

## 2025 Awards Recognition

The Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics annual Awards program recognizes individuals who have demonstrated exemplary commitment and contributions in the field of nutrition and dietetics. We are honored to recognize the efforts and accomplishments of our outstanding peers, colleagues, and students. Your Washington State Academy Board would like to thank the district representatives and individuals who submitted nominations this year. We also thank you, the nominees for following through with the fairly extensive on-line application process.

Beginning last fall, information about the Washington State Academy and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics awards was distributed to each of our district dietetic associations, along with a request for nominations. Awards information was posted on the Washington State Academy website and communicated to all members via email and social media communications. To select our award recipients, a panel of Washington State Academy board members reviewed all applications, using standardized scoring.

We encourage you to consider nominating someone (or yourself) next year! You can begin the process as early as you have a nominee in mind. Please take note of the following:

- Students are nominated by their program coordinators.
- Washington State Academy members may nominate someone or themselves.
- You can continue to re-nominate peers who you feel should have been recognized.

We are excited to celebrate these exceptional members!

Warmly,  
Jacqueline Little, MS, RD, CD  
Awards Chair

## OUTSTANDING DIETITIAN OF THE YEAR

### Carrie Swift, MS, RDN, BC-ADM, CDCES, FADCES



The Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is proud to honor Carrie Swift as Washington State's Outstanding Dietitian of the Year (ODY) for 2025. This award is the most prestigious recognition that the Washington State Academy can give. The award honors a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) who has demonstrated leadership and who has served as an outstanding role model of professionalism and as a source of inspiration to others in dietetics.

Carrie is proud to be an RDN, and throughout her 37-year career, she has enjoyed sharing her knowledge, experience and passion for our field with future generations.

She has served in many roles throughout her career, including Chief of Nutrition and Food Services at the Walla Walla VA Medical Center. While at Gwinnett Health System she hired and trained many registered dietitians for outpatient nutrition counseling and diabetes educator positions.

She has served on the Scholarship Review Committee for the Blue Mountain Community Foundation in Walla Walla for the past 6 years, as well as volunteering at the Kid's Farm Center during the Walla Walla Fair, teaching kids about agriculture and dairy production through fun, hands-on activities. She has also been actively involved with her Walla Walla P.E.O. Chapter (FT) since September 2005; providing nutrition programs for members, hosting meetings and events, and helping with fundraising projects to provide scholarships, grants, and other educational opportunities for women.

Carrie has been the Lead, State Grass Roots Advocacy for the Washington State Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists, sharing action alerts, gathering comments and feedback for legislators, and educated members on policy and legislation that might impact them. Along with the Washington Academy and the WA Department of Health, she has been an active part of updating the rules relating to Certified Dietitians in WA State, and even helped draft new language to reflect current professional practice for RDNs.

She has attended workshops and has met with legislators on Capitol Hill, in Washington D.C., both in person and virtually to promote legislation such as the MNT Act, the DSMT Expansion Act, Treat and Reduce Obesity Act, and the Telehealth Modernization Act.

All through her career, she has always been an outspoken volunteer promoting RDNs to the interdisciplinary team and to the public. She served as a Media Spokesperson for the Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists and she has also authored or co-authored book chapters and peer-reviewed articles, such as Idiots Guides: Overcoming Type 2 Diabetes by Penguin Random House publishing.

In her current role at Sacred Heart Medical Center, she is managing all things formula for the Pediatric Clinical Nutrition team, including creating an Infant Formula Powder Recipes document and a Recipes for Concentrating Breastmilk document. The Washington Academy is honored to recognize Carrie as the Outstanding Dietitian of the Year for 2025

