As I write this, it occurs to me that March is my favorite month of the year. March ushers in the beginning of spring, contains my favorite day of the year- St Patyy's Day (having a name like O'Dea and three children with the names Erin, Meghan and Patrick and a dog Bailey are you surprised?), has March 14th as Registered Dietitian Day and is National Nutrition Month® all rolled into 31 days!! I have always been excited about National Nutrition Month and anyone I have worked with knows that I always plan activities throughout the month- always fun as well as educational. This year’s theme as you know is “Get Your Plate In Shape – Eat Right”. Governor Christie has proclaimed March 2012 as National Nutrition Month in the state. For those of you attending our Annual Meeting on May 4th (and I hope most of you are!) we will have this proclamation framed for all to view.

Our executive board continues to be hard at work for our membership. First of all, is our annual meeting committee, the planning of which takes countless hours (and emails!). Our annual meeting co-chairs, Amy Kaminski and Pat Utke (with the behind-the-scenes assistance from Nancy Munoz) have planned both an educational as well as fun (yes, we CAN, as nutrition professionals, take some time out to have some fun and relaxation) day. This year on May 4th we celebrate eighty memorable years as a dietetic association. In honor of this fete, the executive board has approved reduced attendance fees for members and students alike. NJDA is also in the process of gathering pictures of times past in the association. This year NJDA will be hosting our inaugural student reception following the meeting. This is consistent with one of my initiatives this year- a commitment towards students. I strongly believe that students are NJDA’s future and I wholeheartedly support these future practitioners. I want to thank all of my student members of the Executive Board, in particular, Emily Pomykala, for their input and assistance throughout the year.

Another initiative I have focused on this year has been to continue to offer regional meetings throughout the state. It looks as if we will have hosted six this year, with each of our Regions 1-3 having offered two meetings apiece. Many thanks go to our Regional co-chairs: Jane Ryan (Region 1), Nicole Schaldone and Kathleen Lombardi (Region 2) and Emily Johnston and Elizabeth Nozzier (Region 3) for their hard work and dedication in both the successful planning and execution of these events. Members have stated to me that they enjoy networking at these meetings with other local practitioners. Remember that these continuing education meetings are discounted for members (a member benefit!).

NJDA’s public policy team has also been working diligently these past months. Chesney Blue, our Public Policy Coordinator, is in the process of assembling her NJ delegation to attend the Public Policy Workshop in Arlington VA from April 15th-17th. If you plan on attending and have not yet notified Chesney, you may contact her at chesney_blue@hotmail.com. Our licensure bills (S#833- primary sponsors- Senator Vitale and Singer, A#2182-primary sponsor- Assemblyman Conaway) have been reintroduced into the 2012-13 legislature. NJDA’s licensure team, headed by Tricia Davidson continues working hard towards the pursuit of our legal recognition. Tricia provided a webinar to our grassroots team in February. Be on the alert for continued news as our bills progress in the future. Make it a point to get to know your individual district legislators and let them realize who the nutrition expert truly is! Also, be on the lookout for cases of harm caused by unqualified practitioners. We are continuing to gather this information as this is essential as our bills move forward. If you know of any such cases or have questions concerning this please do not hesitate to contact either Tricia Davidson (nutriciard@yahoo.com) or myself (Rosemaryodea@comcast.net)

Last but not least I cannot forget the omnipresent social media team of Liz D’Alto, Sunny Shahinian, and Emily Pomykala who are always out there on Facebook and Twitter posting NJDA events as they occur. If you have not yet joined Facebook (I must admit I am a latecomer) you should get on board and see what this team is doing for NJDA.

And finally, our voting for next year’s board is in progress until midnight, April 15th. Many thanks go to NJDA’S nominating chair, Maria Stanish and her team for a great ballot. In addition to the candidates for board positions on this year’s ballot, there is a referendum present for you to have a say on what the future name of NJDA should be. You have a choice between the New Jersey Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, an affiliate of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the New Jersey Dietetic Association, an affiliate of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. I encourage all members to vote and decide what our future name will be!

It continues to be an honor and privilege for me to represent each and every one of you this year. I hope all have a great spring and I look forward to seeing you on May 4 at our annual meeting. Remember, that I do encourage members at any time to contact me with comments, questions and concerns at: Rosemaryodea@comcast.net

Respectfully yours,

Rosemary – NJDA President
New Jersey Registered Dietitians Celebrate National Nutrition Month®!

