



WASHINGTON STATE
ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

THE FOOD AND NUTRITION EXPERTS

eat right. an affiliate of the
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

2021 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. While award recipients are usually presented in-person at the spring OR-WA Conference, we are still honored to recognize the efforts and accomplishments of our outstanding peers, colleagues, and students virtually through the 2021 Healthy at Home Conference. Your Washington State Academy Board would like to thank the district representatives and individuals who submitted nominations this year. Thanks also to each nominee 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 also posted on the Washington State Academy website at www.eatrightwashington.org. To select our award recipients, panels of Washington State Academy board members reviewed all applications, using standardized scoring.

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

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

We hope to recognize our outstanding award recipients in person when we are able, and we look forward to seeing you at our state conference in the future.

Warmly,

Marissa Beck, MS, RDN

Awards Chair

OUTSTANDING DIETITIAN OF THE YEAR

Shaekira L. Niehuser, MS, RD, CNSC



The Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is proud to honor Shaekira L. Niehuser, as Washington State's Outstanding Dietitian of the Year (ODY) for 2021. 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.

Ms. Niehuser is the Clinical Assistant Professor of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology at Washington State University's Elson S Floyd College of Medicine and Registered Dietitian at Providence St. Joseph Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, Washington. She is also a board-certified nutrition support clinician. Known to many as a mentor and teacher, Ms. Niehuser's work as a Medical Nutrition Therapy Professor has stood out amongst colleagues and students in her ability to provide specialized career guidance, which is fundamental to her role as a

faculty member. Because of her expertise and ability to understand her students' strengths and areas of growth, Ms. Niehuser has been able to help many students pursue careers in areas they are passionate about and likely to be successful.

Since her arrival to WSU in 2016, Ms. Niehuser implemented a program to collaborate with WSU's College of Nursing to offer add hands-on clinical simulation exercises to the MNT course, adapting course materials and assignments to better prepare students for their clinical supervised practice rotations and the RDN credentialing exam, and adding an official lab to the MNT course to allow for more hands-on application of MNT principles. In addition to teaching the didactic component of clinical nutrition, she has also served as a clinical supervised practice rotation preceptor at Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center and Children's Hospital (PSHMC).

Ms. Niehuser has also served in many leadership positions in professional practice groups and in the Greater Spokane Dietetic Association (GSDA) and Northwest Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (NWSPEN). She was also a reviewer of the textbook, *Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy* 1st edition authored by Kelly Kane and Kathy Prelack and is currently working on several manuscripts related to research projects that are underway, including an IRB approved pilot study comparing the diets, sleep patterns, movement, and gut microbiota of nurses working 12-hour day shifts versus 12-hour night shifts, and another IRB waived post hoc analysis of the nutrition profiles of food bank users in Spokane.

States a letter of recommendation: "I know her students find her to be a dedicated instructor and mentor, and as a hiring manager at Sacred Heart Medical Center (SHMC), I trust her endorsement of anyone who has been under her instruction for both internship and hire. She is an excellent clinician, and after serving for many years in SHMC's ICU, she continues to teach practices at the top of our scope, making WSU students distinct in their capabilities when it comes time for their clinical rotations."

States another letter of recommendation: "Ms. Niehuser is an outstanding professional, mentor, teacher and colleague... Her dedication to the dietetics profession is limitless and she has demonstrated her passion for the profession throughout her entire working career."

PAST ODY RECIPIENTS

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

RECOGNIZED YOUNG DIETITIAN OF THE YEAR

Emily Haymond, MS, RDN



The Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is proud to honor Emily Haymond as the Recognized Young Dietitian of the Year (RYDY) for 2021. 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.

Ms. Haymond has been the Clinical Nutrition Manager for Sodexo/Covenant Shores since 2016, where she oversees clinical nutrition care of the 43-bed acute and long-term care facility, including individual nutrition counseling, collaboration with an interdisciplinary team, day-to-day management of the kitchen, and heading a staff of 18. As well, Ms. Haymond is responsible for

designing and implementing scratch menus, and serves as a preceptor for Bastyr University, University of Houston, Seamar Dietetic Internship, and Sodexo Dietetic Internship, providing an average of 400 preceptor hours each year. She also serves as regional nutrition support manager for Covenant campuses across the country, and coordinates projects and training in clinical nutrition care best practices and food service management projects including menu writing and implementation.

