

## Meet The Member

**BRENDA JOHNSON**  
FLOATING MANAGER

**EASTERN CARVER  
COUNTY SCHOOLS**

*"My motto has always been 'Make it Work!' When situations arise, I find a way to make things work as a team and do my best not to let struggles take over"*



**How did you first get involved with MSNA, and in what ways has being a member contributed to your career growth?**

*I've been working for Eastern Carver County Schools (ECCS) since 2008 and was introduced to MSNA when I was first hired. Attending the annual conference and taking classes has helped me learn about regulations, food safety, and kitchen skills.*

**As a floating kitchen manager, how do you maintain consistency and adapt to each new situation?**

*I use the skills and knowledge I have gained over the years to help in different kitchens and situations. Having knowledge of cooking procedures, ingredients, and district recipes helps, as well as being able to interact well with staff and other district managers.*

**What do you enjoy most about your current position, and what motivates you to work in school nutrition?**

*My favorite part of my new position is being able to meet the staff and learn about each kitchen. It is also fun to be able to work with kids of every age. I like seeing how each level of school sets up and runs their kitchen differently from elementary, middle school, and high school.*

*My motivation for working in the district is how we take care of and feed the kids. Being efficient and providing quality, healthy meals is why we do what we do.*

**What do you think people often overlook about school nutrition that they should understand better?**

*I think people outside of nutrition don't understand how much time and training we do to make sure kids are fed well...and that we truly care about them.*

**You are recognized for your calm demeanor and "yes" attitude. How do these traits help you succeed in your role?**

*I tend to always try to see the best in people and situations. People and staff react better and are better able to get through challenges when they are in a positive environment. My motto has always been "Make it Work"...When situations arise, I find a way to make things work as a team and do my best to not let struggles take over. I also try to keep an open mind when new ideas or changes take place.*

**How have you been mentored throughout your school nutrition career, and have you had the opportunity to mentor others along the way?**

*My mentors through the years have been my managers, assistant managers, the Chaska High School Directors, and all district office personnel. I also give credit to other staff and managers throughout the district who have always been there for me. I don't know if I'm a mentor, but training, guiding, and encouraging staff is one of the things that I truly enjoy. I like to support and encourage staff as they learn and believe that every employee has the potential to be amazing.*

**What's the most popular meal on your lunch menu? Do you have a personal favorite, and why?**

*The most popular meals (in my opinion) in ECCS are walking tacos and orange chicken. At the high schools, we have orange chicken on two lines because of its popularity. My favorite meal is the Sambusas, they are delicious, and I like that they are locally made.*

**How do you help the district chef with food demonstrations? And how do students typically respond when trying new foods you introduce?**

*Working with our district chef has been awesome! I have learned new things and been involved in food service in different ways. I have had the opportunity to help with our all-staff breakfast, grill-outs, and catering events. I helped Chef Lucas teach students knife skills and how to make Pico de Gallo. I helped with their international week, where we cooked a meal highlighting a different culture each day.*

*Kids do tend to be hesitant when it comes to new foods, although it does depend on the food and the situation. We have done kids' choice days at the elementary schools; these are days when the kids are able to "choose" a meal. This month they chose a sushi roll bowl and it went very well!*

*- Brenda Johnson, Floating Manager Eastern Carver County Schools*

***"Brenda's growth journey is remarkable. Her positive attitude and calm approach ensure students receive the nutrition experience they appreciate. With her calm demeanor and unwavering 'yes' attitude, Brenda excels at troubleshooting any challenge. She consistently delivers the positive experience all students deserve, making her a vital part of the school nutrition team."***

*-Spencer Fischer, MSNA Member Services & Awards Chair*