

# MDA Newsletter September/ October 2009



## *New Year—New Challenges*

### ***PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE***

Dear MDA Members,

I am excited to be your leader, as we start another wonderful year with the Miami Dietetic Association! I want to welcome back returning members and welcome new members aboard. I hope you are ready for an informative, educational, fun-filled year with the MDA! We have some great things planned for this upcoming year.

I have the pleasure to be working with a group of hard-working and dedicated nutrition professionals on our MDA Board this year. We all are working hard to provide you what you want. There are several goals that we are diligently working on this year. First and foremost, we are working on the total redesign of our website. I am very excited about this! When this is finished, it will have a younger, fresher look, be more informative, more user-friendly and easier to navigate. Keep your eyes open for the unveiling- coming soon!

I also want to focus on the future leaders of our profession. For the past couple of years, the MDA has established a Mentorship Program with the dietetic students of Florida International University. I want to work to strengthen this program, thus strengthening the future of our profession. Mentoring the young, up-and-coming dietetics professionals is very essential. Mentoring can be very rewarding for both the mentors and mentees. It is our duty, as seasoned dietetics and nutrition professionals in our community, to pass on our knowledge and expertise to the next generation. I have students on the MDA Board as well, serving as the liaison between the student body and our professional organization. This allows them to gain valuable experience and knowledge, seeing first hand how we can make a difference in the community. It also helps to increase student membership in the MDA, and groom future MDA Board members and leaders!

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Another important goal I have is to highlight the RD's and nutrition professionals right here in our community. There are so many nutrition professionals, working in so many facets, and we need to recognize this. We do a lot to contribute to the health and well-being of the community and residents within Miami-Dade County. Let us know what **you** have been doing- and let yourself shine!

With the ever-changing economy and challenges that we face today, we need to stick together as a profession and support each other. It is important to belong to a professional organization like the Miami Dietetic Association. This affords us the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge, network and form lasting professional and personal relationships. Get involved- it will make a difference. I look forward to meeting all of you at our future meetings and events this year. Welcome everyone!

Sincerely,

Dawn Stewart, MBA, RD, LD  
 President, Miami Dietetic Association  
 Greater Miami Dietitian, 2009

### ***PRESIDENT-ELECT'S MESSAGE***

Dear MDA Members,

It is my pleasure to serve as the Miami Dietetic Association's President Elect for the 2009 - 2010 year. I have been a part of the board for quite some time and I am aware of the impact that our local association has on the field of nutrition. I welcome back prior members, welcome new members and I encourage everyone to promote the association to others in the field so they too can be a part of this network of nutrition professionals.

My goal is to serve you by offering a variety of lectures that provide updates on current trends in our field, new findings based on scientific literature and presentations on emerging issues. Su-Nui Escobar, MS, RD, LD/N our Member-at-Large, and I have been diligently organizing a variety of meetings for the upcoming year. We were privileged to have had Melissa Marra, PhD, RD, LD/N for our first meeting where she delivered a great presentation on "Vitamin D: Bones and Beyond". We are working on other meetings including a meeting in October that will focus on Renal Nutrition and our November meeting, which will address "Wellness and the Built Environment".

As we embark on another year, let's not forget that we have to make an indelible mark on our community. We are the nutrition professionals and one of our goals as an organization is to positively influence the health of our community. I therefore encourage each of you to represent MDA by participating in various events that promotes health in our community. The association has participated in a variety of local events such as "Sister to Sister - The Women's Heart Health Foundation" annual health fair and more. The association has an obligation to log and document all community activities, it is therefore important that everyone reports their activities so that each activity can be accounted for officially.

Together we can make a difference! I look forward to meeting each of you and I welcome any suggestions that you may have regarding future meeting topics and ways to expand and improve the association.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Wade, MPH, RD, LD/N  
President Elect, 2009 -2010  
Miami Dietetic Association

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## **FIU-MDA MENTORSHIP PROGRAM**

### ***Hello MDA Members!***

I am reaching out to all of you, on behalf of the Miami Dietetic Association. Since it was introduced two years ago, we have diligently been working on expanding and improving our Mentorship Program. The Mentorship Program is designed for the Dietetic Students at FIU.

The purpose of the program is to provide students with an exceptional opportunity to network with RD's in the field while acquiring practical information about actually working in different areas of the field of dietetics. Think of how valuable this experience would have been for you as students! This is one way of you contributing to this endeavor! All you have to do is meet with your mentees as often as is possible for you, introduce them to your workplace, orient them as to how you spend your day, etc.

We understand that we all lead busy lives. However this program does not call for much time commitment- just an interest in passing some of your valuable knowledge on to the next generation of worthy RD's. This is meant to be casual, where students and registered dietitians could be in contact by email, telephone and if possible in person. These students will truly appreciate your support and time. Without you as mentors, the students would not be able to explore this wonderful and rewarding experience.

Another way for Registered Dietitians to help our dietetic students is by writing a column in the FIU Student Dietetic Association (SDA) monthly newsletter. The SDA is looking for any RD who would be interested in writing a column for the November and/or December newsletter. This is a great way for dietetic students to learn more about the different fields within our profession and also to learn more about the Miami Dietetic Association.