In 2019, Ms. Haymond accepted a promotion to a regional support role in addition to her clinical nutrition manager role. Taking the initiative when the pandemic divided up the responsibilities of the previous regional director's role, she observed that the team would be missing some of the support and connection that had been integral to the dietitians. As a result, Ms. Haymond worked with her district manager to shift her regional support role to work with the national dietitians and still serve as the support dietitian for the Covenant system. This shift gave Ms. Haymond the chance to grow her skills as a manager of dietitians. Her growth allowed her to conduct interviews and onboarding for all new dietitians within their system along with facilitating monthly support calls. Additionally, Ms. Haymond manages a small and diverse kitchen staff of fifteen people, where five languages are spoken and several staff members have learning and physical disabilities. Ms. Haymond developed small huddles every day to provide transparency and discussion.

Ms. Haymond has also served on the board of the Greater Seattle Dietetic Association (GSDA) in various positions, including President and past President. States a letter of recommendation, "Emily has tirelessly served her clients and dietetics community for years ... and helps guide the decisions [GSDA] makes as an organization with her rich knowledge of the history and bylaws and her keen organizational skills. As a clinical nutrition manager in a long-term care retirement community facility, she has been a front-line worker during the entire pandemic."

States another letter of recommendation, "Emily has demonstrated herself in her profession to be a leader, manager, mentor and trainer. She has always been very proactive in looking for innovative solutions to challenges, opportunities for improvements either at the community where she is based at and also beyond to a 14-community national system of CCRCs with 13 other RDs."

PAST RYDY RECIPIENTS

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

EMERGING DIETETIC LEADER

Meredith Freeland, MS, RD



The Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is proud to honor Meredith Freeland as the Emerging Dietetic Leader of 2021. The purpose of the annual EDL award is recognize the competence and activities of dietitians regardless of their age, who have made distinctive contributions early in their dietetics careers to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Meredith Freeland is the Lead Clinical Dietitian at PeaceHealth Southwest Medical Center managing a team of 12 dietitians and prides herself in providing

evidenced-based, individualized nutrition care for patients in a 400+ bed hospital. Since 2018, Ms. Freeland has been the team lead, making great strides. States a letter of recommendation, “In two years, she has turned our department into a cohesive, supportive, and collaborative group; helped expand our order writing privileges hospital-wide; helped advocate for greater nutrition services in our cancer center; worked with regional dietitians to implement a program combatting food insecurity in our community; advocated for the purchase and implementation of indirect calorimetry; onboarded and trained new employees and interns; and has, in general, been an incredibly motivated, empathetic, and generous leader.”

Ms. Freeland also prepares and presents a monthly education and information meeting for her staff and offers in-service presentations for the food and nutrition culinary staff. She works directly with hospital and outpatient caregivers to improve their nutritional education and awareness, and to improve the overall care and nutritional support of the patients. States a letter of recommendation, “she leads her team while still providing direct nutrition care to patients in the hospital and supporting home health patient needs. In January, Meredith was asked to speak to a group of family medicine residents as part of their formal didactic session. She also petitioned the mayor of Vancouver Washington to declare March 2021 National Nutrition Month, promoting health and wellness in the larger community.”

States a colleague, “Meredith has demonstrated grace and care for her direct report caregivers, and for the patients and other caregivers she interacts with throughout the hospital. She has an efficient leadership and communication style that’s relatable to caregivers with 20+ years of experience as well as those who are just starting their career.”

Ms. Freeland stands out for her professionalism and leadership, according to many of her colleagues. States a letter of recommendation, “Meredith leads in a very quiet and unobtrusive manner that achieves great things behind the scenes. She leads a group of clinical dietitians by beginning with the assumption that they are professionals and works toward consensus whenever possible. This process tends to bring out the best in the dietitians and has made for a strong and cohesive department.”