National Nutrition Month is a nutrition education and information campaign created annually in March by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The campaign focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. The theme for March 2012 was “Get Your Plate in Shape.” Below you will see how several New Jersey Dietetic Association members highlighted the importance of this month in both their workplaces and their communities by sharing their knowledge about key nutrition and health messages.

NASDAQ NNM Opening Bell Ceremony

In honor of National Nutrition Month, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics was invited to ring the opening bell on Friday, March 2th, at NASDAQ, the largest electronic equities exchange in the United States! This is the fourth consecutive year in which the Academy has been invited to be part of NASDAQ’s trading day. Academy President Sylvia Escott-Stump was joined by Academy members who live in the New York Metro area to ring NASDAQ’s opening bell. Elisabeth D’Alto, RD was present to represent the New Jersey Dietetic Association. Sylvia made remarks about the Academy, National Nutrition Month, Registered Dietitian Day and the many ways Academy’s members optimize the nation’s health through food and nutrition. The NASDAQ opening ceremony was broadcast live on CNBC, Bloomberg TV, NASDAQ’s website, and on the big video screens in Times Square.

Nutrition Olympics at CentraState Medical Center

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Lauren Purdy, Retail Registered Dietitian for the ShopRite of Clark, organized an event for Registered Dietitian Day on Wednesday, March 14th. She was fortunate enough to have a representative from the Mayor’s Office of Clark, NJ present a proclamation in front of customers and employees at the ShopRite, declaring today “Registered Dietitian Day.” Lauren provided free nutrition services to the associates, customers, and community about nutrition and overall health. It is part of ShopRite’s initiative to provide the community with nutritionally sound and credible information. For Lauren’s event, she set up a nutrition education table, with nutrition literature for listeners to take. She gave a brief introduction on her role and explained the icon “Get You Plate In Shape” as part of National Nutrition Month. It is important to recognize that this proclamation is not just for RD’s, but for all ShopRite employees as they assist and support Lauren in educating their customers. After the proclamation was presented, Lauren raffled off a healthy gift basket.

Clifton Journal Embraces National Nutrition Month Article Series

Elisabeth D’Alto, RD, Clifton resident and owner of D’Alto Nutrition, LLC,

Elisabeth wrote five nutrition articles in honor of National Nutrition Month for the Clifton Journal newspaper which were featured on a weekly basis throughout the month of March. Topics included National Nutrition Month theme “Get Your Plate in Shape”, RDs are the Nutrition Experts, Small Changes Lead to a Healthier You, Eating Right for a Healthy Weight, and Enjoy the Food You Love, While Eating Less. Her articles can also be found online at www.northjersey.com.

Montclair State University Activities

As reported by Alyssa Puorro, Dietetic Intern

Montclair State University Dietetic Internship kicked off National Nutrition Month with a guest speaker from the Department of Psychology. Dr. Debra A. Zellner brought her expertise in the area of the psychology behind food choices to an audience of nutrition students and dietetic interns on March 5, 2012.

Her presentation was entitled “Why We Eat What We Eat,” and she covered various interesting topics related to her research findings as well as previous well-known studies. She reviewed the Steiner study of innate tastes and noted that we are born liking sweet and disliking bitter tastes. She then went on to discuss her research findings on acquired tastes, the effects of stress on food selection, and the influence the appearance of foods have on tastes. We discovered that frequent exposure to a particular food results in greater liking of the food and that when stressed, women tend to make poorer food choices. Another interesting finding of her research was that when given the same exact food, participants rated the neatly presented plate tasting better than the one arranged in a haphazard manner.

Dr. Zellner has been teaching at the university since 2001, and her current research is in the area of food cravings, factors that influence how much we like foods, multi-modal perception of foods (including influence of color on odor perception), and how context and categorization influences food preferences and hedonic ratings. Her discussion was very insightful and informative and brought light to the decisions we make each day when it comes to choosing why we eat what we eat.
**ShapingNJ Partnership Working Towards Implementing Strategies to Reduce Obesity**

**BY DENISE LANGEVIN, MS, RD**

As you may know from previous reports, NJDA is one of more than 160 organizations across New Jersey that are working together as part of **ShapingNJ**, a statewide public-private partnership to implement policy and environmental change strategies to improve nutrition, increase physical activity and reduce TV viewing in the settings where New Jersey residents live, grow, play and work. Much exciting work is being done by workgroups that are targeting various settings.