I sincerely urge all of you to participate and apply. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, or contributing to the SDA Newsletter, please email me, at [drtherd@bellsouth.net](mailto:drtherd@bellsouth.net). Whatever way you contribute, it will make a difference in the lives of students. We will match the Mentors with the Mentees and keep you informed! I look forward to hearing from all of you! This will be a wonderful and enlightening experience for both mentors and mentees alike.

Dawn Stewart, MBA, RD, LD  
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## *Mentorship Program: Student Letter*

Miami, Florida  
September, 2009

As the new school year 2009-2010 is starting, I want to extend my gratitude to the Miami Dietetics Association (MDA), the Student Dietetic Association (SDA), Professor Tania Rivera, MS, RD, LD/N and Mirta Rios RD, CSP.

Through both organizations, I had the opportunity to participate in the Mentorship Program, which provides students with an exceptional opportunity to network with Registered Dietitians. I was matched to work with Mirta Rios RD, CSP, who works at Jackson Memorial Hospital in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU).

During interviews with my mentor, I realized how mentoring is a very valuable way for sharing knowledge and expertise between experienced and apprentice professionals. The Mentorship Program has the capacity to stimulate passion, commitment, and opens new directions and opportunities for us future dietitians.

I learned many lessons during the mentorship program that will definitely help me when I start working as a professional. Now, I feel more confident about the role a Dietitian plays in a Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. I can recognize how important working is in a team and how valuable is all the knowledge that we acquire in all of our classes. Another wonderful experience that I had during the mentorship program was when I was able to meet not only other dietitians, but also doctors, nurses, speech pathologists and social workers working at different units in the hospital. My mentor gave me the opportunity to interact with them, and they were very helpful by giving me information about the type of jobs they perform in the PICU at Jackson Memorial Hospital.

I would like to give thanks to Mirta Rios and Tania Rivera for all their enthusiasm, devotion and motivation in moving the profession of dietetics forward by allowing dietetics students to have the opportunity to interact face to face with dietetics professionals.

Thank you MDA and SDA for your continuing support and guidance in allowing the students to have such an experience. I think all of you play a valuable role in the future of our profession. It is through positive effort that people like you can make a difference in our field.

Sincerely,

Arianna Rivero

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Student of Dietetics and Nutrition/Didactic Program

Florida International University

## **Organic Food: Nourishing the Land, Animals & People**



Organic foods are becoming more and more popular recently, and there is a variety of organic foods available. Is organic food really better for you than conventional food? First of all, let us define each. The USDA National Organic Program defines organic food as food that is produced by farmers who emphasize the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality for future generations. In organic farming there are no antibiotics, growth hormones, pesticides, fertilizers with synthetic ingredients, bioengineering or radiation used. Conventional methods of food production and farming utilize all of the methods stated above. Organic farming is more beneficial across a wide range of environmental aspects. This applies to biodiversity and landscape, soil, water, climate and air, and also to energy consumption. Organic farming improves soil fertility and productivity.

Research has shown that fruits and vegetables in the United States contain less vitamins and minerals compared to 50 or 60 years ago. Some research suggests that produce that is grown conventionally has significantly less vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, and higher levels of pesticide residue, compared to organic produce. Preliminary evidence and research also suggests that organic food may provide greater health benefits than conventional foods.

The most current research is conclusive that organic fruits and vegetables contain higher amounts of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Why is this? Conventional produce is grown on very large scales, to yield high quantities of fruits and vegetables. Big companies want to produce more goods, thus increasing sales and revenue. Conventional methods of farming yield produce with higher nitrogen content, and higher sugar and moisture content. In turn, this causes a diluted nutrient content, including Vitamin C. This can result in decreased bioavailability of nutrients, increased insulin resistance and diabetes in humans.

Aside from research, organic foods almost always cost more than conventional foods. This might very well be a weighing factor in what we will buy at the grocery store. If one is unable to afford organic fruits and vegetables, it is definitely healthier to buy conventional fruits and vegetables than none at all. Possibly, try one or two organic fruits and/or vegetables a week, slowly introducing them in to the diet. Incorporating organic products in to our diet is a matter of personal choice and taste. In short: eating a variety of fruits, vegetables and other foods- organic or conventional- is very important to our overall health, and should be incorporated in to our daily dietary routine.

## Wellness Recipe

### SWEET POTATOES WITH WARM BLACK BEAN SALAD

#### Ingredients:

- 4 medium [sweet](#) potatoes
- 1 15-ounce can black [beans](#) rinsed
- 2 medium tomatoes, diced
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro



#### Directions

Prick sweet potatoes with a fork in several places. Microwave on High until tender all the way to the center, 12 to 15 minutes. (Alternatively, place in a baking dish and bake at 425 degrees F until tender all the way to the center, about 1 hour.)

Meanwhile, in a medium microwaveable bowl, combine beans, tomatoes, oil, cumin, coriander and salt; microwave on High until just heated through, 2 to 3 minutes. (Alternatively, heat in a small saucepan over medium heat.)

When just cool enough to handle, slash each sweet potato lengthwise, press open to make a well in the center and spoon the bean mixture into the well. Top each with a dollop of sour cream and a sprinkle of cilantro.