SPECIAL RECOGNITION-

Wayne County Schools were recently represented on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. by two valuable employees who have helped lead the charge for improved child nutrition. Wayne County Food Service Nutrition Director, Karen Gibson and District Supervisor/Menu Planner, Casey Holt were amongst fellow school food service professionals from four Kentucky school districts, who were chosen as “Food Service Rock Stars” to represent the state.

It was all part of a two-day gathering sponsored by The PEW Charitable Trusts organization who partnered with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation in the nation’s capital. The local school district is considered amongst ‘the best of the best’ in the state for offering appetizing and nutritious meals to students while meeting the new federal standards that schools across the country have been implementing the past three years.

Food service coordinators have a lot on their plates, so to speak, in meeting the demands of their customers, plus we are in the midst of change which makes things even harder. We are serving more fruits, vegetables and whole grains and less fat, sugar, and salt. A menu listed at our elementary schools for example is: BBQ chicken drumstick, tater roasters, wild rice, garden salad, whole grain cookie, pineapple, fresh fruit and daily milk options. The goal is to strengthen our students’ ability to make healthy food choices.

Wayne County’s food nutrition staff are passionate when it comes to combating childhood obesity, and improving student wellness, while providing extensive menu options to satisfy hunger. We applaud them for being on the front line of legislation and promotion of these worthy goals, along with fellow food service representatives from Bardstown Independent, Grayson County and Warren County Schools.

The PEW organization paid for their entire trip while they networked ideas from others from across the country. They compared notes on everything from new recipes, new kitchen equipment ideas such as vegetable roasters to grant opportunities, and free resources for salad bars. They also met representatives from the American Heart Association who have since then wrote a National story about Wayne County’s School Nutrition program which included the school garden.

They made the rounds to see Kentucky’s lawmakers to ask for support for the School Food Modernization Act, a bipartisan legislation that would expand schools’ access to modern kitchen equipment and infrastructure and strengthen workforce training

The USDA Child Nutrition Re-Authorization Act will be voted on this year by Congress. Approximately 90 percent of schools across the country participate in this $15 billion federal school meal program. Wayne County students significantly benefit as we continue to operate under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) whereby all students get to eat a free breakfast and lunch while at school.

Thank you ladies for your exceptional program and willingness to improve our options for children.