The **ShapingNJ Child Care Workgroup** worked diligently last year to propose changes to child care center regulations. NJDA submitted a letter strongly supporting these recommended changes which outlined physical activity requirements, set standards for appropriate foods and beverages that can be offered, delineated limitations for TV, DVD, and computer screen time, and required facilities to provide arrangements for and support breastfeeding and to develop policies and procedures to address important issues such as food allergies and food safety. The Office of Licensing in the Department of Children & Families and Governor’s Office reviewed the proposed regulations and amendments were proposed to the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 10:122). These proposed amendments were posted in the February 21st NJ Register for public review and comment until April 21, 2012. We are reviewing the proposed regulations and initially it appears that at least some of what was recommended has been included in the proposed regulations. In addition, the Child Care Work Group is developing A Child Care Best Practices Toolkit that will assist center directors and providers with translating the proposed child care center regulations and best standards for obesity prevention. Find out more about child care initiatives in the related article in this issue of News and Views.

The **School Setting Workgroup** is also working on the development of a toolkit that can be used by local school districts to help promote a healthier school environment. The tool kit will contain a template for an expanded school wellness policy that will address both nutrition and physical activity. In addition the toolkit will provide guidance and tools for schools that are developing or strengthening School Wellness Councils. The toolkit will also contain links to resources and best practices. The **ShapingNJ School Setting Workgroup** also cooperated with the NJ Department of Education, Alliance for a Healthier Generation and Rutgers Cooperative Extension in presenting a webinar targeted to school faculty and administrators entitled “The How-To of School Wellness Councils: Developing and Sustaining Your Team”. NJDA would like to support these efforts by encouraging you, our members, to volunteer for your local school wellness council. Remember, there are many resources to help you in this effort in the Childhood Obesity Toolkit which was developed by NJDA, along with some of our other **ShapingNJ** partners and is posted on the homepage of the NJDA website, www.eatrightnj.org.

The Health Care Setting Workgroup continues to move forward, along with American Academy of Pediatrics- New Jersey Pediatric Council on Research and Education (AAP NJ/PCORE) to implement the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative in New Jersey (NJ BFHI). The goal of this Initiative is to increase exclusive breastfeeding rates in NJ, thereby preventing obesity and improving health outcomes. The two major objectives of the Initiative are: Implementing the World Health Organization’s “Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding” in NJ delivery hospitals and Implementing office based trainings for pediatric, family and OB providers and their staff about best breastfeeding practices. Ten hospitals have been provided with migrant kits to help them implement the “Ten Steps” and 3 of these hospitals have been inspected by Baby-Friendly USA and are awaiting results.

In the community setting, ten pilot projects in local health environmental and policy change were funded through the Office of Nutrition & Fitness, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Partners for Health, and Walgreens. The New Jersey Health Officers Association worked with the Office of Nutrition and Fitness to coordinate these projects.

The work site is another setting being targeted. **ShapingNJ** partners, the NJ Health Care Quality Institute and the NJ Business and Industry Association will be launching a work site wellness initiative within the next few weeks, similar in design to the Mayors Wellness Campaign. In addition, the Employers Association of NJ, a new **ShapingNJ** partner, received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to create an online and live training platform to help NJ employers implement employee wellness and engagement programs.

There is much exciting work being done in New Jersey through the **ShapingNJ** partnership and NJDA is proud to be a part of such important work. As we move toward the final year of the grant that has funded our ShapingNJ initiative, much emphasis will be placed on sustainability of these efforts.

continued on page 5
ShapingNJ Partnership Working Towards Implementing Strategies to Reduce Obesity

Child Care Environment is Key to Healthy Children

This article was written and distributed by the Child Care Workgroup of ShapingNJ

Child care center staff and family child care providers across the country are being encouraged to join the Let’s Move! Child Care campaign to raise a healthier generation of kids. Let’s Move! Child Care was launched by First Lady Michelle Obama and has a website www.letsmove.gov that providers and parents can access for a plethora of information and resources to improve physical activity and healthy living. The Let’s Move! Child Care site is www.healthykidshealthyfutures.org

Some of the helpful topics for parents include ways to reduce screen time and get active, talking to your family about sitting less and moving more, creating screen-free bedrooms, and focusing on family time during meals. Suggestions for child care providers, centers, and school-age programs include ideas on being a role model to students for a healthy lifestyle, encouraging staff to consume healthy foods and beverages, updating worksite policies for teachers and staff including breastfeeding support, and implementing a variety of healthy eating and physical activities that emphasize health education, skill-building, and changes to the child care environment.

