**MEET OUR SPEAKERS**

**7:15 - 7:50 AM**

**Registration & Networking**

**Continental Breakfast**

**Exhibits**

**7:50 - 8:00 AM**

**President & Annual Conference Chair Welcome**

**8:00 - 9:00 AM**

**Keynote Speaker**

**A.I. Unleashed: Shaping Dietetics Practice in the Digital Age**

A person smiling for the camera

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**Drew Hemler, MSc, RD, CDN, FAND**

Drew (he/him) is an internationally accredited registered dietitian who’s been integrating artificial intelligence (AI) in private practice, public health, academia, and clinical practice since the birth of Open AI’s Chat GPT. Drew has collaborated with leading organizations, including Microsoft and TELUS Health Canada, to transform nutrition communications, program development, client management, and education services through innovative AI-driven tools and strategies. As a faculty member at Buffalo State University and Hilbert College, Drew leverages AI for course development, delivery, and student real-world preparation through a lens of professional practice and ethics.

He is the recipient of the Nutrition Educator of the Year award by AI Global Media (2023), Early Career Faculty Award for Community Engagement by Buffalo State University (2021), and upwaRD Award by FoodMinds (2019), Drew embraces technology’s transformative power in dietetics practice. He is a proud Fellow of our Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and celebrates dietitians in all areas of practice.

**9:00 - 9:30 AM**

**Break/Exhibits/Posters**

**9:30 – 10:30 AM**

**Breakout Sessions**

**Leadership: From Self-Care to Self-Empowerment: A New Outlook on Dietitian Job Satisfaction and Well-Being**

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**Lauren Fleck, RD, MS**

Lauren Fleck is a registered dietitian and yoga teacher specializing in mental health and employee well-being. She is passionate about empowering others to make sustainable lifestyle changes to feel their best while finding purpose and joy in their work again. Lauren is currently an Employee Whole Health Specialist for the Veterans Crisis Line, playing a pivotal role in the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention for the VA.

**Clinical: Functional Medicine and Applications for Private Practice & Clinical Care**

**A person with long brown hair and blue eyes

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**Jessica Carter, MS, RDN, LD, CDCES, E-RYT200hr, PhD Student of Integration & Functional Nutrition**

Jessica is a Registered/ Licensed Dietitian, Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist, Lifestyle coach, 200 hour Experienced Registered Yoga Teacher and a Certified Yoga Education Provider. She recently received certification from the Institute for Functional Medicine and is a third year PhD student in the Integrative and Functional Nutrition department at Saybrook University. She is pursuing her dissertation using action research methodology which promotes and supports transformation within organizations and communities. She is also the founder and president of Core Health Nutrition & Yoga, which consists of an active yoga studio and small private nutrition practice.   
   
Jessica has been working in the health care field for more than 20 years. She started as a pharmacy technician which created a strong foundation for her future understanding of the needs within the larger health care ecosystem. Her nutrition specific work history includes time spent with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Health Department as a diabetes educator, five years with Lakewood Health System where she served as the Bariatric Program Coordinator, and two years with a nutrition startup company out of New York, serving as the lead dietitian and overseeing training and management of staff. Overlapping these positions, she had the opportunity to take on various contract positions including a seven-year stint as an adjunct instructor at Bemidji State University. Recently she has focused her professional attention on her private practice and yoga studio, as well as her full-time position with the Institute for Functional Medicine (IFM). Jessica has been with IFM for more than two years where she was recently promoted to the position of Clinical Lead in the Strategic Partnerships and Innovation department.

Jessica has experience in functional and integrative nutrition, bariatric nutrition, diabetes education and counseling, food intolerance testing, sports nutrition, weight loss management, medical nutrition therapy, chronic disease management, community nutrition, nutrition education and counseling, content creation, and yoga instruction. The last two years Jessica has been serving as the Finance Director for the Minnesota Board of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND) and has supported the MAND Strategic Planning Committee.

Outside of work Jessica is a mom and wife, has a small farm with sheep, pigs, chickens, dogs and cats. Her and her husband serve as leaders for their 4H club and recently took on the position of swine barn superintendents with the local fair board. She likes to spend her free time outside no matter what the weather, and enjoys reading and travel.

**Nutrition Professionals in Practice: Step-By-Step: How to Build an Authentic Brand That Converts**

A person smiling with long hair

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**Ashley Moyna Schwickert, MS, RD**

Ashley is a food photographer and stylist and the founder of Studio Moyna. Armed with a zest for storytelling through her work, Ashley has collaborated with numerous food brands, restaurants, and cookbook authors, and her photography appears weekly in the Minneapolis Star Tribune. Get a taste of her latest work over at [www.studiomoyna.com](http://www.studiomoyna.com).