PAST EMERGING DIETETIC LEADER AWARD RECIPIENTS

YEAR	RECIPIENT	YEAR	RECIPIENT
2000	Donna Parsons	2011	Marie Millren Tucker
2001	Pam Mahre	2013	Marissa Claiborne
2004	Judy Heesacker	2016	April Davis
2007	Stacy Lueck	2017	Ben Atkinson
2009	Kendra Swartz	2019	Susie Fox
2010	Livia Wagner	2020	Ginger Hultin

PAST COMMUNITY PRACTICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

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

EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY PRACTICE AWARD

Chris Mornick, MPH, RDN



The Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is proud to honor Chris Mornick for the Excellence in Community Practice Award for 2021. The purpose of the Practice Awards recognizes outstanding registered dietitian nutritionists; nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered; and members who have demonstrated innovation, creativity, and leadership in a specific area of practice.

Ms. Mornick has been the Nutrition Coordinator at the Washington State Department of Health since 2017, where she manages the CDC's State Physical Activity and Nutrition grant strategies on food service guidelines and early care and education and promotes nutrition within state agencies, as well as offers her expertise for state employee wellness programs. She represents the Department of Health in several national workgroups and organizations and has contributed to several reports and toolkits

on nutrition, including A Roadmap for Comprehensive Food Service Guidelines, Obesity Prevention in Rural Early Care and Education Settings Toolkit (publication pending) and the Food Service Guidelines Vendors Training Guide Tool. She also led internal and external workgroups to develop comments on several federal policies on behalf of the Washington State Department of Health. In 2018 and 2020, she formed diverse workgroups and fostered collaborative approaches to develop responses for several nutrition-related federal policy comment opportunities, including Healthy People 2030 and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

States a letter of recommendation, "Chris' leadership to promote health and nutrition for agencies and organizations in Washington has led to healthy food access to municipal employees, correctional facility inmates, Special Olympics athletes and others. Her talent in understanding the needs and culture of communities, enables her to meet people where they are and to help guide them along in their journey toward health. Hopefully, Chris will continue her extraordinary public health work for a long time, and in the process, mentor others to succeed in creating sustainable healthy worksites."

Ms. Mornick's key projects have included a Revised Executive Order 13-06: Improving the Health and Wellness of State Employees and Access to Healthy Food in State Facilities, leading Washington's Food Service Guidelines work in worksites and community settings, with a focus on equity, and leading Washington's work promoting nutrition, physical activity, breastfeeding and responsible screen time use in early learning.

States a letter of recommendation, "At the same time of helping Special Olympics Washington pass their Healthy Food and Beverage Guidelines policy, Chris was managing multiple other community-based public health nutrition projects at the Department of Health. She worked closely with the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) to help them revise menus at all 12 state correctional facilities to align with the DGAs, increasing servings of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean and plant-based proteins, and fish while reducing added sugar, saturated fat and sodium for over 15,000 incarcerated individuals. Together with DOC, she developed a Train-the-Trainer toolkit on the DGAs to educate staff and the incarcerated on basic nutrition and help increase acceptance of the menu changes. She also manages the state's efforts to increase nutrition and physical activity best practices in early learning through the Nourished and Active in Early Learning website and is the coordinator for the state's Farm to Early Care and Education network.

PAST EXCELLENCE IN MANAGEMENT PRACTICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

YEAR	RECIPIENT
2016	Adam Pazder
2017	Katie Farver
2018	Kelsey Thomas
2020	Heather Watkins

PAST CLINICAL/RESEARCH AWARD RECIPIENTS

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

The above 2 awards had no applications in 2021.

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 Sarah Haack



The Washington State Academy is proud to honor Sarah Haack with the 2021 Outstanding Dietetics Student in a Coordinated Program in Dietetics. Ms. Haack is pursuing a Master of Science in Clinical Nutrition from the University of Washington with an expected graduation date of June 2022. Ms. Haack also has her Master of Public Health from Montana State University, 2014.