## PAST ODY RECIPIENTS

YEAR	RECIPIENT	YEAR	RECIPIENT	YEAR	RECIPIENT
1983	Nancy Beurgel	1998	Elaine Reid	2013	Kathy Dirks
1984	Kaye Funk	1999	Betty Lucas	2014	Janet Beary
1985	Colleen Matthys	2000	Ethan Bergman	2015	Louise Peck
1986	Luanne Anderson	2001	Paula Charuhas	2016	Angel Planells
1987	Not awarded	2002	Carol Griffith	2017	Anne Lund
1988	Ruth McDonald	2003	Not awarded	2018	Sharon Feucht
1989	Gladys Jennings	2005	Not awarded	2019	Alison Evert
1990	Dorothea "Dottie" Nicholson	2006	Annie Frederick	2020	Susan Yake
1991	Margaret Brown	2007	Michelle Weinbender	2021	Shaekira L. Niehuser
1992	Marilyn Guthrie	2008	Caroline Steele	2022	Michelle Hagen
1994	Virginia McMulkin	2009	Barbara J. Pyper	2023	Julie Larsen
1995	Martha Peppones	2010	Debe Nagy-Nero	2024	Ginger Hultin
1996	Paula Hudon	2011	Nancy James		
1997	Susan Lukacs	2012	Karen Barale		

## RECOGNIZED YOUNG DIETITIAN OF THE YEAR

### Kendall Altig, MS, RD, CSP, CD



The Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is proud to honor Kendall Altig as the Recognized Young Dietitian of the Year (RYDY) for 2025. The purpose of the annual RYDY award is to recognize the competency and activities of young dietitians in the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics, while also encouraging continual member participation in Association affairs.

Kendall earned her Master of Science degree in nutrition and exercise physiology through the Coordinated Program in Dietetics at the Washington State University. Kendall has been a pediatric dietitian at Sacred Heart Medical Center and Children's Hospital since February 2021, covering all units; General Pediatrics, Pediatric Oncology, Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. She has earned her Board Certification as a Specialist in Pediatric Nutrition (CSP) and is working to also earn a Certified Specialist in Pediatric Critical Care (CSPCC) in the coming years.

Kendall is not only a board member for Beats and Rhythms, a Non-Profit Organization supporting infants, children, and adolescents with congenital heart disease, but she also manages their public relations. Her passion for this organization is evident and she contributes countless hours to both their social media management as well as assisting in planning and hosting events throughout the year.

Being passionate about nutrition support, she truly enjoys calculating enteral and parenteral nutrition prescriptions and provisions. She has extensive experience in caring for infants with feeding difficulties (failure to thrive, cow's milk protein intolerance/allergy, formula and feeding intolerance, etc.).

She is very interested in continued community service opportunities as well. One of her goals for 2025 is to identify locations in Spokane that would benefit from pediatric nutrition education and provide education on how to identify various feeding difficulties in infants and children.

In her current role at Sacred Heart Medical Center, she is heavily involved in training new hires for their pediatric team, as well as being a mentor for new hires.

The Washington Academy is honored to recognize Kendall as the Recognized Young Dietitian of the Year for 2025.

## PAST RYDY RECIPIENTS

YEAR	RECIPIENT	YEAR	RECIPIENT	YEAR	RECIPIENT
<b>1978</b>	Cheryl Marshall	<b>1991</b>	Linette Jurdy	<b>2005</b>	Amy Myrtue
	Sue Foise		Leslie Thomson	<b>2006</b>	Jennifer Helms
<b>1979</b>	Polly Lenssen	<b>1992</b>	Victoria Warren		Sarah Zarelli
	Jennifer Parenteua		Elaine Reid		Lisa Grentz
<b>1980</b>	Judy Larsen	<b>1993</b>	Kathy Marlon	<b>2007</b>	Andrea Hill
	Margaret Gross		Shelly Nagle		Heidi Roberts
<b>1981</b>	Marilyn Guthrie	<b>1994</b>	Paula Charuhas	<b>2008</b>	Kristen Rezabek
	Jean Sloan		Julie Drzewiecki	<b>2009</b>	Bobbi Jo Rettman
<b>1982</b>	Barbara Himes	<b>1995</b>	Mary Paeth	<b>2010</b>	Allison Stanton
	Rebecca Esvelt		Denise Zimmer	<b>2011</b>	Michon Williams
<b>1983</b>	Mari Chapman	<b>1996</b>	Julie Mahler	<b>2013</b>	Lindsay Hays
	Chelene Campbell		Julie Muelheim	<b>2014</b>	Amy Frasier
<b>1984</b>	Debra Thumser French	<b>1997</b>	Nikki Kettles	<b>2015</b>	Katy Figel
	Carol Melby		Caroline Swenson	<b>2016</b>	Maureen Chomko
<b>1985</b>	Kathleen Clark	<b>1998</b>	Jennifer Newman		Chris Vogliano
	Alison Becker Evert		Michelle Hagan	<b>2017</b>	Marissa Beck
<b>1986</b>	Laurie Ditton	<b>1999</b>	Annie Frederick	<b>2018</b>	Bec McDorman
	Barbara Eldridge	<b>2000</b>	Kim Robien	<b>2019</b>	Mari O. Mazon
<b>1987</b>	Perri Bernard		Wendy Weyer	<b>2020</b>	Julie Larsen
	Lisa Meusborn	<b>2001</b>	Susette Gjovik	<b>2021</b>	Emily Haymond
<b>1988</b>	Cheryl Johnson		Marybeth Roberts	<b>2022</b>	Brajee Green
	Megan Veldee	<b>2002</b>	Katie Thorner	<b>2023</b>	Megan Houchin
<b>1989</b>	Jacqueline Beard		Mary Jennings	<b>2024</b>	Rachel Falkner
	Kathy Dirks	<b>2003</b>	Beth Ogata		
<b>1990</b>	Janis Harsila		Holly Trujillo		
	Terri Trisler	<b>2004</b>	Kelly Frederick		