**10:40-11:40 AM**

**Breakout Sessions**

**Leadership: More Than Meets the Eye: The Importance of Utilizing the Social Determinants of Health in Dietetics**

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**Emily Heying, PhD, RD, LD**

Emily is an associate professor of nutrition and registered dietitian. She currently teaches courses on metabolism, global malnutrition, and native food sovereignty at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University. Her research focuses on two different areas: food security in college students and satiety responses to carbonated beverages. She received her doctorate in Human Nutrition from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2014 and a bachelor of arts in Biochemistry from Wartburg College in 2010.

**Clinical: Culturally Competent Menu Development**

A person in a black jacket

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**Leah Hebert, BS**

Leah has been leading Open Arms since 2013, after more than 20 years of nonprofit leadership positions. An Executive Director since 1999, Leah has worked in the arts, community education, and reproductive and community health care. She began her career out of college as a victim advocate at a battered women’s shelter – an experience that ignited a deep commitment to justice and access to resources for underserved and vulnerable populations. A mother herself at age 17, who had to ask for help, Leah is committed to ensuring that everyone who asks for help is treated with dignity and respect. She has served on a variety of boards of directors, steering committees, and community coalitions, and currently serves on the Advisory Board for the national Food is Medicine Coalition.

**Nutrition Professionals in Practice: Tracking Macros: How to Use a Flexible Dieting Approach to Facilitate Body Change**

A person leaning on a couch

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**Emily Field, MPH, RD, CPT (NASM)**

Emily is a Registered Dietitian and certified personal trainer committed to liberating women from the constraints of food rules and restrictive dieting. As the owner and lead dietitian of Eat to Lean, a specialized group coaching program exclusively for women, Emily empowers her clients to embrace being strong, getting fit and feeling lean - without compromising on food freedom and flexibility.

She is the brains behind Macros Made Easy, a professional-led, self-paced online course designed to teach the stress-free way of tracking macros. Emily's expertise extends to the airwaves as the host of a podcast with the same name, Macros Made Easy, that simplifies the world of macros and where audience members discover practical insights and actionable tips that empower them to implement a macro-balanced eating pattern - ultimately placing them in the driver's seat of their own well-being.

**11:40 AM – 12:30 PM**

**Lunch**

**Business Meeting**

**Awards**

**12:30 - 1 PM**

**Break/Exhibits/Posters**

**1:00 - 2:00 PM**

**Breakout Sessions**

**Leadership: Cultural Compass: Harnessing the Power of Your Culture in a Rapidly Changing World**

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**Eric Pratum, MBA, MA**

In a world where organizations are constantly navigating technological, cultural, and communication shifts, every leader seeks a compass to guide their organization to success. Yet, amidst these rapid changes, many leaders find their strategies falling short, unable to truly engage their teams or adapt quickly enough.

Enter Eric Pratum. With over two decades of in communications and leadership, Eric has harnessed the transformative power of culture to drive growth and resilience. From tripling revenue growth at Bigwidesky through culture-centric strategies to global, multilingual marketing and technology programs for over 1,000 clients, his journey is a testament to the profound impact of placing deep human needs at the core of business strategy. A sought-after speaker, Eric shares his insights at conferences and academic institutions, empowering leaders to turn their cultures and communications into their most valuable assets in navigating today's dynamic business landscape.

**Clinical: Tube Feed or Not To Tube Feed: Ethics Beyond The Consult Question**

A person taking a selfie with a turtle on her shoulder

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**Nina Curvis, MS, RD, LD, CNSC**

Nina has been a registered dietitian since August of 2014. She has a BA in Mathematics from Carleton College in Northfield, MN, and a MS in Nutrition and Health Promotion from Simmons College in Boston, MA. She completed her dietetic internship at National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD, with a focus on clinical nutrition research. She has worked in the hospital setting since 2014, and has been at Abbott Northwestern Hospital since June 2016. She currently covers the Neuro ICU and Neuro Med/Surg units and covered the inpatient mental health units at Abbott for 7 ½ years prior to this year. When not at work, Nina enjoys baking, getting outdoors, and spending time with her tortoise and her 2 cats.

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**Ryan Nelson, PhD, HEC-C**

Ryan is a clinical ethicist at Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis. He earned his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Utah and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in clinical ethics at Baylor College of Medicine. His research addresses ethical and philosophical questions related to psychiatry, disability, and medical decision making.

