

ACTIVE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

TARA LANDRY BAYOU DISTRICT

What type of work setting/area of concentration did you specialize?

I am currently working in public health with the WIC program and have done so for the past 4 years. It was not an area that I thought I would work in upon completion of my internship. In fact I remember thinking that I would never want to work in public health. But I have to say that working with WIC has been a pleasure, although challenging at times. I truly love working with this population and find it rewarding.



What makes you an exceptional dietitian?

This is a hard question to answer because I consider myself equal to my peers who nominated me. I care greatly about my clients and try very hard to make a difference in their lives. Because I work with WIC, I feel that I have a greater ability to make a difference early on in my client's lives. Taking baby steps with each visit and conquering one problem at a time inspires most of my clients to make the changes they need to improve their health. A smile and a thank you from a client is what keeps me going. Progress is rewarding.

Who is the person who has inspired you the most?

I recently lost a subordinate to a better job with more money and benefits. I supervised her for a short period of time, about 2 years. Within those 2 years, I learned a lot from her as well as made a lifelong friend. She is a very spiritual person, putting great faith and trust in God. She has gone through many hardships in her life, but she always seems to come out smiling. Her incredible positive attitude is such an inspiration that it is contagious. When I am frustrated, angry, sad, etc., I think about how she would handle it. She is my biggest cheerleader.

Briefly describe a patient who has touched you.

I currently have a patient who is almost 4 years old and was diagnosed with brain cancer at the age of 2. He has undergone many treatments including chemotherapy and radiation therapy. His weight has fluctuated from below normal to way above normal resulting from long-term steroid treatment. He is a challenge to keep well nourished, but he has a strong family support. No matter what, he always has a smile on his face.

What is your favorite food/recipe?

I am embarrassed but, I must admit that my favorite food is chocolate. My favorite recipe is for Chocolate Decadence which is similar to a chocolate soufflé. Fortunately it is a recipe from Cooking Light magazine, so it is not all that bad. I enjoy trying new recipes from Cooking Light magazine on a regular basis.

What do you like best about being a dietitian?

The best thing about being a dietitian is that you get to be a teacher. It is great to teach people how to utilize their own resources and knowledge to make changes that can affect their quality of life. It is so rewarding when you have a client that realizes they are in the driver's seat. They can choose foods and lifestyle habits that can improve their health and quality of life.

What words of wisdom do you have for new dietitians?

New dietitians should never be afraid to ask questions. Just because you are a dietitian does not mean you automatically know everything in the nutrition world. No question is too stupid or trivial. A willingness to learn is the key to success. I learn something new everyday and when you do this, you have room to grow in your expertise and profession, no matter what area of practice you choose.