By taking an active role in initiatives such as Let’s Move, children will set forth on a path to a healthy future during their earliest month and years. ShapingNJ – the state partnership for nutrition, physical activity and obesity prevention, an initiative of the New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services/Office of Nutrition and Fitness is focused on promoting the same key concepts as Let’s Move! Child Care. ShapingNJ, recently funded training and support to child care centers participating in the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment in Child Care and has actively promoted updates to the New Jersey Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers to provide child care programs with guidelines that promote raising a healthier generation. LuAnn Wood, a ShapingNJ Committee member and vice president of Lakeview Child Care, which operates seven child care centers in central New Jersey, shared that “Lakeview has updated its policies to promote healthy children by setting high standards around nutrition, physical activity and screen time. The future habits of young children are established before they enter school. We take responsibility for helping children develop practices that will help them maintain a healthy lifestyle throughout their future. We based our policies on the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association for the Education of Young Children. They are compatible with the ideals of both Let’s Move! Child Care and ShapingNJ.”
Today, wellness in the supermarket industry is essential to the growth of the business and is part of our overall corporate strategy. But what is wellness and what does it mean to our business? For one, I’m sure I don’t have to tell you that consumers are more confused than ever – we get questions like… gluten, is it good or bad? seafood, too much mercury or will it help make my brain function better? And of course the issue of chronic disease, “I have diabetes; does that mean I can’t eat carrots?” We (RDs) have heard it all...

I have spent the past year at A&P working with the marketing team to develop a shelf tag system that could help shed some light on these questions and at the very least help consumer make a more informed food choice. On January 13th we launched a new shelf labeling tag system called “Wellness Factor”. What makes Wellness Factor unique is that we aligned FDA regulated nutrient attributes such as low sodium, good source of fiber and whole grain with our “wellness clusters”. We created four clusters: Heart Healthy, Prevention & Wellness, Weight Control and Sugar Smart. I was responsible for assigning the attributes to each of these clusters. With the help of our advertising team, the result was a beautifully designed colorful tag that is a first in industry!

Live Better also received a new look and feel with a new logo and new website complete with education related to each wellness cluster, recipes and a search engine that can be used to search for timely health and wellness articles, visit www.livebetterwellness.com

Finally, we reward consumers for eating more fruits and vegetables with our Live Better wellness club membership. As a member, every time your produce spending reaches $50.00, you’ll receive a 20% off coupon at checkout to use on your next product purchase.

Got a question?
Consumers can also write in an ask health related questions. It’s a great way to learn first-hand what people are looking for when they shop in our stores and also provide the necessary guidance.

My goal is for shoppers to have a clearer idea of what to purchase to reach their health related goals.
Breakfast in the Classroom:
An investment today for our kids’ future.

We support the benefits of the school breakfast program, especially Breakfast in the Classroom, because:

1. **BETTER PARTICIPATION**
   Significant increases in the levels of participation

2. **BETTER NUTRITION**
   Optimal nutrition provided via the breakfast meal that might otherwise have been skipped

3. **BETTER BMI**
   Works as an effective tool to fight childhood obesity

4. **BETTER BEHAVIOR AND ATTENTION**
   Reduces incidence of tardiness, nurse visits and absenteeism

5. **BUILDING SOCIAL SKILLS**
   Increased student attentiveness and improvements in student behavior

6. **BETTER PARTICIPATION**
   Students enjoy the experience of eating breakfast at their desks with their peers

7. **PARENTS’ PEACE OF MIND**
   Breakfast in the Classroom offers an inexpensive nutritious breakfast to all students, resulting in a decreased demand financially and time-wise on parents

8. **EASY EXECUTION**
   For teachers and school administrators alike

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