

School Nutrition Association's 45th Legislative Action Conference – Recap

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This year there were 22 attendees from Arizona at the SNA's 45th Legislative Action Conference in Washington, D.C. LAC is always held in Washington, D.C. usually in March. This year the conference was April 2-4th, 2017. It was an added treat that the cherry blossoms were still in bloom!

The LAC is a conference that brings school nutrition professionals from across the United States to advocate on behalf of the children they serve each day. This year the attendees listened to Washington insiders who gave insight to the current congressional climate, USDA gave their annual updates and a group of students who gave us candid feedback on what they want. We also had the privilege of listening to the keynote speaker who had written several books on past presidents and were able to heed his advice for how to talk with our legislators.

Arizona has had a successful track record obtaining congressional visits with our legislators. This year our group was able to personally meet with Representatives Grijalva, Gallego and Biggs. The other group visits were with our legislator's congressional aides. It is important to always remember the work doesn't stop in Washington, it is important that while we are in Arizona we continue to educate and visit with our Legislators. While it is possible that it is impossible to attend a LAC in Washington, it is always possible to schedule a visit, go to a Town Hall or invite your legislator to visit you at your district.

At the LAC, SNA has added an awards program called Celebration of School Heroes. This year the Arizona attendees had the honor to celebrate this amazing night with one of our very own Hero's, David Schwake! Honoring David and all the amazing things he does outside of his "normal" job as the Director of Food Series for Litchfield Elementary School District was truly a humbling experience; he is a true hero for the community he serves.

As we move forward this year with the legislative climate, I urge you and challenge you to contact your legislator, attend a Town Hall and invite them to have lunch in your district. Go to the SNA webpage on advocacy and download some of the materials from LAC. Visit the SNA Legislation and Policy page on their website: <https://schoolnutrition.org/legislation/>. You can also download the position paper and infographic at: <https://schoolnutrition.org/legislation-policy/action-center/2017-position-paper/>.

If at any time you need help locating your legislators please don't hesitate to contact me at cweekly@qcusd.org!