



In the Spotlight! ✨ Learn About Andrew

Welcome to MSNA's newest member spotlight! We're featuring Andrew Lehrke, Kitchen Manager at Columbia Heights Public Schools. [Learn about Andrew and what he loves about his role.](#)

Meet the Member

ANDREW LEHRKE
KITCHEN MANAGER
COLUMBIA HEIGHTS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"What motivates me and the team is to have happy customers, the students!"

MSNA Executive Director Update



Joy DesMarais-Lanz

Beginning April 15, Joy DesMarais-Lanz will serve as Executive Director of MSNA upon her new role with Fusion Learning Partners. The change comes following Margaret Winchell's departure from Fusion after a lengthy tenure and dedicated service to MSNA since 2021.

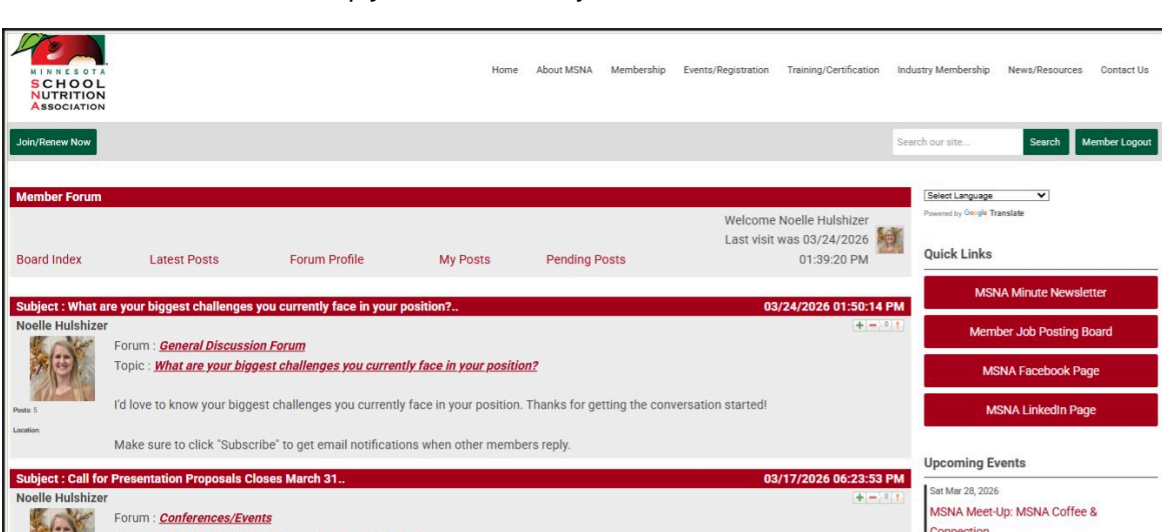
Joy will lead the established MSNA team from Fusion, comprised of Ian Jordan, Events Manager; Noelle Hulshizer, Marketing and Communications Manager; and Olivia Hui-Andersen, Member Services & Event Coordinator.

Joy is a seasoned leader with more than 15 years of relevant experience in serving as Executive Director, Senior Account Executive, and Chief Operating Officer within association management companies. Joy's people-centered leadership, facilitative approach to decision making, and her systems-level thinking make her an ideal leader for the MSNA organization. Stay tuned for Joy's welcome in our April newsletter.

🔥 Your New Member Forum Is Live: Connect, Share, & Solve Together

The [MSNA Member Forum](#) is officially open, and it's built for you! This is your space to ask questions, share ideas, and connect with peers who understand the real challenges of school nutrition. Getting started is simple: [log in](#), choose a forum category, and click "New Topic" to start a conversation.

See a discussion you want to follow? Favorite it for quick access later or subscribe to get email alerts when others reply. Click below to join the conversation.



Make Your First Post on the Forum

ANNUAL CONFERENCE NEWS

Inspire Professionals & Help Shape the Future The Call for Presentation Proposals Closes March 31



Don't miss your chance to present at the 2026 Annual Conference! MSNA is accepting proposals for 60-minute educational sessions on a diversity of topics and perspectives. We're talking scratch cooking, procurement, commodities, leadership, AI, menu planning, and much more.

