosis. This webinar will provide an overview of the literature and share resources that RDNs can use when communicating about the role of diet as it relates to breast cancer.

### BENEFITS OF ORGANICALLY-PRODUCED FOODS: REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE *(Friday, April 17, 2015, 2:00-3:30pm ET/1:00-2:30pm CT/12:00-1:30pm MT/11:00am-12:30pm PT)*

New studies have been published supporting the benefits of organically-produced foods. This webinar will provide an overview of this ongoing discussion, describe the new studies, and provide tips and tools for RDNs to use when discussing this topic with clients, other health professionals, and the general public.

*Check the HEN website and eZine in early 2015 for further details including information on registration. CPEUs pending.*

# Southern Roots: Growing Vegetable Dreams on a College Campus

by HEN Member Sara Schamber, Student at University of Southern Indiana

Growing food was not in my blood – my interest spurred when I became a Food and Nutrition-Dietetics major and joined a community garden. I attended the *Healthy Food, Local Farm Conference* in Louisville, Kentucky, then heard Teri Underwood, MS, RD, a sustainable dietitian, speak at the Indiana Dietetics Conference. I began to see how crucial it is that fellow students learn how to grow their own food, not just for the nutritional benefits, but for the empowerment of knowing where their food comes from.



If more college students learned about gardening practices, it could open the door to understanding about issues such as pesticide use and food miles.

As a student at University of Southern Indiana, I felt it was important to grow vegetables on campus, so I set out to ask questions and garner support on how to make it happen. I connected with professors in biology and geology, the head groundskeeper, the provost for student affairs, and my dietetics director. These actions led to seed-sprouting in the biology department greenhouse last winter. Growing produce during an academic year is different than having the flexibility of a year round garden. Seeds like lettuce, kale, carrots, and kohlrabi were selected for their cold tolerance and short growth period.

The campus garden took months of prior planning and collaborating with different departments. When I continued to email and call during summer break, the faculty and staff involved

knew I wouldn't be backing down. Through more phone calls, emails, and Skype, I had all my ducks in a row. Now, there is a campus garden, located in the student housing area – accessible for student maintenance and water supply.

After classes resumed for the fall term, my goals to create a campus garden and raise student awareness about food issues, came to fruition—my project grew into **Southern Roots**, an official student organization, due to the support and donations from several people in the community. Southern Roots quickly evolved with 15 registered student members from several different majors. Just a week later, six students were helping me in the garden beds, munching on a cucumber, tasting radishes, and planning their salads for the evening.

Our organization participates in various activities, from planting and harvesting, to attending a local herb class. In appreciation for the community support we received, I highly encourage my student members to volunteer at Seton Harvest, a local non-profit CSA farm from campus. And every Friday at a very early 6:30am, there are always students excited to pick fresh tomatoes or whatever else is waiting for them there.

Currently, the garden is two 4x4 foot raised beds with plans underway to add two 4x8 beds. This square foot gardening method was chosen for aesthetics,

as well as the ability to control weeds, minimize space, and maximize production. Raised beds are also easy to take down once the semester is over and build back up later. Southern Roots produce is already being put to good use—some of it will be donated to help create a free dinner for visiting Riley Hospital for Children families.

If you're interested in starting a produce garden on campus, it's best to start early, and decide how far you are willing to go to make it happen. Write a proposal on what you aim to do and how. Develop a budget for all of the necessary equipment and supplies that you think you may need. Begin networking with the local community to find people who can offer knowledge and information if you need it, or provide donations. Become acquainted with university professors, administrators, and grounds keeping.

It's likely there will be some challenges when trying to start a garden on campus. For example, this past winter was exceptionally cold and long in the Midwest, which made it hard to predict when the plants should go in the ground. At times it was difficult to get supplies such as seeds, soil, lumber, and tools. But it worked out—many items for the garden were donated by community members, the university, and Seton Harvest. Time management can also be a difficult part of the process—newly sprouted seedlings require water daily. The toughest part may be getting the idea started, but it's worth it.

I've grown with my garden as well. I've been writing an extensive proposal and budget for an Endeavor Grant, an award given to students for research and creativity. There is much to be learned and gained when students grow, prepare, cook, and store food. It's not just about growing food—it's about growing better people!



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