

AUGUST 2019

# SHANNON EBRON, MS, RDN, LD

Spotlight Member of the Month



## FUN FACT

Shannon won the votes in naming the new Spoodle Report. Thanks Shannon!



## #SquadGoals: The launch of a New Manager Mentorship Program

### FEATURING SNS MEMBER SHANNON EBRON

There may need to be a patent for this clever hashtag and genius concept at Fox Consolidated-6 School District in Arnold, Missouri. Shannon Ebron, MS, RDN, LD, is the Assistant Director at Fox C-6. She and her team are excited for the launch of a new manager mentorship program for the 2019-2020 school year. Join us as we get to know Shannon and learn more about the program that can improve school nutrition programs in any district.

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## 1. ABOUT SHANNON

I am from St. Louis, Missouri. I was raised in St Louis county in University City, but currently reside in South St. Louis City in Dutchtown. I had a whopping 10 minute commute to America's Center where the 2019 Annual National Conference (ANC) was held! I transitioned into dietetics after a retail and interior design career. Prior to dietetics I earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from Tennessee State University in Family and Consumer Sciences, Design Concentration. I received my undergraduate dietetics education from Fontbonne University and completed my dietetic internship with combined Master of Science from Saint Louis University. Currently, I work as the Assistant Director of Nutrition Services in the Fox Consolidated-6 School District in Arnold, MO. I assist with the operations; overseeing 17 schools and 100 employees. We serve 12,000 students. I love that my job in school nutrition allows for the opportunity to connect with students over food. I have had a high school student compliment a salad we prepared telling me that it reminded her grandmother's that she made as a restaurant owner. Another favorite encounter with a student occurred when I held a nutrition education sampling event. I served a student his first sample ever of broccoli apple salad and he came back for seven more samples! It is so rewarding to have the ability to nourish my community through school meals.

## 2. THE PATH TO SCHOOL NUTRITION

I was led to the field of school nutrition by way of a practicum experience as an undergraduate dietetics student. I was fortunate to secure a food management practicum with a school district during the inaugural year of the historic Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act. I spent 120 hours at the school district during the Spring semester of this placement. I had many school nutrition firsts during this practicum including a USDA Foods show, director's association meeting, checked in food orders, performed an in-service, conducted a plate waste study and so much more. I can remember taking on a project to create a scratch made hummus to meet the legume requirement. I enjoyed every aspect of that project from recipe standardization to merchandising, student taste tests and serving it on the line. After this I was hooked! I used the practicum experience to secure employment as a school nutrition cook my final year of undergraduate coursework. The hours were perfect with my courses occurring later in the afternoon and the experience was invaluable. I believe it helped me secure a dietetic internship and my first job as a dietitian and nutrition educator with my former school district.



### 3. FOX C-6 MANAGER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

*AKA #SquadGoals*

In the 2019-2020 school year we are developing our #SquadGoals with the launch of a new manager mentorship program. The vision for this program emerged due to the changes taking place in our department with reference to recent and impending retirements of long term kitchen managers and employees. In preparation for this school year we have hired over 20 new employees! Given this change in our department's workforce and our already stretched resources, we want to empower our nutrition services team members to take greater responsibility for their learning where appropriate.

This school year's mentorship cohort has six members; pairing three seasoned managers with three kitchen managers new to their leadership role. We are using a peer led learning approach with the expectation that our program participants gain self-confidence, engage in active problem solving, practice self-evaluation, offer emotional support and improve managerial competency. Monitoring of the mentorship program will occur on a constant basis through phone calls , emails, and check-ins at monthly manager meetings. In the first week of this school year the Nutrition Services Director and I, Assistant Director, have initiated several nudges encouraging participants to make use of their mentorship relationship to navigate issues when in times of our unavailability. At the completion of the 19-20 school year, the mentorship program evaluation will consist of two parts, the annual employee performance evaluation to measure an increase in managerial competency and a post mentoring survey to measure the program's impact.

### 4. MORE NEW & EXCITING PLANS FOR 2019-20

Other new and exciting things for our nutrition services team include new food items to our ever changing menu. In the 19-20 school year we have over 20 new food products added to our inventory list. In addition to the 45 plus fresh produce items we already source, we are adding radish and sugar snap peas to our fresh vegetable boats. Last, we plan to serve bento box grab 'n' go meals and we recently secured a grant from our local dairy council that will allow us to purchase equipment to serve smoothies at our two high schools.

### 5. FUTURE GOALS AND VISIONS

My goal for the profession is to bring diversity to the field of school nutrition through mentorship. While I believe every position in a school nutrition services is extremely important, I see great value in bringing diversity to the highest decision making levels of the profession. It is imperative for innovation and greater connection with the students and communities we serve.