### PAST EMERGING DIETETIC LEADER AWARD RECIPIENTS

YEAR	RECIPIENT	YEAR	RECIPIENT
<b>2000</b>	Donna Parsons	<b>2016</b>	April Davis
<b>2001</b>	Pam Mahre	<b>2017</b>	Ben Atkinson
<b>2004</b>	Judy Heesacker	<b>2019</b>	Susie Fox
<b>2007</b>	Stacy Lueck	<b>2020</b>	Ginger Hultin
<b>2009</b>	Kendra Swartz	<b>2021</b>	Meredith Freeland
<b>2010</b>	Livia Wagner	<b>2022</b>	Leslie Weidner
<b>2011</b>	Marie Millren Tucker	<b>2023</b>	Grace Ling
<b>2013</b>	Marissa Claiborne	<b>2024</b>	Aria Wexler

### PAST CLINICAL/RESEARCH AWARD RECIPIENTS

YEAR	RECIPIENT	YEAR	RECIPIENT
<b>1998</b>	Nancy James	<b>2010</b>	Lonnie Isaacson
<b>1999</b>	Polly Lenssen	<b>2011</b>	Marilyn Shelton
<b>2000</b>	Johanna Lampe	<b>2012</b>	Joan Milton
<b>2001</b>	Ruth Patterson	<b>2014</b>	Ben Atkinson
<b>2002</b>	Susan Scheunemann	<b>2015</b>	Megan Nordland
<b>2003</b>	Caroline Steele	<b>2017</b>	Julie Church
<b>2005</b>	Kim Nowak-Cooperman	<b>2023</b>	Lisa Heneghen
<b>2007</b>	Katie Farver	<b>2024</b>	Christina Lederle
<b>2008</b>	Diane Packard		

## PAST COMMUNITY PRACTICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

YEAR	RECIPIENT	YEAR	RECIPIENT
1998	Vivienne Dutzar	2011	Lisa Randall
1999	Sandi Laney	2012	Lori Tanner
2000	Lonnie Isaacson	2013	Laurie J. Schaetzel-Hill
2001	Becky Knapp	2014	Joan Brookhyser Hogan
2002	Michelle Weinbender	2015	Stacey Trogdon
2003	Martha Marino	2016	Chelsey Lindahl
2004	Sharon Feucht	2017	Judy Simon
2007	Jan Gilliam	2019	Alexandra Bush-Kaufman
2008	Malvina "Annie" Goodwin	2020	Rebecca Finkel
2009	Michelle Hagan	2021	Chris Mornick
2010	Sue Butkus	2023	Claudia Hume
		2024	Vanessa Vu-Sabido

## PAST EXCELLENCE IN MANAGEMENT PRACTICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

YEAR	RECIPIENT
2016	Adam Pazder
2017	Katie Farver
2018	Kelsey Thomas
2020	Heather Watkins
2022	Melissa Molloy
2023	Kelli Frederick

## OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARDS

The purpose of the Washington State Academy's Outstanding Student Award is to recognize the emerging leadership and achievement of students in Academy-accredited and approved dietetic education programs. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics established this award in 1994 to recognize students who have demonstrated exceptional academic excellence and leadership in their dietetics program.

