



NEWS FROM THE NEW YORK STATE ACADEMY OF NUTRITION & DIETETICS

The NYSAND e-newsletter serves to inform members of current news related to food & nutrition, and NYSAND activities.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR NYSAND PRESIDENT

Happy New Year, NYSAND Members,

We hope this message finds you well and staying warm during the winter season.

As of November 2025, NYSAND transitioned from Lutine Management to an Interim Director model. The NYSAND leadership and Board of Directors remain firmly committed to prioritizing the organization's growth, stability, and the interests of its members.

We are pleased to announce that Diana Monaco, RDN, CDN, FAND has been appointed as Interim Executive Director. Diana is a long-standing NYSAND member and recently retired after 32 years of service with the Food and Drug Administration. She will serve in this role until a permanent Executive Director is identified, anticipated by mid-year.

The NYSAND Board of Directors would like to extend sincere appreciation to the following individuals for their willingness to serve on the Transition Committee: Carol DeNysschen, Michelle Barber, Catherine Conway, Kristina Thomopoulos, Allison Bowers, Catherine (Katie) Brown, and Brenda A.Z. Abu. We thank these members for their time and accepting to serve!

On January 27, 2026, about 20 NYSAND members and volunteers joined our Lobbyist to virtually advocate for our Licensure of Dietitians and Nutritionists Bill, and four other bills that are priority for NYSAND members. The team did exceptional work and reached 16 elected officials! Thank you to the Public Policy Committee, our Lobbyists from The Roffe Group of Robinson+Cole, and volunteers for taking time to actively contribute to this important effort for NYSAND. For more details on Lobby day and public policy - related efforts, please see the Public Policy Committee's updates on page 2.

Lastly, we look forward to welcoming you to the NYSAND Annual Meeting & Exhibition (AME) at Pace University on April 24, 2026. We encourage you to register early to take advantage of the early-bird registration rate. [Register here.](#)

Wishing you a wonderful spring season ahead.

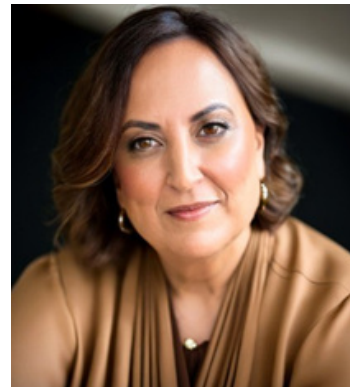
Warm regards,

Brenda Ariba Zarhari Abu PhD, RDN, CDR

NYSAND 2025-2026 President
baahst@rit.edu



Brenda Ariba Zarhari Abu
2025-2026 President



Diana Monaco
Interim Executive Director

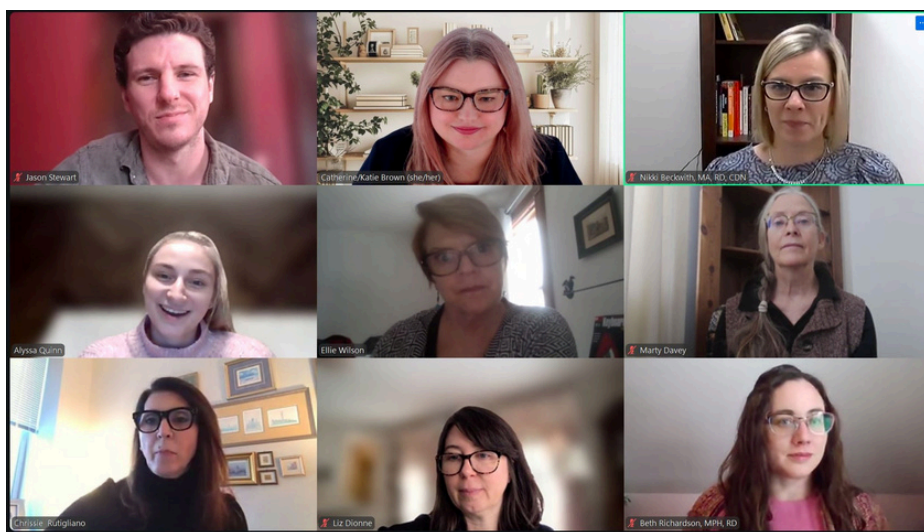
NYSAND has launched an online swag shop! [Shop here.](#)

