

# GCNFEATURES

## ONWARDS! A CELEBRATION OF SERVICE GENE WHITE, GCNF PRESIDENT

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Anniversaries are a very special time, and this year GCNF celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> year of service that started in 2006 when a young non-government organization started helping counties develop and operate nutrition based school feeding programs linked to local small farm production. We gratefully acknowledge the many individuals, governments, organizations and industries that have faithfully collaborated and worked in partnership with GCNF throughout this decade of service.

High on our gratitude list is the dedicated and visionary leadership of the GCNF Board of Directors. One of its board members, Ulla Holm, Global Director, Tetra Pak Food for Development Office, recently retired from Tetra Pak and



also from the GCNF Board where she served for 8 years with near perfect meeting attendance.

Ulla's service on the GCNF board, and her related work for Tetra Pak globally, illustrate the innovative ways in which public-private partnerships work successfully together to support school feeding for some of the world's

most deserving children. In many countries, especially in Africa and Asia, Ulla and her team have become trusted colleagues who understand and helped guide the early innovative concept of linking school feeding to local farm production. In this case, they helped local farmers

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**Next Issue of GCNFeatures**

The next issue of GCNFeatures will focus on **Food Safety**.

Please share your questions, challenges, successes, photos, etc. as soon as possible to [Janey@gcnf.org](mailto:Janey@gcnf.org).

See Page 4 for additional information.



The Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF) is proud to announce that Howard G. Buffett will be the 2016 recipient of the Gene White Lifetime Achievement Award for Child Nutrition. Mr. Buffett joins the ranks of previous award recipients and champi-

## 2016 GLOBAL CHILD NUTRITION FOUNDATION GALA

ons of child nutrition such as U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack; former U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah; Senators George McGovern and Bob Dole; former Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman; and former World Food Programme Executive Director Catherine Bertini.

Mr. Buffett is Chairman and CEO of the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, a private charitable foundation investing in global food security and conflict mitigation. He oversees a 1,500-acre family farm in

central Illinois and farms with his son in Nebraska. He oversees four foundation-operated research farms in Arizona, Illinois, Nebraska and South Africa totaling 18,500 acres.

Mr. Buffett currently serves on the Corporate Boards of Berkshire Hathaway, Inc., Lindsay Corporation, and The Coca-Cola Company. He has served on the boards of Archer Daniels Midland, Coca-Cola Enterprises, Inc., ConAgra Foods, Agro Tech Foods, and Sloan Implement. He is a member

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## DIRECTOR UPLOAD



Arlene Mitchell, GCNF Executive Director

Happy 2016!  
The year is off to a wonderful start for GCNF, and we hope that is going well for you, too. Much has happened since our last newsletter, and we see exciting things on the horizon as well.

The 2015 GCN Forum, held September 28 to October 2 on the island of Sal in Cabo Verde was a tremendous success, thanks in large part to the support of our partners—the Government of Cabo Verde (Ministry of Education and FICASE) hosted the Forum, and the World Food Programme's Centre of Excellence against Hunger and the Lula Institute in Brazil again contributed greatly by supporting participants and assisting with all aspects of planning and implementing the event. Over 250 participants from 43 countries attended and were able to see for themselves Cabo Verde's impressive

school system and school meal program.

Throughout the second half of 2015, GCNF undertook a strategic planning process, which involved structured interviews with some 48 stakeholders around the world working in one or more of the interrelated fields of school meals, nutrition, agriculture, local purchasing, etc. The interviewees included policy makers, donors, practitioners, advocates, researchers, and GCNF Board members. Each was asked to rate different strategic options in five categories on two levels: a) the importance of the topic in general, and b) the level of priority the topic should have for GCNF going forward. The five categories were:

- 1) Thematic focus (The strategic options in this category were food safety, local purchase/agricultural development, job and profit creation, nutrition, obesity prevention and control, and early childhood development)

2) Value added (objective broker, clearinghouse, database/network for expertise and talent, linking agricultural development to school meals and nutrition, and developing research questions)

3) Means of intervention (technical assistance; knowledge dissemination; policy, standards, and best practice development; and cross learning)

4) Services and products (the GCN Forum; capacity building, training, and certification; technical assistance provider; technical facilitation/matchmaker; and products such as apps, toolkits, and food or other products)

5) Geographic focus (Africa, South/Central Asia, Latin America, and "opportunistic")

The ratings were compiled into a report for the December 8 GCNF Board meeting and served as the basis for the Board members' discussion and decisions regarding priorities for GCNF going forward.

