

2024 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

Ginger Hultin, MS, RDN, CSO



The Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is proud to honor Ginger Hultin as Washington State's Outstanding Dietitian of the Year (ODY) for 2024. 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.

Ginger Hultin is a vibrant force in nutrition and dietetics and has made her mark through a blend of clinical excellence, innovative education, nutrition communications, and community empowerment. With a master's degree in nutrition from Bastyr University, Hultin specializes in evidence-based integrative nutrition with her patients in the outpatient oncology private practice setting. She is the author of the Krause & Mahan's *Food and the Nutrition Care Process*

textbook oncology chapter for editions 15 and 16, and has also authored a cookbook, *The Anti-Inflammatory Diet Meal Prep*.

Addicted to volunteering and passionate about promoting dietitians as *the* nutrition experts, she is the current Washington State House of Delegates representative, a former spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, former Chair of the Vegetarian Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group, and former president of the Greater Seattle Dietetic Association as well as the Chicago Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She is not only an accomplished dietitian but also a passionate advocate for our profession.

Beyond her clinical expertise and commitment to the profession, Hultin has been a dedicated mentor, shaping the next generation of dietitians through her role as an adjunct nutrition instructor at the Bastyr Center for Natural health since 2015. Her current venture includes pursuing her Doctorate of Clinical Nutrition degree at the University of North Florida where she is focused on how the nutrition care process affects clinical outcomes. Ginger Hultin's dedication and innovative spirit truly define her as an outstanding professional in the field.

PAST ODY RECIPIENTS

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

RECOGNIZED YOUNG DIETITIAN OF THE YEAR

Rachel Falkner, MS, RD



The Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is proud to honor Rachel Falkner as the Recognized Young Dietitian of the Year (RYDY) for 2024. 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.

Rachel has spent the first five years of her career as a clinical dietitian at Sacred Heart Medical Center. She specializes in cardiac ICU nutrition support, including patients on ECMO, CRRT, and status post VAD (cardiac transplant implantation). As an NFPE (Nutrition Focused Physical Exam) peer trainer, Rachel provides annual NFPE competency trainings to the clinical nutrition staff at Sacred Heart. Recently, she has partnered with WSU Spokane to precept dietetic students for the duration of their clinical rotations.

Rachel is also an active research dietitian. She worked with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics from 2019-2021 to provide data collection for their recently published AAIM study. She has also authored multiple research articles, including a first authorship focusing on how chronobiology affects nutrition intake. Rachel has presented her research at several local and regional conferences, as well as at FNCE® this past October.

PAST RYDY RECIPIENTS

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

EMERGING DIETETIC LEADER

Aria Wexler, MBA, RDN, CDCES



The Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is proud to honor Aria Wexler as the Emerging Dietetic Leader of 2024. The purpose of the annual EDL award is to 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.

Aria graduated from the University of California, Davis with a Bachelor of Science in Clinical Nutrition. At UC Davis she was recognized as one of 11 students within the University of California system as a Global Food Initiative Fellow. Her project focused on increasing food access amongst university students reporting food insecurity.

Aria completed her dietetic internship at Dominican University, a coordinated program where she also earned her Master of Business Administration with an emphasis in healthcare administration.

Aria began her career covering different nursing homes in the Chicagoland area. In this role she worked to reduce significant weight loss and help decrease incidence of pressure injuries amongst residents. She then assumed a food service management role at Thorek Hospital in Chicago, managing a team of about 40 people.

Aria became a diabetes educator in 2021 and shortly after landed her first job as a Diabetes Educator with Swedish in their Maternal Fetal Medicine clinic in Seattle. She now focuses on providing nutrition and diabetes education to patients/clients during pregnancy. She helped create a robust gestational diabetes class series to provide valuable information to newly diagnosed parents with gestational diabetes. She also has residents and fellows of the clinic shadow her as she provides mentorship in the space of diabetes education. Aria also serves as a preceptor for the University of Washington.

Aria served as the membership co-chair for the Greater Seattle Dietetics Association where she has been able to promote joining the GSDA, which currently has nearly 90 members.

In her free time, you can find Aria at the pottery studio, spending time with her niece and nephew, biking, hiking, and frequenting farmer's markets.