**Nutrition Professionals in Practice: How We Learn What To Eat And Why**

**Jess Reiners, RD, LD, MS & Hilmar Wagner, MPH, RDN, CD, LN**

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**Jess Reiners, Rd, LD, MS**

Jessica Reiners is a Registered Dietitian licensed in MN. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Nutritional Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and her Master's of Science Degree in Nutrition at Arizona State University. She completed her dietetic internship at the University of Minnesota and has since been working as a dietitian at The Emily Program. Jessica works with adolescents in an intensive day program and at an outpatient level. Jessica has experience working with all eating disorder diagnoses in both group and individual settings. Jessica also has extensive experience collaborating with parents to help heal their child’s relationship with food. While Jessica’s passion is working with clients with disordered eating behaviors, she is also passionate about working with athletes to properly fuel their bodies.

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**Hilmar Wagner, MPH, RDN, CD, LN**

Hilmar is a Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist (RDN), licensed in Minnesota and Washington State. Hilmar has experience working in a variety of clinical, outpatient, community, and management settings. Hilmar joined the Emily Program in 2006 and has served in a number of clinical and management roles, both at the site, regional and organization-wide levels. He currently serves as a Clinical Outreach Specialist. In this role Hilmar has presents on a wide range of eating disorder and related nutrition topics at local, regional, and national conferences. Hilmar received his bachelor’s degree in Nutrition/Dietetics and Master’s in Public Health Nutrition from the University of Minnesota. He has worked in the field of eating disorders for the past 17 years. Hilmar has extensive experience working with clients of all eating disorder diagnoses in both individual and group settings. He has a particular interest in the application of mindfulness and body-centered, somatic approaches to the nutritional treatment of eating disorders.

**2:00 - 3:00 PM**

**Breakout Sessions**

**Clinical: Fueling Mental Health Through the Power of Nutrition**

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**Lauren Fleck, RD, MS**

Lauren Fleck is a registered dietitian and yoga teacher specializing in mental health and employee well-being. She is passionate about empowering others to make sustainable lifestyle changes to feel their best while finding purpose and joy in their work again. Lauren is currently an Employee Whole Health Specialist for the Veterans Crisis Line, playing a pivotal role in the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention for the VA.

**Nutrition Professionals in Practice: Empowering Nutrition Professionals to Bring Value to Your Organization and Connecting with RDN’s Who Are Billing for MNT**

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**Zeinab Alol, MSc, RD, CLC, CFI**

Zeinab is a passionate and highly skilled healthcare professional with a decade of clinical experience, specializing in Medical Nutrition Therapy, diabetes education, and comprehensive cardiovascular management. As a Registered Dietitian, Zeinab has dedicated her career to making a positive impact on diverse communities by providing personalized care and guidance.

Professional Background:

With over 10 years of nutrition experience, Zeinab has demonstrated expertise in diabetes management, chronic kidney diseases, and cardiovascular health, including hyperlipidemia and hypertension management. Zeinab holds a bachelor’s degree in nutrition/dietetics from the University of MN, master’s degree in science (Nutrition) and is currently pursuing MPH degree.

Credentials:

Zeinab holds RD (Registered Dietitian) credentialing and is a licensed Registered Dietitian Nutritionist in the state of Minnesota. Additionally, Zeinab is certified as a Lactation Consultant Specialist and a Certified Personal Fitness Trainer (NASM). Zeinab also possesses Health Coaching and Motivational Interviewing certificates.

Key Skills:

Zeinab brings a wealth of expertise in creating tailored nutritional plans for diabetes patients, effectively managing chronic kidney diseases, and implementing strategies for cardiovascular health. Her comprehensive knowledge in personal fitness training enhances holistic approaches to health.

Philosophy:

Dedicated to the belief that proactive measures can prevent chronic diseases, Zeinab is committed to empowering individuals to lead healthier lives through education and personalized support. They firmly believe that those already affected can effectively manage and reduce complications.

Community Engagement:

With extensive experience working with diverse communities, Zeinab has actively fostered a culture of health and well-being.

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**Donna Gjesvold, RDN, LD, CCTD**

Donna is a clinical dietitian at Hennepin Healthcare. She is a graduate of the University of Minnesota and is certified as a clinical transplant dietitian. She is a long-time member of the Renal Nutrition Practice Group of The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and currently serves as Chair of the Minnesota Board of Dietetics and Nutrition Practice. Prior to joining the Kidney Transplant Program at Hennepin’s Kidney Center in 2008, Donna practiced in a variety of settings including food industry, community health, long term care, and acute care. She currently sees patients with chronic kidney disease, kidney transplant patients, living kidney donors, and kidney stone patients in the outpatient setting.