**SUPPORT NY
DIETITIANS**



NYSAND PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES

On Tuesday January 27th the NYSAND public policy committee held an impactful lobby day with legislators in Albany. Although inclement weather led to a last minute switch to virtual rather than in person meetings, our group consisted of 20 volunteers that met with a total of 16 different offices to lobby in favor of five different bills (see below). Combined, these bills further NYSAND's mission by protecting consumers from misinformation, increasing access to food and medically tailored meals, increasing access to obesity treatments including MNT, and holding insurance accompanys accountable for timely and transparent communication with healthcare providers. We are so grateful to the volunteers who spent time studying the bills and took time off of work to participate, as well as to our amazing lobbyists who scheduled our meetings, and helped us formulate our language to be as impactful as possible. We hope to see you at Lobby Day 2027!



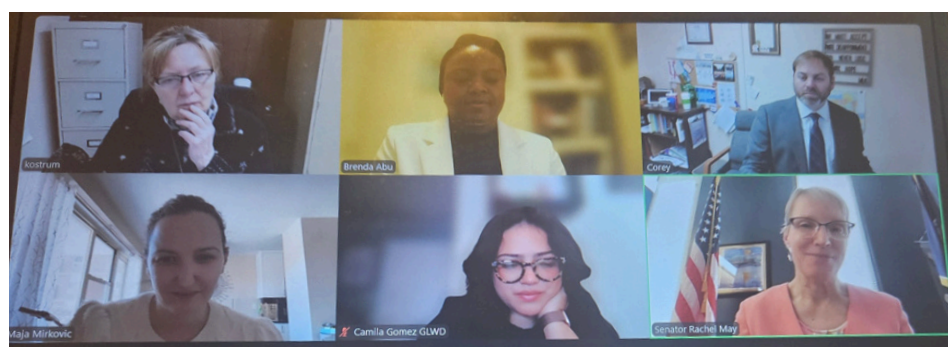
A07365 – Coverage for Medically Tailored Meals (MTM) and MNT | Leads: Beth Machnica and team at God's Love We Deliver

S5209– Limits the Lookback Period for Insurance | Lead: Katie Brown

S665 – State SNAP Minimum Benefit | Lead: Beth Richardson

S607A – Licensure for Dietitians | Lead: Karen Ostrum

S3104 – Comprehensive Treatment for Obesity | Lead: April Ho



UPDATE ON LICENSURE OF DIETITIANS & NUTRITIONISTS IN NEW YORK STATE

In brief, the licensure bill passed the state senate, was delivered to the assembly, and referred to the higher education committee on February 3rd, 2026. **The bill, S607A, can be reviewed here.**



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CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR NYSAND MEMBERS WHO WERE AWARDED AT FNCE 2025!

50 years of AND membership:

Gladiola P. Sampson
Jody Greco
Harriet Nunez
Rita J. Stewart
Laurie Ferraro
Rochelle C. Dworetzky
Joan W. Arno
Dorothy Wrase Hares
Barbara K. Williams

Carol B. Whitlock
Mary W. Bossart
Joan B. Rogus
Andrea M. Rifkin
Virginia E. Vorhis
Lois H. Chait
Rita K. Batheja
Eileen Kane-Gemmell

AND Medallion Award:

Keith T. Ayoob
Sudha Raj



From left to right: Kristina Thomopoulos (NYSAND President Elect), Rita K. Batheja (50 years of AND membership), Keith T. Ayoob (AND Medallion Award), Brenda A.Z. Abu (NYSAND President), Sudha Raj (AND Medallion Award) and Eileen Kane-Gemmell (50 years of AND membership)



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NYSAND GATHERING AT FNCE 2025