PAST EMERGING DIETETIC LEADER AWARD RECIPIENTS

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

PAST CLINICAL/RESEARCH AWARD RECIPIENTS

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

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL AND RESEARCH PRACTICE AWARD

Christina Lederle, CSP CC, RD, CSP



The Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is proud to honor Lisa Christina Lederle with the Excellence in Clinical and Research Practice Award for 2024. The purpose of the Practice Awards is to recognize outstanding registered dietitian nutritionists; nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered; and members who have demonstrated innovation, creativity, and leadership in a specific area of practice.

Christina Lederle is a Pediatric Clinical Dietitian working at Providence Sacred Heart Children's Hospital in Spokane, WA. Christina works in the Pediatric ICU as well as the Pediatric Congenital Heart Clinic. She has been a Pediatric RD for 17 years and is Board Certified as both a Specialist in Pediatric Nutrition and Pediatric Critical Care Nutrition.

Christina contributes largely to the improved outcomes of pediatric patients at Sacred Heart in a variety of ways. She is part of the team that started the Comprehensive Care Clinic for High Risk Infants with Congenital Heart Disease and closely follows the highest risk CHD infants both in the outpatient clinic (along with a PA, RN, and SLP) and inpatient when they are in the PICU. She leads pediatric onboarding and is a mentor for new hires at Sacred Heart, plus she provides in-services and training for other pediatric RDs on topics such as malnutrition diagnosis, estimating needs, and recipe making.

Christina is part of the team that created a variety of feeding protocols for the PICU, including Pre-Op and Post-Op Feeding protocols for infants with CHD. She is a board member for Beats and Rhythms, an organization that serves local patients with CHD and their families. As part of the Beats and Rhythms Board, Christina volunteers at a variety of activities including fundraisers and a Cardiac Camps each summer. Christina is an instrumental part of the Sacred Heart PICU team, CHD team, and Pediatric RD team.

EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY PRACTICE AWARD

Vanessa Vu-Sabido, MPH, RDN, CD, IFNCP



The Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is proud to honor Vanessa Vu-Sabido with the Excellence in Community Practice Award for 2024. 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.

Vanessa has always been drawn to helping people, but especially to those facing heightened barriers to receiving support. Her early career was largely spent working with organizations catering to individuals living at or below the poverty line, bringing a mix of nutrition, lifestyle, and gardening education to WIC clinics, community centers, and classrooms from pre-K to community college-level age groups – sites that were culturally diverse, high needs communities throughout King County, Washington. Her work included adapting or creating lesson plans or recipes to

make them more culturally relevant & practical for incorporating into their daily life, participating in afterschool and summer programs or partnering with community gardens. Vanessa recognized the need for systemic approaches to create deeper, more sustainable impact. Transitioning to a program manager role, efforts were concentrated on collaborating with faculty at over 20 schools and 300 classrooms annually. The goal was to integrate nutrition education on a school-wide level, instilling health-conscious behaviors aligned with core curriculum requirements for state testing.

Vanessa is a proud, long-standing member of the Olympia Area Dietetics Association (OADA). She's been a board member since 2015, taking several roles officially and unofficially over the years including Media & Volunteer Liaison, Treasurer, Co-Committee Leader for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and currently, Member-At-Large. She's enjoyed the camaraderie and networking, consistently seeking avenues to enhance the profession, celebrate it, and be a bridge to the community. Vanessa loves teamwork and has been a participant and a leader in coordinating events in and around the community, such as the annual National Nutrition Month® kick-off event with the Hands on Children's Museum and holiday social events that involve coming together to prepare and distribute meals to the homeless in our area. As a woman, with immigrant parents, Vanessa feels deeply responsible for promoting representation and holding space for open discussions, increasing awareness, and understanding of how our diverse backgrounds can enhance our abilities to serve others.

Vanessa is now an Integrative and Functional Certified Practitioner (IFNCP) through the Integrative and Functional Nutrition Academy (IFNA) and founded Nutrition Flow LLC in 2022. Her insurance-based private practice aims to provide accessible, holistic care that focuses on individuality within a healthcare team approach. Every aspect of her business is rooted in service and reflects her core belief that everyone has a unique path in their wellness journey but "it takes a village."

This venture has allowed Vanessa to flex her own individuality with creativity and leadership, while directly helping people in my community on multiple levels.

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

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

Paola Bregni Ibarra



The Washington State Academy is proud to honor Paola Bregni Ibarra with the 2024 Outstanding Dietetics Student in a Coordinated Program in Dietetics.

