



## **NFEF Announces 2024 Award Recipients**

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### Contact Information

Sarah Dunton

Association of Nutrition & Foodservice Professionals

Marketing & Member Engagement Coordinator

[sdunton@ANFPonline.org](mailto:sdunton@ANFPonline.org)

Phone: 800.323.1908 x234

**St. Charles, IL** – The Nutrition & Foodservice Education Foundation (NFEF), the philanthropic arm of the Association of Nutrition & Foodservice Professionals (ANFP), has announced the recipients of the 2024 Foodservice Department of the Year Award and the 2024 Foodservice Education Innovator of the Year Award.

### **Nutrition & Foodservice Education Foundation Announces 2024 Foodservice Department of the Year Award**

YES Prep Public Schools located in Houston, Texas has earned the NFEF’s 2024 Foodservice Department of the Year Award. Yes Prep is an open-enrollment public charter school system serving grade-school students in Houston’s most underserved communities. The Child Nutrition Team at YES Prep Public Schools serves its students by providing free, healthy meals all year long.

Communication is the foundation for everything the department does and various forms including phones calls, texts, and team messages are used to inform staff on all aspects of Child Nutrition, to ensure the team is ready and able to manage anything that comes their way.

Teamwork is the epitome of Child Nutrition, and team members rely on one another to take care of their students daily. Jessiica Howell serves as the Director of Child Nutrition and diligently works to provide cross-training for her employees, identifying the responsibilities of each position within the department to effectively operate when a team member is out. Implementing an effective cross-training program has allowed coworkers to learn new skills and build their leadership qualities while serving its students.

The Mission and Purpose of Child Nutrition is to ensure that ALL students are ready to learn by having access to nutritious and appealing school meals. Child Nutrition provides a high-quality level of food service to thousands of students,

and this is dependent upon accurate planning and forecasting and knowing the students' eating behaviors and attendance. To encourage students to eat a meal in the cafeteria, the team must highlight why it is cool, fun, and nutritious. Receiving a great tasting meal from happy and positive cafeteria workers allows students to feel valued, appreciated, and energized to learn for the day.

The Child Nutrition department received passing audit scores and YES Prep Public Schools received local, state, and national awards including a proclamation from the mayor for the Healthy Kids Day that was implemented this school year.

The Child Nutrition department revamped its Wellness Policy and Plan - the blueprint used to keep students healthy and fit. The plan outlines the requirements for meals, physical and mental health, and provides tasks and objectives for reaching desired goals, and their unwavering dedication to the wellness of their students. The Child Nutrition department completes a triennial assessment of the Wellness plan to determine the metrics in place are being followed. This assessment provides a score in each area, and it gives both the Child Nutrition team and the district the information needed to make any adjustments to the plan and policy.

The Child Nutrition department funds all expenses for Child Nutrition related items, with no funding from the district. It is imperative the team effectively procures items that follow state and federal guidelines. The department has successfully secured grants to help with food costs, equipment purchases and stipends for the cafeteria staff. As a result of being good stewards of federal funds, the Child Nutrition department has a healthy surplus for future Child Nutrition projects.

### **About YES Prep Public Schools**

Since 1998, YES Prep Public Schools has redefined what is possible in public education. With over 18,000 college-bound students across 20+ campuses, we are a system of high-performing public charter schools proving that students from underserved communities can achieve at the highest academic levels. Our exceptional results demonstrate that better outcomes are not only possible, but also probable, when school systems build a culture of high expectations, and create effective support systems to ensure that student achievement is at the forefront of every decision made.

### **Nutrition & Foodservice Education Foundation Announces 2024 Foodservice Education Innovator of the Year Award**

LaGuardia Community College located in Long Island City, New York has earned the NFEF's 2024 Foodservice Education Innovator of the Year Award.

LaGuardia Community College offered a unique grant program to students in the associate degree of the Nutrition and Culinary Program to be selected to the first cohort to attempt the Certified Dietary Manager, Certified Food Protection Professional (CDM, CFPP) credential as a group. The cohort was promised ANFP exam preparation study materials, including textbooks, the CDM, CFPP Credentialing Exam Study Guide, CDM Credentialing Exam Flash Cards, Math Workbook Practice, the CBDM CDM Self-Assessment exam, and a \$399 voucher to cover the cost of the CDM, CFPP Credentialing Exam. The grant additionally covered the cost of review sessions conducted by skilled instructors (Registered Dietitians) for credential preparation.

The funding for this program was obtained through a scholarship grant awarded to Dr. Nicolle Fernandes titled 2022-2023 Health Careers Credentials (HC2) Scholarship Grant.

Fifteen students participated in the program and twelve appeared for the CDM, CFPP Credentialing Exam. Study materials were distributed promptly, and review sessions were conducted as fully immersive hybrid meetings via Zoom. Students were encouraged to meet in smaller study groups, and the instructors provided additional quizzes and tip sheets to assess student progress. All content material, including Zoom recordings, were neatly organized in a shared folder by week and topic for all participants to access. The three instructors conducting the review also appeared alongside students preparing for the CDM, CFPP Credentialing Exam.

Students completing the program unanimously indicated that they would recommend this opportunity to future students. When asked how prepared participants felt before sitting for the national CDM, CFPP Credentialing Exam, eight indicated they felt confident, two indicated adequately prepared, and one indicated somewhat prepared. Overall, participants found the combination of study materials (two textbooks, Study Guide, Flash Cards, Math Workbook, and the CDM Self-Assessment exam) and the review sessions very beneficial.

Participating in this program has not only added a defining career achievement early in the career path of LaGuardia Community College graduates but also created insatiable confidence in their role in culinary nutrition and foodservice. Future students attempting to take the CDM, CFPP Credentialing Exam can also use the materials and recordings created for the review sessions as part of this grant. Instructors who also become CDM, CFPP credentialed as part of this program now serve as examples for students to aspire to get credentialed while also providing first-hand guidance in the steps involved in achieving the credential. Dr. Fernandes will continue to try to secure funding for future program students.

### **About LaGuardia Community College**

LaGuardia Community College, is a proud Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), Asian

American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI) and is part of the Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program (MSEIP). Located in Long Island City, Queens, and an institution of the City University of New York (CUNY), LaGuardia is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and offers a welcoming environment for immigrants of all nations and individuals of all backgrounds. The College reflects the legacy of our namesake, Fiorello H. LaGuardia, the former NYC mayor beloved for his advocacy of underserved populations. Since opening its doors in 1971, LaGuardia's academic programs and support services have advanced the socioeconomic mobility of students while providing them with access to a high quality, affordable college education.

Learn more about NFEF Awards criteria [here](#).

### About NFEF

The Nutrition & Foodservice Education Foundation (NFEF) was originally founded in 1994, as the Dietary Managers Association (DMA) Foundation. It was re-configured as a part of the DMA's re-branding and name change to the Association of Nutrition & Foodservice Professionals (ANFP) in 2012. NFEF engages in innovative research, education, and charitable causes that promote the vital role of the Certified Dietary Manager as the expert in the profession of foodservice management and food safety. NFEF supports the goals of ANFP and works to strengthen the overall nutrition and foodservice profession. As ANFP's philanthropic arm, the Foundation is organized to advance the foodservice and nutrition profession to stay ahead of rapid change by fostering innovative thinking, cutting-edge research, and new ideas. The Foundation's highest priority is research and education for the future.