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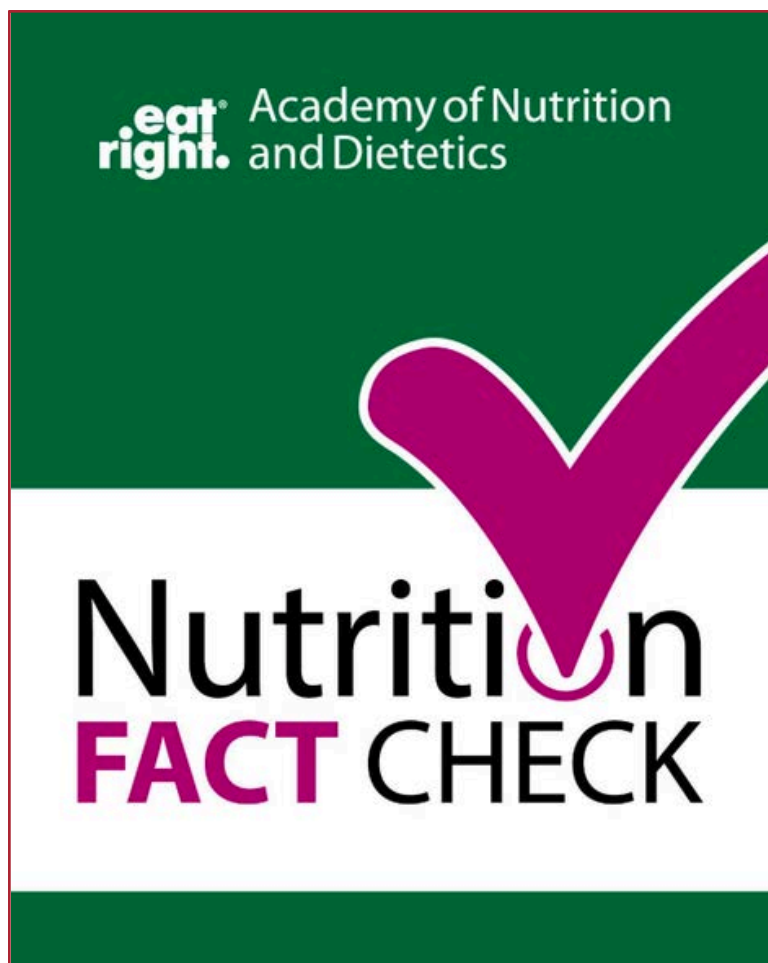
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NATIONAL PUBLIC POLICY NEWS

CMS LAUNCHES NEW MEDICARE INNOVATION MODEL WITH EXPANDED ACCESS TO MEDICAL NUTRITION THERAPY

WHO ESTABLISHES FIRST-EVER ICD CODE FOR UNDERNUTRITION IN CLINICAL SETTINGS FOR ADULTS



Have you seen the new Nutrition Fact Check campaign?

The campaign will provide clear, credible nutrition research and resources to help consumers make confident, informed decisions about what they eat, and help lift you up as the qualified and trusted nutrition experts.

Visit eatrightpro.org/NutritionFactCheck to learn more!



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NYSAND IS SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR PRESIDENT, TREASURER & SECRETARY

As Secretary and Treasurer you will serve on the Board of Directors and play a valuable role in shaping the organization. These are lower time commitment positions that allow you to make a big impact on NYSAND.

As President Elect, you won't serve alone. This role is part of a leadership continuum. You will begin by working closely with the current President as President-Elect, then serve your term as President, and continue supporting the organization as Immediate Past President, alongside a dedicated Board of Directors and Coordinating Cabinet.

Why serve?

- Make a statewide impact on the dietetics profession
- Gain advanced leadership, governance, and advocacy experience
- Build strong professional networks
- Strengthen your professional visibility and legacy

Nominations should be emailed to info@eatrightny.org by February 15th.

Eligibility: The President-Elect must have served in a NYSAND Board of Directors (BOD) or Coordinating Cabinet (CC) position within the past five years.