With Ms. Haack's diverse background, she has brought together her public health communications, expertise in creating content and team collaboration to the nutrition field, focusing her academic research on dietary guidance, pediatric nutrition, and eating competency. Ms. Haack is currently a Graduate Research Assistant at the University of Washington, supporting manuscript preparation for study valuating eating competency and Covid-related anxiety. She also recruited more than 2,500 participants via digital and print outreach and performed data analysis (SPSS and R). Prior, Ms. Haack worked as a Marketing Strategy Senior Associate for Publicis Sapient (Client: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute) where she managed more than 15 strategic communications plans as editorial lead of NIH internal communications team and developed digital content to support key science, IT, and workforce initiatives with continuous client input. As well, Ms. Haack has published research work in the Journal of Community Health and Nutrition Reviews Journal.

In her own words, "My time as a dietetics student at the University of Washington has made me delightfully uncomfortable as I've expanded my perspectives in weight-neutral care and HAES, food systems and sustainability, and equity at the intersection of these fields. One year into the pandemic, it is difficult to judge how one student may be more deserving than the other of this award, when getting out of bed is an accomplishment. I am proudest not of my grades or research or accomplishments, but of my ability to hold space for myself and my fellow dietetics cohort to challenge our thinking, use our discomfort for growth, and embrace the messiness of the world and the profession. As a dietitian, I hope to bring that same mindset to my clients in strengthening their relationship with food - and themselves."

Outstanding Student in a Dietetic Internship
Leah Dambacher



The Washington State Academy is proud to honor Leah Dambacher with the 2021 Outstanding Student in a Dietetic Internship award. Ms Leah Dambacher received her Bachelor of Science in Nutrition from California Polytechnic State University in 2019 and is expected to complete her Dietetic Internship from Central Washington University in July 2021. Ms. Dambacher has is recognized on Cal Poly President’s List – Spring 2019; and Dean’s List – Fall 2018, Winter 2019, Spring 2019.

Through her undergraduate studies, job and leadership opportunities, and rotations as a dietetic intern, Ms. Dambacher, in her own words, has, “... developed a passion for and a strong commitment to the field of nutrition. Moreover, I have gained an interest in further education, as I realize that contributing to nutrition research is the basis to initiating change among both individual and population-based health behaviors.”

Ms. Dambacher was a Research Assistant for Cal Poly’s Nutrition & Exercise in Type 2 Diabetes Project in 2019, where she Investigated the effects of Mediterranean Diet, exercise, and collected data via food recalls, DXA, metabolic cart, blood draws. Ms. Dambacher was also a volunteer research with women and children in Sierra Leone’s Vista Regional Medical Center in 2018 and involved with the sports nutrition team at Cal Poly, which all taught her the basics of data collection with human subjects.

“My involvement in nutrition research reinforced my critical thinking skills and my adaptability to the dynamic characteristics of research. I aim to enhance these skills and increase my literacy in nutrition research, allowing me to provide accessible, clear education and interventions in order to best serve my future clients.”

Outstanding Student in a Didactic Program in Dietetics
Jasper Brezsny-Feldman



The Washington State Academy is proud to honor Jasper Brezsny-Feldman with the 2021 Outstanding Dietetics Student in a Didactic Program in Dietetics. Ms. Brezsny-Feldman is pursuing her Master of Science in Nutrition at Bastyr University, maintaining a 4.0, and in 2019 received the Bastyr University Graduate Honors at Entrance Scholarship. Ms. Brezsny-Feldman coordinates guest speakers for Bastyr University's Student Nutrition Association (SNA), initiating study groups and organizing events to bring students together. She has also helped to organize a guest speaker series focused on bringing diverse voices and expertise to the student body.

In addition to her coursework, Ms. Brezsny-Feldman is a Nutrition Assistant for an RDN in private practice with an integrative and functional medicine approach, where she assists in weekly telehealth appointments led and observes effective strategies to deliver MNT with collaborative interventions in the private practice. Previously, she worked as an Oncology Nutrition Intern for the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Institute, where she prepared and served community meal for teens experiencing homelessness as a Teen Feed Volunteer and utilized her Spanish language skills to translate nutrition-related content from English to Spanish on a website dedicated to providing resources for those touched by cancer.

In Ms. Brezsny-Feldman's words, "...these experiences have deepened my knowledge, allowing me to be a student not only in the classroom, but in the community, and have prepared me for a lifetime of learning along with the rapidly progressing field of dietetics."