### Outstanding Student in a Coordinated Program in Dietetics

#### Paulina Nuñez Esquivel



The Washington State Academy is proud to honor Paulina Nuñez Esquivel with the Outstanding Dietetics Student in a Coordinated Program in Dietetics Award for 2025.

Paulina is completing her Master of Science Degree from the Coordinated program at the University of Washington. She is a native of Mexico, where she grew up, but has also moved a lot in her life. Her passion and motivation to thrive in the world of Dietetics stems from having lived with Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) for 22 years. Her goal is to become a certified diabetes educator.

When she worked at Steno, a diabetes research institution in Copenhagen, Denmark, Paulina's research focused on patients' experience with devices for diabetes management. Having been a patient there herself, she was able to see diabetes management in another light, which solidified her motivation to bring patient

voices and experiences to the forefront of diabetes care.

To honor her heritage, she wants to work with minority groups who have been underrepresented and may lack access to care. She believes the language barrier between patients and healthcare providers is a significant factor behind health inequities. Being a bilingual provider will be one way he can help bridge that gap, as well as amplify patient voices.

Over the past year, she completed her Masters of Public Health fieldwork, working alongside the Washington State T1D workgroup of the WA Department of Health (DOH). Paulina created a one page handout in both English and Spanish to help shed light to basic health practices and the available resources, which was well received by the large Latinx community in Washington. More recently, she became a co-facilitator for the T1D Teen Connect group, a once monthly support group giving space to 12-19yo living with diabetes. She believes that increasing space for patient and family health education is most important for patients with diabetes and their families. Based on her experience, she believes there is the most opportunity for growth in youth-centered spaces within Spanish-speaking communities. The Washington Academy is honored to recognize Paulina as the Outstanding Student in a Coordinated Program for 2025



## Outstanding Student in a Dietetic Internship Amelia Chestnutt



The Washington State Academy is proud to honor Amelia Chestnutt with the Outstanding Student in a Dietetic Internship award for 2025.

The Washington State Academy Outstanding Student Award recognizes more than just achievement—it seeks an emerging leader with the potential to make a real difference. This potential shines through in her journey, defined by her commitment to growth and service.

Amelia has truly demonstrated her passion and commitment; she is consistently working to grow her knowledge and practice skills in all settings, from clinical care to research.

Amelia completed her Master of Science in Nutrition from Central Washington University in the summer of 2024 graduating with a GPA of 3.976. She conducted an important and well-run research study on the topic of "Facilitators and Barriers to Breastfeeding Among Mothers Recovering from Opioid Use Disorder". In her study, she led focus groups in rural WA state to learn more around the perceived obstacles related to breast feeding amongst mothers recovering from opioid use disorder. This research shows her commitment to maternal, pediatric and public health. Her dual bachelor's degrees in Nutrition and Dietetics and French and Francophone studies, both earned with honors, further showcase her academic excellence and versatility. She is now completing her Dietetic Internship.

Amelia possesses a robust set of qualifications and experiences that make her an exemplary candidate for this award. Her eagerness to advance her knowledge and contribute meaningfully to nutrition and dietetics in a variety of settings is evident in her day-to-day performance as an intern. Her preceptor describes her as having "a rare combination of hard work, professionalism, motivation, resilience and humility".

Amelia has gained valuable professional experience as a Nutrition Technician at Sacred Heart Medical Center. In this role, Amelia improved patient outcomes by preparing over 12,000 infant and pediatric feedings per month in collaboration with a multidisciplinary team. Her ability to ensure accuracy and consistency in such a demanding role speaks volumes about her attention to detail and teamwork. The Washington Academy is honored to recognize Amelia as the Outstanding Student in a Dietetic Internship for 2025.