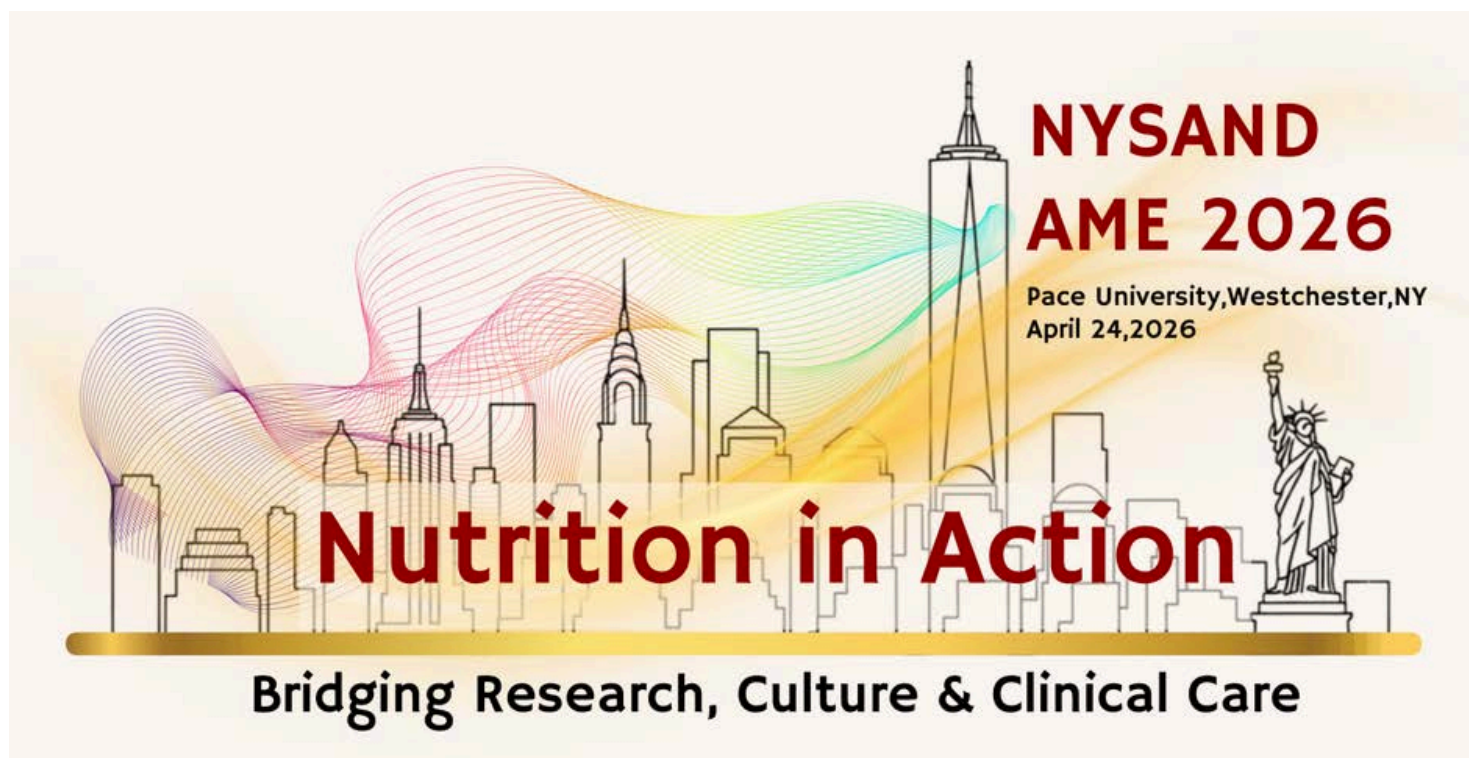
 <h2>Call for Nominations</h2> <p>NYSAND is seeking nominations for 2026-2027 leadership</p> 	<h3>SECRETARY</h3> <h4>POSITION HIGHLIGHTS</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term: 2 Years • Records and organizes all Board of Directors meeting minutes • Coordinates election reporting and reports election results to membership • Collaborates to notify members of annual business meeting <h4>THE IDEAL CANDIDATE</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed to decision-making and implementation of Association goals and objectives. • Interested in serving on a variety of committees • Able to record clear and concise meeting minutes <p>NOMINATIONS CAN BE SENT TO INFO@EATRIGHTNY.ORG</p>	 <h2>Call for Nominations</h2> <p>NYSAND is seeking nominations for 2026-2027 leadership</p> 	<h3>TREASURER</h3> <h4>POSITION HIGHLIGHTS</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term: 2 Years • Serves as CFO and bookkeeper • Chairs the finance committee • Approves monthly bills • Administers policies regarding reimbursement • Review annual financial report • Reviews account transactions and submits financial reports • Submits all budget requests <h4>THE IDEAL CANDIDATE</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed to decision-making and implementation of Association goals and objectives. • Budgeting and finance experience • Understands fiscal responsibility as it relates to the NYSAND strategic plan <p>NOMINATIONS CAN BE SENT TO INFO@EATRIGHTNY.ORG</p>
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SAVE THE DATE FOR NYSANE AME 2026!

