



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**2015 NATIONAL FAME AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

**SCOTTSDALE, Az.** – Nov. 5, 2014 – Basic American Foods, Schwan’s Food Service, Inc., and Tyson Foods, Inc., sponsors of the 26<sup>th</sup> annual **Foodservice Achievement Management Excellence (FAME) Awards** program are pleased to announce the 2015 FAME Award winners.

The FAME Awards most prestigious honor – the **Golden School Foodservice Director of the Year Award** – will be presented to Jeff Denton, director of child nutrition, Ponca City Public Schools, Ponca City, Okla.

Denton is being recognized for his commitment to innovation in child nutrition in his 25-year career as a food service director. He is passionate about helping students understand the benefits of healthy food options and has worked to increase fruit and vegetable consumption by 60 percent over 4-years. He does this through personal interaction with students at all grade levels, teaching them to take responsibility for the foods they eat.

Chef Denton has had to overcome adverse conditions in his district when he was challenged with shrinking enrollment and state mandates for lower income students that went unfunded. He was able to increase participation by creating a “layers of flavor” concept with redesigned bid documents for better pricing and incorporating ways to convert students from a la carte to participation in solid reimbursable meals.

Denton has been applauded by his district’s leadership for overcoming increased costs, loss of students and continuing to keep a positive cash flow for the child nutrition program. Many districts visit Ponca City Public Schools to observe methods and operations to implement and enjoy the same level of success. His most recent challenge came from a district-directed increase in salaries and equipment improvement costs to adhere to new guidelines for aging equipment. He was able to meet these budget requirements for salaries and equipment while starting the year with a \$750,000 surplus for the child nutrition program.

Innovative is one of many words of praise that colleagues use to describe Denton. He has been able to create two major production kitchens and one small kitchen site to feed over 6,000 meals daily. The uniqueness of this allows elementary sites to offer eight protein selections and two fruit selections. Often, two vegetable selections are available to these sites as well.

Denton has served as President of the School Nutrition Association of Oklahoma for four different terms and has also served as the state Legislative and Public Policy Chair for many years. He personally led the charge to hire a paid state lobbyist to champion Child Nutrition in Oklahoma. He is a passionate innovator in the industry and has earned this recognition.

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**Additional 2015 FAME Award winners include:**

**Silver Leadership Award:** Arthur Dunham, retired director of food service, Pinellas County Schools, Largo, Fla.

**Silver Spirit Award:** Shana Wood, MS, RD, LD, coordinator, Houston County School Nutrition, Perry, Ga.

**Silver Special Achievement Award:** Sandra Voss, MS, RD, SNS, food and nutrition services director, Marquardt School District #15, Glendale Heights, Ill.

**Silver Rising Star Award:** Susan Wenona Johnson, supervisor, School Board of Marion County, Ocala, Fla.

**Silver Friend of Child Nutrition Award:** Barry Sackin, president, B. Sackin & Associates, LLC, Murrieta, Calif.

**Gertrude Applebaum Lifetime Achievement Award:** Josephine Martin, PhD, RDN, LD, president, The Josephine Martin Group, Decatur, Ga.

For 26 years the FAME Awards have been honoring school nutrition professionals who raise industry standards by tackling challenges within their school districts and communities. The awards will be presented at an event on Jan. 11, 2015 at the Omni Resort & Spa at Montelucia in Scottsdale, Az. during the SNA School Nutrition Industry Conference (SNIC). FAME event tickets can be obtained by visiting [www.fameawards.net](http://www.fameawards.net). For event updates throughout the year, visit [www.fameawards.net](http://www.fameawards.net) or [www.facebook.com/fameawards](http://www.facebook.com/fameawards).

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***For Additional Public Relations Information, Please Contact:***

Jody Harris  
479-283-9859 phone  
[pr@fameawards.net](mailto:pr@fameawards.net)

***For Additional Event Information, Please Contact:***

Summer Skinner  
417-234-2296 phone  
[info@fameawards.net](mailto:info@fameawards.net)