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*"Linking hunger and education is one of the strategies for battling hunger that works just about everywhere in the world [...]"*

*Howard Buffett*

### 2016 GCNF Gala Continued from Page 1

of the Commission on Presidential Debates and a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador Against Hunger on behalf of the World Food Programme. He has been honored over the years for his leadership and contributions to agriculture, conservation, journalism and philanthropy.

Mr. Buffett serves as an Auxiliary Deputy Sheriff and Under-sheriff in Macon County, Ill. He has traveled to more than 140 countries and authored eight books on conservation, wildlife, and the human condition, including the *New York Times* bestseller *40 Chances: Finding Hope in a Hungry World*. Mr. Buffett is the executive producer of *Virunga*, an award-winning and Academy Award-nominated documentary about Africa's oldest national park.

In *40 Chances* Mr. Buffett wrote: "Linking hunger and



**Moringa research on Buffett farm in South Africa**

education is one of the strategies for battling hunger that works just about everywhere in the world [...]. Our foundation has directly supported school feeding programs in Burundi, Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, and the United States."

The GCNF Annual Gala Reception raises funds for GCNF's efforts to end child hunger by assisting developing countries establish sustainable, nutritious school meal programs sourced—when possible—from local farmers. Nutritious school meal programs nourish children, provide an incentive for children to go to school and help lift children, farmers, families and communities out of poverty.

The GCNF Annual Gala Reception is in its 13<sup>th</sup> year. The reception will take place at the US Chamber of Commerce Hall of Flags on Tuesday, April 12, 2016, in Washington, D.C., with the awardee and leaders in the world of international child nutrition and agriculture. Please visit [www.gcnf.org](http://www.gcnf.org) for the latest updates and details.

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start small dairy herds and industries to provide milk for school meals. In the schools, they worked with teachers and parents to promote nutrition education and support for community based school

feeding programs. It is not surprising that Ulla and her Tetra Pak team wrote one of the first industry sponsored school feeding handbooks. It was an exceptionally practical and useful guide to assist counties in starting, operating and managing nutrition

based school feeding programs. GCNF and many counties globally have referred to this handbook many times.

One of Ulla's strong commitments is to support education and "telling the good news"

about the benefits of school feeding. I recall attending a Tetra Pak school milk conference in Vietnam when 16 countries came together to learn and share information to further strengthen and expand nutrition as an essential component in school feeding.

Visionary and realistic leaders like Ulla leave a track record we are all challenged to follow. Thank you, Ulla on behalf of GCNF, the global community and the many children you have so faithfully served.

*"Visionary and realistic leaders like Ulla leave a track record we are all challenged to follow. "*

## A SCHOOL NUTRITION CHAMPION RETIRES— PENNY MCCONNELL

How times have changed since Penny McConnell, MS, RDN, SNS, embarked upon a career in school nutrition. A lifetime of championing the importance of school meals and nutrition education sets McConnell apart as one of the profession's most distinguished leaders — and the recipient of the 2015 Marjorie Hulsizer Copher Award.

"Back in 1965, school lunch costs 25 cents, I made \$400 monthly without benefits, the federal regulations were new, kids drank whole milk, they had one meal choice, there were no special diets and we had to do everything by hand or from scratch and find creative ways to use commodities like 50 pound blocks of butter — all while being financially solvent," says McConnell. "It was fun, rewarding, challenging and I never stopped learning, which is why I stayed for 50 years."

Recently retired as director of food and nutrition services for Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia, McConnell oversaw a \$95 million budget, 1,400 employees and 185,000 students in the na-

tion's 11th largest school district. An early adopter of innovation, she used technology to streamline communications. "I welcomed the challenge and opportunity to use technology to centralize operations and communicate more effectively," says McConnell, adding that this allowed her staff to spend more time educating kids about nutrition.

With an unwavering focus on the growth and well-being of children, McConnell put their needs above all else. "Talk, serve and teach nutrition' was my goal, with the hopes of sowing the seeds of good nutrition in children that would continue into adulthood and maybe even spurn a career in dietetics," says McConnell.

A respected expert, she used her influence to advocate for feeding programs nationally and globally, especially for the underserved. McConnell authored more than 50 publications, and in 2008, she co-developed a School Feeding Toolkit, which — now in its third edition — is used internationally by the Global Child



Nutrition Foundation.

McConnell's commitment to dietetics extends beyond school nutrition, and she has held more than 60 elected positions in the Academy, School Nutrition Association and the GCNF. In addition, she has served as a preceptor and mentor to many RDNs. "Everyone needs a mentor," she says. "It has been such a pleasure mentoring young dietitians, encouraging them to consider food service management, get involved with our profession, and stay up to date so they can become lighthouses — shining the way for our future."