Buy Your Tickets Today!

[Early Bird Member Tickets](#)
[Early Bird Non-member Tickets](#)
[Early Bird Student Tickets](#)

Early bird rates for AME 2026 will end on March 1, 2026

PRACTICE TRENDS

[SUMMARY OF SCIENCE: DIAGNOSING PEDIATRIC MALNUTRITION FOR THE PRACTICING CLINICIAN](#)

[NUTRITION FACT CHECK: RAW MILK](#)



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CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

LIVE WEBINAR: BEHIND THE GRAIN: REFINING PERSPECTIVES ON THE PUBLIC HEALTH ROLE OF ENRICHED & FORTIFIED GRAIN FOODS

Date: Feb 19th at 11:30 AM

This webinar will address the scientific rationale behind enrichment and fortification of grain foods and elevate opportunities to help Americans navigate dietary guidance and optimize their health with enriched and fortified staple grain foods as part of a healthy dietary pattern.

[Register Now](#)

LIVE WEBINAR: NUTRITION & HYDRATION STRATEGIES FOR ACTIVE WOMEN

Date: Feb 25th at 12:00 PM

Women have unique and evolving nutrition and hydration needs throughout their physically active years. Yet much of the research has historically been based on male physiology, leaving gaps in guidance for everyday physically active women. This webinar brings together Dr. Jessica Garay, a leading researcher in women's health and nutrition, and Val Schoenberg, a women's health dietitian, to explore evidence-based strategies for supporting physically active women across the lifespan.

[Register Now](#)

LIVE WEBINAR: FRUCTOSE MALABSORPTION: MECHANISMS, DIAGNOSIS AND NUTRITION MANAGEMENT

Date: Feb 26th at 12:00 PM

This session will review the underlying mechanisms of fructose malabsorption, typical symptom patterns and current diagnostic approaches, including when testing is appropriate. A key focus will be differentiating fructose malabsorption from hereditary fructose intolerance, a rare but serious genetic condition requiring strict lifelong fructose avoidance.

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CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES CONT...

RECORDED WEBINAR: ADDED SUGARS: CURRENT EVIDENCE ON SOURCES, HEALTH OUTCOMES, & DIETARY GUIDELINES

Join Laura Chiavaroli, PhD, and John Sievenpiper, MD, PhD, FRCPC, and moderator Rosanne Rust, MS, RDN, for a webinar that will examine added sugars by providing an in-depth review of the current evidence on sources, health outcomes, and dietary guidelines on added sugars, in order to support dietitians in drawing evidence-based conclusions and making evidence-based recommendations.

[Watch Now](#)

RECORDED WEBINAR: DECODING THE DAIRY FOOD MATRIX: FAT, FUNCTION, & HEALTH

Join nutrition experts Hannah Holscher, PhD, RD, and Tara Schmidt, MEd, RDN, for an engaging discussion on the evolving science of the dairy food matrix and the cardio-protective benefits of dairy foods across all fat levels, and how flexibility in dairy food choices can help people build and enjoy healthy diets.

[Watch Now](#)

LIVE WEBINAR: PROCESSED FOODS: WHAT EVERY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL SHOULD KNOW

Date: Mar 26th at 2:00 PM

Processed foods, particularly the ultraprocessed kind, have been vilified for contributing to obesity, heart disease, and other chronic conditions, but that's not entirely fair. This session will explore how processed food is classified, recent research about the health effects of processed foods, food dyes, and other additives, and the benefits of processed foods for certain groups, including those living in food deserts. We will discuss how best to communicate the risks and benefits of processed foods in a balanced eating plan.

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Advance Your Career with CDR Scholarships, Stipends & Awards!

