

Congratulations to Beth Thorson, MS, RD Winner of the SNS DPG Award of Excellence

Recipient of the American Dietetic Association School Nutrition Services Dietetic Practice Group 2009 Award of Excellence was recognized recently at the Food and Nutrition Conference held in Denver, Colorado. Beth Thorson, MS, RD, CTSBS, was presented an engraved pewter tray at the annual dinner by Dr. Mary Kay Meyer, president of the SNS DPG. This award honors a member who has demonstrated excellence in leadership, management, and innovation.



A graduate of the University of Nebraska, Lincoln in 1977 with a Master of Science in Foods and Nutrition, Ms. Thorson is the Child Nutrition Program Director for the Leander Independent School District in Leander, Texas.

Affiliated with the Leander Independent School district since 1996, Ms. Thorson has focused a great deal of her time in promoting nutrition to the students and the district as a whole. The school district has seen significant growth while sensibly standardizing the child nutrition program.

Using the continuous improvement model, Ms. Thorson developed and implemented broad program objectives and operating policies and procedures for food service operations on 31 campuses (k-12 with 28,400 enrollment). She was responsible for the selection and training for 200 employees, budget preparation and management of over \$10,000,000 in operations, and authorization of food, supply and equipment purchases. Additionally, she expanded menu choices and marketing options at all levels with emphasis on customer input.

Among Ms. Thorson's key accomplishments are:

- * increasing school lunch participation by 15%
- * instituting 5 entrée choices at elementary schools; expanding sides and ala carte choices
- * implementing NuMenus (Nutrient Standard Menu Planning)
- * implementing campus-based production record modification and printing
- * managing growth of district from approximately 10,000 students in 1996 to 13, 200 students in 2000 to current enrollment