By

Kathleen Zelman, MPH, RD  
Food and Nutrition Magazine  
October 30, 2015

Visit us on the web:  
[GCNF.org](http://GCNF.org)

## FUTURE EDITIONS OF GCNFEATURES

Future editions of GCNFeatures will each focus on a specific topic that YOU will select. We want this to be YOUR Newsletter and want it to be as helpful and informative as possible. For that to happen, we need you to participate.

We will announce in the prior issue what the focus of the upcoming issue will be. We would then like for you to

submit your questions that you would like answered, any "best practices" that you have found to be effective, anything you have tried that you felt was not effective (we learn from other's mistakes) or any other information related to the topic you would like to share. You may want to communicate with individuals at a variety of work levels to identify information to share

from your country. We would also like to publish the link to any research on the topic that is applicable to the majority of readers, so if you have something to share in that area, please send in a brief summary and the appropriate link.

Please send your information to [Janey@GCNF.org](mailto:Janey@GCNF.org). We will publish a date for responses, perhaps reach out via an

email to gain input, and re-view the questions and try to see that they are answered in the following edition. If you would like any of your communication to be anonymous in the Newsletter, just state so in the response and you and/or your country will not be identified. Remember, YOUR Newsletter will not be successful unless YOU participate.

### Director Upload

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While the Board decisions will not dramatically change our focus, we are being encouraged to both be more proactive in working on the priorities identified and to improve how we describe GCNF and its work. We are now planning how to best communicate the Board's decisions as well as organize and fund a proactive

work plan covering 2016-2020. Stay tuned!

We hope to see many of you at our 2016 GCNF Gala Reception that will take place beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the US Chamber of Commerce Hall of Flags at 1615 H St., NW (across from the White House) in Washington, DC on Tuesday April 12, 2016. This year we are honoring Howard G. Buffett for his great work in school

meals, agriculture, and local purchasing. (Read more about the Gala and Howard's work elsewhere in this Newsletter.)

We know that our friends are waiting to hear news of the 2016 GCN Forum. Our Board decided to respond positively to the Government of Armenia's invitation to hold the Forum there, and we are in the process of discussing specifics such as the dates and roles and respon-

sibilities. We will send a Save the Date to all of you as soon as possible.

And now, a quote from our amazing leader, Gene White: "Peace begins when the hungry are fed, the future begins when they are educated." It is very exciting to work together with you and to know that we are contributing to both peace and to the future.



## CELEBRATE 4th INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MEALS DAY

### MARCH 3, 2016



The ISMD draws attention to the importance of school meal programs around the globe, both in developing and developed countries. One of the primary goals of ISMD is to connect children around the world to foster healthy eating

habits, raise awareness of differences and shared values, and promote well-being in schools (support a platform for global learning on food via suitable media)

The 2016 International School Meals Day will be March 3rd, 2016. We encourage children and young people of the world (with support from their teachers) to connect and talk to each other and share their food experiences, stories and news about food and the part it plays in their lives using the

theme **Fresh and Healthy Local Foods**. Many schools have farm to school programs, or have school and community gardens that support nutrition education and healthy eating.

Local farmers play a huge role in strengthening local economies and contributing to vibrant communities around the world. Farm to School programmes and projects support public health aims by providing local healthy food. The use of school and community gardens can contribute to healthy neighbourhoods where communities have a better understanding of how food is grown and how food affects their health and wellbeing.

It is up to each individual country, school and classroom to take part and work together to make the day fun and make nutrition a staple of

the education calendar throughout the year; celebrating the wonder of food and raising awareness of the importance of healthy eating patterns among school age children. Food and nutrition can be integrated into all subject matter. Please visit

[www.internationalschoolmealsday.com](http://www.internationalschoolmealsday.com) for more information

Students are encouraged to send their stories, pictures, vines, blogs, about their locally grown foods, school or community gardens and visits to their local farms to

<http://www.internationalschoolmealsday.com/share-practice/your-examples-of-practice/> and these pictures and stories will be featured on **Twitter** using hashtag #ISMD2016 and on **tumblr**.

The website:

[www.internationalschoolmealsday.com](http://www.internationalschoolmealsday.com) serves as a conduit for activities and a signpost for participating organizations.

The concept of International School Meals Day (ISMD) emerged from collaboration between USDA's Food and Nutrition Service and its counterpart in the United Kingdom; the two nations have been engaged in an exchange of practices and lessons learned in the area of food and nutrition policy in schools. Among the intended purposes of ISMD is to raise awareness of the importance of food and nutrition to education and to share school feeding experiences from around the globe.