

Sister Maureen Schrimpe



MKpVmyNp

Entry details

Entry Name: March Meal Madness

Institution Name: University of Maryland

Entry Completed By (*name and position*): Sister Maureen Schrimpe-Quality Coordinator, Nutritionist & Certified Allergen Trainer

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Essay:

In honor of National Nutrition Month, the University of Maryland presented "March Meal Madness", a four-week informational and interactive series every Tuesday throughout the month of March. The theme was inspired as a spin-off idea based on the famous college basketball tournament, March Madness.

As we set out on our tenth annual event series, the program was inspired by the shared experience of students learning how to plan meals that support energy, productivity, and overall health while balancing busy academic schedules. Nutrition education each week was centered around fiber, protein, micronutrients, and anti-inflammatory foods, demonstrating how small, intentional food choices can make a meaningful difference in how students feel and function throughout the day.


"March Meal Madness" emphasizes how a variety of foods can benefit energy and productivity levels for busy students throughout the day. The weekly themes, "Full Court Fiber," "The Protein Playbook," "Micronutrient Madness," and "Anti-Inflam SLAM DUNK", were paired with trivia, educational handouts, and sponsor features to reinforce key takeaways. Students were able to learn practical strategies such as increasing fiber intake, understanding protein needs, incorporating essential vitamins and minerals, and identifying foods that support recovery and reduce inflammation

To expand engagement, this year's program placed a greater emphasis on digital outreach through social media, newsletters, and weekly blog posts. These platforms helped promote events while also providing additional nutrition education in a format accessible to students beyond in-person participation. Collaboration with corporate sponsors, including General Mills, Hormel, Barilla, and Pepsi allowed for the integration of featured ingredients into recipes and educational materials, while partnerships with campus organizations helped support the execution of each event.

Each week, students were invited to complete a short quiz to be entered into a raffle, allowing us to both engage participants and assess our educational impact. To further encourage continued involvement in nutrition education, students were encouraged to sign up for our monthly newsletter, take a handout, and our monthly calendar showing when all the events were happening. This year, attendance averaged 2,349 students per event, an increase from last year, reflecting growing interest and engagement across campus. Feedback from both students and staff was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the series as both informative and interactive. By tailoring our programming to the collegiate audience, we created an engaging and well-rounded educational experience centered on the health impact of both macronutrients and micronutrients, ultimately promoting sustainable habits that support a balanced and healthy lifestyle for UMD students.

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