Submitters are strongly encouraged to review the [list of preferred topics](#), curated from 2025 survey feedback. Have a great session idea? [Submit your proposal](#) by **March 31**.

Next in the MSNA Webinar Series...



Coffee & Connection March 28, 8:00 - 9:00 AM

Join us this Saturday for a relaxed, virtual morning meet-up designed especially for school nutrition professionals - a welcoming space to connect, share ideas, and start the weekend inspired.

Grab your coffee and join fellow frontline staff, managers, directors, and industry partners for an open, supportive virtual conversation. This is your space to ask questions, share challenges, and connect with others who truly understand the work you do every day.

This is a live-only virtual event - no CEUs, no recording, no pressure - just real conversation and support. Can't wait to see you there!

Sign Up for Saturday's Meet-Up

Spice Class Series April 8 & 22, 2:00 - 3:00 PM

Discover how to create bold, satisfying flavors in school meals without relying on salt. We're thrilled to host two virtual spice classes led by Holly Kolkman of Karlsburger on April 8 and 22 from 2:00 - 3:00 PM.

To help bring these ideas to life, spice kits, including three (3) 18-oz. spice blends are available to purchase for \$40 and ship directly to your district or home. These blends are ready-to-use alternatives discussed in Workshop 2.

The price is free for members and \$10.00 for non-members. Teams are encouraged to register together! The district registration option allows one purchaser to order a spice kit and register multiple team members.

See What Spices Can Do

Show Legislators What School Meals Really Look Like Day at the Capitol | April 13, 1:30 - 4:30 PM



It's crucial we tell legislators why school meals are important. Join MSNA members Monday, April 13 at the Minnesota State Capitol to tell our lawmakers why school meals are not optional, but essential.

Even if you can't attend, your outreach still matters. A direct invitation from a constituent carries weight! Plus, it's easy! Check out the [info sheet](#) for a quick message you can copy and paste and how to easily find your legislators.

The event fee has been reduced from \$30 to \$10 to ensure all members have the opportunity to attend this important event. Thank you to Capitol Hill Associates for supporting the event.

Be Seen at the Capitol



Member in the News



March 3

MSNA Secretary/Treasurer and Manager of Nutrition Services for Brooklyn Center Community Schools, Jess Peña, visited WCCO & CBS News Minnesota to highlight the importance of school breakfast during National School Breakfast Week.

[Watch the segment](#)



March 8-10

Darcy Stueber, MSNA Public Policy Chair and Mankato Area Public Schools Director of Nutrition Services, and Brianna Caverzagie, Nutrition Services Specialist at White Bear Lake Area Schools attended the 2026 School Nutrition Association Executive Leadership Program, held in partnership with the Georgetown McDonough School of Business, prior to the start of SNA's Legislative Action Conference (LAC).



Maria Amerman, Nutrition Services Supervisor at Roseville Area Schools was also honored with a School Nutrition Foundation scholarship to attend LAC.

[View on Facebook](#)

Upcoming Events 17

March 28: MSNA Coffee & Connection Saturday Morning Meet-Up | Virtual

April 13: MSNA's Day at the Capitol | Minnesota State Capitol

April 23-25: SNA's National Leadership Conference (NLC) | Kansas City, MO

[See the Full Events Calendar Here](#)

THANK YOU, MSNA SUPPORTERS

COMMUNITY SERVICE SPONSORS

DAY AT THE CAPITOL SPONSOR

ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPONSORS

SNIP CONFERENCE SPONSOR

Support MSNA events. Sponsorships are available to industry members.

If you have any questions, please contact MSNA at 320-251-2344 or MSNA@fusionLP.org.

Minnesota School Nutrition Association

1400 Van Buren St NE, #200-239
Minneapolis, MN 55413
Phone: 320-251-2344

MSNA@FusionLP.org

Connect with Us:

Facebook

LinkedIn