Paola is currently completing her Master of Science degree in Nutritional Science through the Coordinated program at University of Washington. She received a Bachelor of Science in Clinical Nutrition degree in Guatemala, where she was born

and raised. Through her undergraduate studies, she gained experience while performing many different roles in a variety of clinical settings. These experiences enabled her to discover the many aspects of the field and to narrow her interests. Her primary goal is to practice in clinical settings, with future plans to pursue academia and research opportunities that will enhance her experience as a healthcare practitioner.

Paola is also completing the Pediatric Pulmonary Centers (PPC) training program funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) at the University of Washington, which has an individualized curriculum that seeks to enhance leadership and training skills cultivated around an interdisciplinary care and family-centered scope. Additionally, she is merging her PPC capstone project with her culminating thesis project. This project involves the creation of a screening tool to assess the probability of drug-nutrient interactions based on an extensive literature review. Additionally, a set of internal and external trials are set in place to validate the tool's value and accuracy with the collaboration of practicing clinicians. The central aim of the project is to develop a personalized healthcare model when detecting drug nutrient interactions.

Outstanding Student in a Dietetic Internship

Robin Holliday



The Washington State Academy is proud to honor Robin Holliday with the 2024 Outstanding Student in a Dietetic Internship award.

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.

For two decades, she honed her leadership skills in the fast-paced world at Starbucks Coffee Company. As a manager and supply chain planner, she learned to inspire teams,

delegate effectively, and navigate diverse perspectives—skills that transferred well to the collaborative field of dietetics. However, she craved a deeper impact, leading her to embrace a career change: nutrition. This wasn't just switching jobs. It became a transformative experience as she embraced Bastyr University's holistic approach to health alongside the complexities of her own life.

Her experience at Starbucks prepared her to be a valuable team player within her cohort. Serving on the Bastyr University Student Nutrition Association Board, she led the Food Pantry Coordinator role, helping feed other students who were food insecure. She also mentored and tutored fellow students, sharing her experience of returning to school mid-life as a testament to resilience.

Her story isn't about chasing perfect grades or achieving specific internship objectives but about pushing boundaries. It's been about embracing discomfort, such as volunteering as a Nutrition Education Instructor, where she practiced her communication skills and developed engaging nutrition content for older adults. It's about using her experience to build a future, like serving on the Greater Seattle Dietetic Association's Continuing Education Committee, where she advocates and organizes continuing education webinars for her peers and dietetic professionals.

Robin's passion is to help others through the power of food. She hopes to help patients with chronic conditions such as autoimmune and digestive disorders one day. Her dream is to one day have a private practice, which she has been nurturing by attending webinars in her free time on starting a nutrition business, as well as working with and learning from other entrepreneurial dietitians.

Robin is tremendously honored to receive the Washington State Academy Outstanding Student Award in a Dietetic Internship.

Outstanding Student in a Didactic Program
Kimberly Biladeau



The Washington State Academy is proud to honor Kimberly Biladeau with the 2024 Outstanding Student in a Didactic Program award.

She is currently an undergraduate student at Central Washington University, in Ellensburg, WA. Kimberly will be graduating this June as magna cum laude from the Bachelor of Science in Food Science and Nutrition with a Dietetics Specialization, a Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD). She's been on the Dean's list and honor roll for the 2022 and 2023 academic year. Kimberly is also the winner of the John A. Shoudy Scholarship, for Outstanding Students in Food Science & Nutrition Programs, March 2023.

Kimberly is a current Menus of Change University Research Collaborative (MCURC) student fellow. She has presented at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, in Long Beach, CA. Kimberly is also an active senator for the Nutrition Science

Club. She holds a position as a Peer Nutrition Educator position, providing nutrition education and counseling to the student body.

Kimberly has also been volunteering for a local community food bank that focuses on serving the Hispanic-Latino community. In addition to community work, she has volunteered with the Wildcat Pantry, an on-campus food recovery and food bank, as well as the Second Harvest Mobile Pantry. Some of her other volunteer work includes time with the Ellensburg School District primarily working for the Summer Meal Program, offering meals to school age children in various parts Kittitas County.

In addition to being an exemplary student, Kimberly is wife to John, mother to Henry and has baby number two the way, due in July 2024. Congratulations Kimberly!