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**Stacey Hoffman, RD, LD**

Stacey is the Clinical Nutrition Director at Hennepin Healthcare - Hennepin County Medical Center – Level 1 Trauma Center (adult & ped’s). She has been a Clinical Dietitian for over 25 years and oversees 17 RD’s, with a combination inpatient and outpatient units and oversees a 1M+ budget. She also coordinates interns from the University of Minnesota MPH & TEP programs and precepts several students each year. Stacey has a team of very experienced dietitians and a lot of longevity at Hennepin.

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**Louann Kaupa, RD, LD**

Louanne has been in private practice since 2005 in Owatonna, MN, doing business as Eat Well Nutrition Therapy. She has been a Certified Diabetes Educator since 1991, completed the Academy’s Certificate of Training in Adult Weight Management (2004) and Childhood & Adolescent Weight Management (2016). She received her Bachelor’s Degree in Dietetics from the University of Wisconsin – Stout; her Master’s Degree in Nutrition from the University of Tennessee; and completed her Dietetic Internship & Residency at the University of Tennessee Center for the Health Sciences. Throughout her career she has specialized in the treatment of eating disorders and on a volunteer level has spent 30 years working with food insecurity.

Louanne has served on the Minnesota Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics Public Policy Committee as Reimbursement Representative from 2011- 2023. Through the public policy committee she represented RDN’s on state health care reform committee meetings providing written and oral comments about including RDN and MNT services as a part of the state’s Essential Health Benefits. Louanne has attended the Academy’s Business of MNT Boot Camp I & II in 2013 and 2015 respectively.



**Priyanka Sagar, M.Sc., RDN, LD**

Priyanka has been practicing RDN since 2012. She’s working as a consultant dietitian for outpatient clinic, Neighborhood HealthSource in Minneapolis for more than ten years and is a founder and owner of her new private practice, “Ginger Spice Health, LLC”, accepting major insurances in MN. Her passion is to empower clients in the prevention-wellness and chronic diseases realm through lifestyle and nutrition, utilizing ‘Food as Medicine’ with ‘a personalised integrative approach’, so they could lead a fulfilling quality of life!

To promote healthy nutrition in her community, she has actively volunteered for elementary school kids, along with authoring articles to raise nutrition awareness at a local non-profit organization, participated in local health fairs hosted by SEWA-AIFW, a local nonprofit organization committed to serving, supporting, and enhancing family wellness for the South Asian community, especially the vulnerable and underserved

population.

She’s also been actively involved with the South Asian-Centered Heart-Healthy Education (SACHHE) project by the University of Minnesota, Family Medicine and Community Health Discovery. It’s her third year serving as IDEA Liaison for Indians in Nutrition and Dietetics Member Interest Group (IND MIG) at the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and loves spreading awareness, equity and inclusion for other cultures.

She enjoys travel and spending time with her family back in India when time allows; also loves recreating healthy vegetarian recipes, in fun and colorful ways on her website, www.gingerspicehealth.com.

**2:30 -3:30 PM**

**Break/Exhibits/Posters**

**3:30-4:30 PM**

**Keynote Speaker**

**Empowering RDNs to Achieve Professional Goals: A Panel Discussion on Terminal Degrees and Certifications**

A person wearing glasses and smiling

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**Katie Galloway, MBA, RD, LD, IBCLC**

Katie is a Public Health Supervisor for the WIC Program in Dakota County. Katie has worked for the WIC program for 17 years in both Colorado and Minnesota. Katie is a Registered Dietitian and an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant with a passion for maternal and child health. Katie attended the University of North Dakota for her undergraduate degree and received her Master’s in Business Administration from Hamline University. Katie has helped lead efforts for Dakota County to become recognized as a Gold Level Breastfeeding Friendly Health Department as well as a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite, both recognition programs through the Minnesota Department of Health. Katie is actively involved in the Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition holding various leadership positions, including Treasurer in 2019, the Board Chairperson in 2020, and currently the Chair for the Governance Subcommittee. On a personal note, Katie enjoys reading and traveling with her husband as well as supporting her son’s sporting events at either the ice rink or baseball field.

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**Lindsay Heidelberger, PhD, RDN, LDN**

Lindsay is an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin-Stout who completed her undergraduate degree at the University of St. Catherine in St. Paul, MN and dietetic internship at the VA Medical Center in San Diego, CA. As a dietitian, Lindsay has worked in a variety of settings and with diverse patient populations. Her professional experience includes practicing as a dietitian with patients undergoing bariatric surgery. She also worked for the WIC program for 8 years in Minnesota.