All Credentialed Nutrition and Dietetics Practitioners are Eligible
Academy Membership Not Required

Current Available Opportunities:

- ✓ Advancing Practice Award
- ✓ Expanding the Reach of Dietetics Scholarship Fund
- ✓ Expanding the Reach of Dietetics: Scholarship for Interns Fund
- ✓ Doctoral Scholarship Fund
- ✓ Enhancing Practice Through CDR Certifications Award

[Learn More >](#)

AND PRESIDENT'S JANUARY MESSAGE

The release of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030 (DGAs) marks an important moment for our profession. The DGAs serve as a national framework, shaping federal nutrition policy and programs, influencing health care and public health practice and informing how millions of Americans understand food, nutrition and health.

As members have likely already seen, the Academy identified concerns where the DGAs may create confusion or diverge from the broader body of evidence. These include recommendations related to saturated fat, dairy and dairy alternatives, as well as the use of non-nutritive sweeteners and synthetic food dyes, among other issues. While the DGAs establish a high-level framework, we are continuing to carefully review the scientific foundation document that accompanied the DGAs to better understand how the evidence was evaluated and how recommendations were reached.

[CONTINUE READING](#)



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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: RIT GRADUATE STUDENTS

MADISON DEGENFELDER

Madison, won the GLRAND scholarship this past summer. She also was awarded the NYSAND scholarship in April 2025 and has just been named the named Graduate College Delegate from the College of Health Sciences and Technology at RIT. Madison is also part of the NYS AHEC Scholars program. She is currently completing her rotations at Strong Memorial Hospital.

Madison created Tiger Nutrition as a community health initiative on campus. Learn more about the program [here](#).

Her thesis was titled, "What Do Future Nutrition Professionals Think About WIC Jobs? A Study of Career Perceptions."



SAM ALLEN

Sam just completed her thesis, titled "Knowledge and Perception of Human Milk Donation Among Pregnant and Lactating Women in Rochester, NY and Near HMBANA Milk Banks."

She currently works at the Mother's Milk lab at Strong, is rotating in pediatrics at Golisano Children's Hospital and wants to work in pediatrics.

Sam is also part of the NYS AHEC Scholars program.



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2025 MEDALLION AWARD WINNER, SUDHA RAJ

Growing up in India, Sudha Raj's childhood dream was to become a physician. But there was one problem: She didn't like the sight of blood.

But thanks to the influence of her parents and a friendly neighbor, Raj discovered a different way to help people by focusing her career on nutrition science and dietetics. As she was about to enter college, Madras University in India introduced a new degree in nutrition science and dietetics. So, Raj received her bachelor's degree from Madras and her master's degree in foods, nutrition and dietetics from Bombay University (now the University of Mumbai).

At that point, Raj wasn't planning on pursuing a doctoral degree, but she received a letter from Syracuse asking if she would consider becoming a graduate teaching assistant for the food science course and enrolling as a doctoral student in the Nutrition Science Ph.D. program. She says she "jumped at the opportunity," and it was a decision that ultimately altered her career trajectory. She moved to Syracuse in 1981 to enroll at Syracuse University, and while she has never left Syracuse, she has made an enormous impact around the globe.



Left: Deanne Brandstetter, AND President
Right: Dr. Sudha Raj

Raj's influence within the Academy continued to grow, and she has served as newsletter editor; chair of the Vegetarian Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group; chair of the Vegetarian Nutrition Evidence Analysis Group; committee member for the development of the Scope of Practice for Dietitians in Integrative and Functional Medicine; and a member of the Professional Development Committee for the Global Member Interest Group. Currently, she is chair of the Membership Committee for the Academy's Global Member Interest Groups. Last year, Raj received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Dietitians in Integrative and Functional Medicine (DIFM) dietetic practice group.

To recognize Raj's groundbreaking contributions to the field of nutrition and dietetics, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Board of Directors selected Raj as a recipient of the 2025 Medallion Award that was presented at an Honors Breakfast Oct. 12 during the Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo in Nashville, Tenn.

While she has been thrilled to see how her work is being applied across the world, Raj says she is most proud that she has been able to incorporate her roles with the Academy into her teaching. (continued on the next page...)



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2025 MEDALLION AWARD WINNER CONT...

She is now in her second stint as Director of the Graduate Program in the Department of Nutrition and says she still gets as excited about teaching the introductory Nutrition in Health class to freshmen as she did when she started more than 30 years ago.

