

## **Nourishing Change: Celebrating 50 years in Nutrition Education**

Delving into the rich tapestry of experiences nearly five decades in the life of Carol Miller, whose professional journey has been driven by a passion for nutrition education. Her commendable journey with nutrition began as a high school student growing up in Syracuse, New York where she spent summers working for the New York State Fair in the Art & Home Center, the hub of culinary, art and craft exhibitions and discovered the expansive topic of nutrition and agriculture. She was introduced to Cornell's Departments of Nutrition and Cooperative Extension at this young age, and she immediately decided to devote her career to nutrition.

Carol's college education path began at Villa Maria College (now Gannon University) in Erie, Pennsylvania followed by a dietetic internship at St. Luke's Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio. Her professional career started as a Clinical Dietitian working at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. While working full-time she obtained a master's degree in education from The Johns Hopkins University in 1974. She began looking for professional organizations that would emphasize both nutrition and education. She had been an active member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics beginning in her college days and discovered the Society of Nutrition Education and Behavior as her career continued.

Working as the first outpatient dietitian in a community hospital setting, her responsibilities included talking to clients about their dietary intake and how they could make changes or modifications to their diet and lifestyle. She was instrumental in developing small group classes that were interactive and included information on food preparation and food tastings.

Adding more to her work experience, for over 20 years, Carol worked for the Maryland Department of Health as a Chronic Disease Nutrition Consultant and also serving as the Maryland Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Coordinator. In addition, she worked first as a Nutrition Consultant and then as the Program Coordinator for the Maryland CDC Obesity Prevention Grant. For the last 10 years of her professional career, she served as the Training Coordinator for the SNAP-Ed program at the University of Maryland. There she was responsible for coordinating all training for new hires, project leaders, educators, and statewide partners. She retired in September 2019.

Sharing her earliest memories of SNEB, Carol recalls finding a copy of the SNEB journal and refers to that moment as opening her eyes to a new world of nutrition and education. The focus of the journal on nutrition education was what she was looking for and inspired her to put nutrition and education together in a way that could guide clients on how to make behavior changes for a healthy lifestyle. Throughout her career, Carol has referred to the Journal for inspiration in ways to interactively educate others about the importance of nutrition. Each edition provided examples of educational tools for various demographic audiences. She considers herself fortunate to be able to attend an SNEB annual meeting starting early in her career where she was able to meet students and faculty members in the area of public health nutrition and eventually it became a home for her. Since the early 2000s, she has been reviewing abstracts for posters and oral presentations for the annual conference and reviewing educational materials for the journal.

Being involved with SNEB, she feels she has had a great experience. “SNEB provides great opportunities to network and meet people at the general conference. At the annual meeting, despite the number of attendees, you always have the time to network and share your experiences”, she said. She recalls making friends during the meeting who she has continued to reach out to throughout her career and is still in contact with them.

When asked what advice she would give to students and early career professionals, she said, “Getting involved in SNEB and serving this type of organizations is always beneficial as you never know where your career will take you and how the volunteer experiences and collaborations might help you in your future.” She never anticipated that work-career relationships could turn into good friendships meant to last for 50 years. In addition, she recommended “not being confined to one small area because you don't know what kind of influence you're going to have on other health professionals. Getting the opportunity to work with different professional organizations and being invited to give talks and presentations has been a wonderful professional experience.” She gives credit to SNEB for the opportunity to develop and grow personally as well as professionally.

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