Lindsay earned my doctorate degree from the University of Minnesota in 2016. In her role as associate professor at UW-Stout, she is the graduate program director. She also teaches courses on multicultural aspects of food and health and graduate level research courses. The goal of her research is to better understand the connection between food insecurity, food access, and health using primarily qualitative research methods. Lindsay’s research objectives are 1) to explore the behavioral and environmental factors that influence diet and physical activity choices of families that live in low-income communities and among university students; and 2) to better understand how sociocultural factors influence health-related values and behaviors.

A person in a red dress

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**Melissa Jaeger, RD, LD**

Melissa Jaeger RD, LD is a Corporate Registered Dietitian for Hy-Vee, Inc. For over nine years Melissa has supported and educated consumers of all ages and backgrounds while working in the area of retail dietetics. She has developed signature recipes, built nutrition education programs, supported employer health programs and shared her love of cooking through running a teaching garden and leading children and adult cooking classes. Melissa’s true passion is nutrition communications - translating evidence-based nutrition science into actionable messages for consumers. She has appeared on a variety of local media outlets including KARE 11, WCCO - CBS Minnesota, KSTP - Minnesota Live, CCX Media, Vikings Huddle: Nutrition Minute, KAAL, KTTC and The Sheletta Show (WCCO Radio). She has also published consumer-focused nutrition education pieces in publications throughout the Midwest.

Melissa received a Bachelor of Arts in Nutrition (DPD) from the College of Saint Benedict in 2014 and completed her dietetic internship through Iowa State University. Melissa has completed the Certificate of Training program in Childhood and Adolescent Weight Management through the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and Monash University’s training for the Low FODMAP Diet for Irritable Bowel Syndrome. She also served as the former Social Media Director for the Minnesota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics from 2021 - 2023.

A person wearing glasses and smiling

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**Dr. Leah Qubty, DCN, MS, RDN, LDN, FAND**

Leah Qubty is an Assistant Professor in the Applied Health Sciences department at Bethel University in St. Paul. She is also currently serving as the Nominations Chair-Elect for the Minnesota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Her past experience includes work as a clinical dietitian and graduate school educator.

Leah has been an Assistant Professor for 2 years. In her role at Bethel University, she teaches physiology and nutrition courses for students pursuing a variety of careers including but not limited to physical therapy, physician assistant, medicine, athletic training, occupational therapy, and nursing. Leah’s research has focused on promoting interdisciplinary healthcare approaches and incorporating the nutrition-focused physical exam into holistic patient care.

Leah received a BS from Concordia College with majors in biology and dietetics, completed her dietetic internship at the Mayo Clinic, received a MS degree in nutrition science from Northeastern University, and received a DCN from the University of North Florida. Leah collaborated on two research projects, including her doctorate dissertation, with the University of Ghana.

Leah lived in San Francisco, CA for 4 years where she taught Western medical nutrition therapy and nutrition biochemistry to masters and doctorate students pursuing degrees in Traditional Chinese Medicine. Leah appreciates how these two schools of thought complement each other and her teaching approach focused on bolstering collaboration between traditional Western and traditional Eastern Medicine practitioners. Leah, her husband Will, and their dog Otis now live in Minneapolis.

A person in a blue shirt

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**Amanda Rau, RD, LD, CD, CDCES**

Amanda specializes in providing expert care for individuals with diabetes as a vital member of the team at St. Luke’s in Duluth, MN. Amanda plays a crucial role in guiding individuals with diabetes through their healthcare journey, assisting them in identifying the most effective tools tailored to their specific needs. With nine years of prior experience in long-term care settings, Amanda particularly cherished the opportunity to cultivate meaningful relationships with both staff and residents. She earned her bachelor's degree in Dietetics from the University of Wisconsin – Stout in 2007. Outside of work, Amanda finds joy in outdoor running, off-road UTV riding, and unwinding by a cozy campfire.

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**Toni Swanson RDN, CSG, LD**

Toni became a Dietitian in 2012 and has since spent 10+ years working in long-term care and has even become certified as a BoardCertified Specialist in Gerontological Nutrition. She is active in the Dietetics community through speaking at nutrition conferences, maintaining her ServSafe/Always Food Safe instructor certificate, serving as the president for the MN Consultant Dietitians (2020-2021), President of the MN Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (2022-2023), and hosts dietetic interns every spring. Her areas of focus are malnutrition, diabetes, heart disease, and kitchen safety. Toni has a passion for delivering nutritious meals while inspiring individuals to make wise food choices and live healthier lifestyles.

**4:30-6:00 PM**

**Happy Hour and Raffle supporting the MAND Foundation**