"The projects that I have picked (outside of Syracuse) have been writing and research projects that I have been very passionate about and something that would be of value to me in my teaching, and that's how my work has expanded and gone in different directions," Raj says. "I don't want to ever lose sight of my primary objective, which has always been to teach and to mentor."

Original article written by: Matt Michael, Communications Manager, Falk College, Syracuse University

Modified by: Nikki Beckwith, Director of M.A. in Nutrition Science, Falk College, Syracuse University

NYSAND AWARDS APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN!

NYSAND is excited to announce award applications are now open! The deadline for submission is March 1st. You can view all the awards, their requirements and apply [here](#).

New this year is a quick overview of award requirements and prizes for each award. We want applicants to be successful, please double check you qualify for the award before completing the application processes. It can be found on the awards web page.

Self nomination is encouraged. If you do nominate someone please ensure they complete the award application.

NYSAND is excited to celebrate and honor the amazing work our members do!

All NYSAND Awards and NYSAND selected AND Awards will be presented at the NYSAND Annual Meeting & Expo!

If you have any questions regarding the awards please email info@eatrightny.org



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CENTRAL REGION MEMBERS & SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TEAM UP TO PROVIDE NUTRITION EDUCATION FOR CAREGIVERS

When David's Refuge reached out to the Central Region Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (CRAND) members to lead three 45-minute nutrition-focused informational breakout sessions at their annual Caregiver Summit and Wellness Retreat, the response was an easy yes. Dietitians Nikki Beckwith and Nancy Rindfuss, and Syracuse University nutrition graduate students, Sarah Harper and Grace Novak, led the preparation and 45-minute breakout sessions. CRAND members and the director of Wellness at David's Refuge, Rory Lawrence contributed to the development of the program. As students and members embarked on the planning process for this event, the mission of David's Refuge was at the forefront of their minds. The mission of David's Refuge encompasses a spirit of God's love, grace, intentional care, and support for parents, guardians, and caregivers of children with life-threatening medical conditions or special needs (David's Refuge, 2026). The Caregiver Summit and Wellness Retreat proceeded on October 2, 2025, at the Syracuse Downtown Marriott. The title of the nutrition presentation was "Back to Basics – Building Better Nutrition for Everyday Balance". It was geared toward caretakers, with nutrition information focusing on both their own personal nutritional needs and on their role of providing nutrition to their children/family. The event also featured a local vendor fair where local companies featured their products and services. CRAND provided handouts on healthy eating for the family, fruit squishes, and free raffles, funded through a NYSAND grant.

A literature review was conducted by the graduate students investigating the nutritional needs of parents with children who have disabilities and the unique challenges they may face. Using this research, the graduate students developed a pre-assessment survey that acted as a needs assessment, which allowed for an analysis of what the caregivers needed in the nutrition education sessions. The final survey consisted of 12 questions with some being opened-ended, some multiple choice, and some yes/no. Most of the questions asked about the parent/caregiver themselves, but a few asked about their family. Notable findings include feelings of stress over planning and preparing meals, being busy with little time to focus on themselves, and struggling with providing meals that appeal to all family members. Based on these findings, the main focus of the presentation was meal planning, meals that suited everybody's needs, helpful resources, and basic nutrition for wellness. To support the presentation, links to sheet pan dinners, skillet dinners, and additional meal ideas were provided. Lastly, there was a Q&A at the end of the breakout session to allow for open discussion.

After the Caregiver Summit, the nutrition graduate students developed a post-assessment survey to evaluate the presentation's effectiveness and to receive feedback. (continued on the next page...)



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NUTRITION EDUCATION FOR CAREGIVERS CONT...

Some suggested additions included advice on how to be consistent when life is hectic, easy ways to eat healthier, and no-cook low prep meal options. In total, there were 110 caregivers that attended the summit, and 87% said they had a decrease in stress levels while at the event. In addition, 93% reported learning new strategies they can use as a caregiver, 96% said the sessions were beneficial to their mental health, and 100% said they would recommend the summit to others. Overall, the attendees of the summit were satisfied with the education sessions and felt they had a beneficial experience. It was a pleasure for Syracuse University students and members to work with David's Refuge, and the program was a great success.

