

# Director Spotlight!



Showcasing the passion, talents, and hard work of Arizona school nutrition professionals.



## Jennifer Gordon

**Child Nutrition Services Director, Laveen Elementary School District**

**Hometown:** Pocatello, Idaho

**Current City of Residence:** Phoenix, Arizona

**Favorite Childhood School Meal:** Barchetta Pizza and Peanut Butter Squares

**When I was a kid, I wanted to grow up to be a:** Marine Biologist

### What was your first job in food service?

I worked at a sub shop called Hogi Yogi in high school.

### What prompted you to start working the field of school nutrition?

My community nutrition class during undergrad shed light on the programs that I was a participant of as a child, including NSLP and WIC. It brought everything full circle for me and I knew then that I wanted to work in a nutrition field that provided the resources I benefited from during my youth.

### Tell us about a specific project or initiative you have championed that you are proud of.

Our partnership with the Life Time Foundation. This partnership aligned with my nutrition philosophy and has provided additional resources and tools needed to help carry out a clean label initiative in a more formalized and robust manner.

### Assuming time and money were not barriers, what would be your top priority as far as changes you would like to see in your school nutrition program?

I would like to convert our operations to a centralized approach where we could focus on more scratch cooking and baking, branding, and merchandising.

### What are the top three skills a school food service director should have?

Communication and the ability to convey your mission and vision, financial management and budgeting skills, forward thinking and a progressive mindset.

### What advice would you give to a younger version of yourself just starting your role as Director?

Be more flexible and less black and white. Learn to find the balance between the reality of day-to-day operations and the intentions of the many regulations we are required to follow.