Article written by: Grace Novak and Sarah Harper, Syracuse University graduate students

Reference: David's Refuge. (2026).

GLRAND COOK ALONG WEBINAR

In September 2025, GLRAND hosted a virtual cook-along event, "The New Mediterranean Table: Tradition-Inspired Eating for a Modern Life", as a fundraiser for the Nancy DeMuth Ruhle Scholarship. Nearly 30 people registered for the Zoom event and over \$500 was raised to support the scholarship for local dietetic students. The cook-along featured Robert Stabler, RDN demonstrating two recipes- Spanish Chickpea Stew and Lebanese Fattoush Salad. Many of the participants prepared their recipes at home alongside chef Robert. In addition, Trisha Shea, RDN presented practical strategies to incorporate core Mediterranean principles into our current lifestyle.

GLRAND greatly appreciates our presenters generously donating their time and expertise enabling participants to earn CPEUs and 100% of the program registration fees went directly to the scholarship fund.

*Pictured: Robert Stabler
demonstrating a recipe*



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GLRAND FALL NETWORKING EVENT

Greg's U-Pick Farm was the ideal setting for GLRAND's fall networking event on a warm and sunny day in October. Over 30 participants had the opportunity to connect with other nutrition professionals and to engage with local students from University of Buffalo, SUNY Buffalo State University, D'Youville University and Rochester Institute of Technology.

Trisa Shea, MS, RDN, CDN, GLRAND Regional Chairperson shared ways to get involved with the regional committee. Katie Brown, MS, RDN, CDN, NYSAND Immediate Past President provided an update on issues impacting the nutrition profession on the state level.

In addition to networking, other activities included:

- Raffle of 10 donated gift baskets, which raised \$80 from ticket sales for the Nancy DeMuth Ruhle scholarship fund
- U-pick flowers, vegetables or pumpkins in the fields at Greg's U-Pick
- Relaxing hayride around the farm

A fun and engaging event to kick off the 2025-2026 programming year, while enjoying local apple cider and fresh donuts!



Top Left: Katie Brown

Bottom Left: Buffalo State students

Top Right: University at Buffalo students

Bottom Right: D'Youville students



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GLRAND HOLIDAY GATHERING



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SAVE THE DATE: VIRTUAL QUALITY SYMPOSIUM

Elevating Nutrition and Dietetics Practice through Data Collection and Quality Improvement

Organized by the Quality Management Committee and the Research Dietetics Practice Group

This year's symposium will examine strategies for implementing and sustaining quality and process improvement initiatives.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM](#)

RESEARCH UPDATES

[NUTRITION SUPPORT INTERVENTIONS IN ADULTS WITH HEMATOLOGIC MALIGNANCIES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND META-ANALYSIS](#)

[BREASTFEEDING REGISTRY STUDY FINDS INFANT NUTRITION DIAGNOSES IMPROVE WITH CARE FROM RDN](#)

[NEW STUDY EXAMINES PLAN-DO-STUDY-ACT FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING GESTATIONAL DIABETES](#)

NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH 2026

This year's theme is "**Discover the Power of Nutrition.**"

Nutrition has the power to help individuals and communities thrive. Discover how food and beverage choices can help power your day. Learn tips for accessing healthy foods in your area. And build healthy habits into your day to help you feel great now and in the future.

[VIEW CAMPAIGN RESOURCES](#)



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There are several important action alerts available for you to take action on currently.
Take Action Now!

NEED TO UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO?

To update with AND:

Go to eatrightPRO.org
Login In to Academy account
Go to Profile/Account Settings
Update your email and save.

To update with CDR:

Go to CDRnet.org
Login
Update contact/mail in profile.

MEMBER UPDATES

A SEAT AT EVERY TABLE MEMBER TOOLKIT

MISSION IN MOTION: FISCAL Q2 HIGHLIGHTS

ACADEMY OFFERS SINGLE SIGN-ON ACCESS TO JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS



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CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

NYSAND is looking for Contributors for the next newsletter. It's an excellent opportunity to keep up with our profession and collaborate with other leadership volunteers!

Interested in contributing to NYSAND newsletters? Members should contact Emily Holdorf (eholdorfRD@gmail.com) for more info.



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