



## Conference Presenter Bios

Presenters are listed in alphabetical order, by first name  
★*this is not an all-inclusive list for conference presenters*

### **Beth Elliott**

Since 2004 Beth Elliott has been the Executive Director of FISH Food Banks of Pierce County. FISH (Friends in Service to Him) is comprised of seven fixed food bank locations and one mobile unit in Pierce County. Every month FISH provides nutritious food to approximately 45,000 clients.

Prior to joining “FISH”, Beth was the Director of Support Services for the American Red Cross Tacoma-Pierce County Chapter for 9 years and before that she was the Director of Outdoor Recreation for the US Armed Forces in Berlin, Germany for 8 years.

She holds a Masters Degree in Public Recreation Administration from Indiana University and Bachelor's Degree from the University of Kentucky.

### **Bonnie Baker**

Bonnie Baker, Director of the Hunger Response Network for Northwest Harvest, has been working in the emergency food arena since 1993. She started as a food bank director and has had the opportunity to serve on Executive Committees of many organizations including: Seattle Food Committee, Food Resources Network Federation, Seattle Human Services Coalition and WA State Food & Nutrition Coalition and WA Food Coalition. She founded the Food Bank Network, which worked to strengthen South King County food banks. Currently she supervises Northwest Harvest programs such as Cherry Street Food Bank, Three Squares backpack program, Kids Summer Food Club, Growing Connections, and also works with the advocacy program, contracting, relationship-building, and education with Northwest Harvest's 360 statewide partner food banks, meal programs and schools.

### **Dani Turk**

Dani manages four programs that involve highly perishable food donations from a wide variety of donors including wholesalers, prepared food manufacturers and hospitality entities. Nationally recognized by Feeding America for best practices in prepared food recovery, Dani serves on a Feeding America strategy group, charged with developing a national level prepared food donation model.

A native of New Jersey, Dani graduated from the University of Wisconsin - Madison with a Bachelor of Science. Dani started at Food Lifeline in 2005 and brings with her a passion for building communities around food security.

### **Denise Sorom**

Denise Sorom is a native of the Seattle area. She received her BA in Art History from the University of Pennsylvania and her MA in Business with a major in Arts Administration from the University of Wisconsin's Graduate School of Business. Throughout her education and career, Denise remained active in the arts, working in Philadelphia, Rochester and at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. She also worked in Eugene, Oregon, where she worked for the University of Oregon College of Arts and Sciences as a Development Associate and then at the

UO Museum of Natural and Cultural History as its Marketing and Special Projects coordinator. In June 2013, Denise and her husband and their three children relocated to Wenatchee to raise their children and enjoy proximity to their families. At the Community Foundation, Denise manages all grant making initiatives as well as their Nonprofit Practices Institute, which provides continuing education opportunities for nonprofit staff and volunteers. Denise enjoys hiking, running, skiing, tennis and the arts.

## **James Scovel**

James Scovel is a program coordinator for the Food Assistance Programs at the Washington State Department of Agriculture. He has held various positions of responsibility within the TEFAP program for 17 years and has also been the Program Coordinator for the CSFP program for the last 9 years. He has extensive knowledge and experience in supply chain management and commodity program policies and procedures.

## **Jenn Tennent**

Jenn Tennent serves as the Partner Programs Manager for Northwest Harvest, where she provides support and training to a network of over 330 partner food banks and meal programs across the state of Washington. Jenn joined Northwest Harvest in 2011 and since then has focused on providing food safety, technical and non-profit support to Northwest Harvest's network of partner programs. Prior to working at Northwest Harvest, Jenn worked in public health at SeaMar Community Health Center as well as a civil rights law firm in the Seattle area. Jenn graduated from Whitman College with a BA in Latin American Studies. In her free time, Jenn enjoys the outdoors, particularly backpacking and skiing, travel and great food.

## **Jim Shapiro**

Jim has spent 20 years serving and working in the nonprofit sector. He is co-founder of The Better Fundraising Company. Prior to TBFC, he founded The EDGE Group; a nonprofit fundraising and business development consulting company with offices in Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles. He is also the co-host of the tele-class training resource Better Fundraising For All. Prior to launching The Edge Group, Jim held the Vice President of Development position at CRISTA Ministries managing the fundraising operation. Jim is a graduate of Pacific Lutheran University. He serves his community by coaching various youth sports including a paid position as the Head Football Coach for King's High School in Seattle. Jim is married and has three kids.

## **Julie Washburn**

Julie Washburn is a motivated leader with a passion for change. She is the Executive Director for Washington Food Coalition, the statewide coalition for emergency food providers. Julie's interest is to bring together diverse groups that share common interests, in order to advance the common good. She believes in finding the best ideas developed and bringing them into practice in the nonprofit sector. She has received awards from the Business Examiner as a "40 Under 40" recipient as well as a "Woman of Influence". Julie was also honored as a "Young Alumni of the Year" by Seattle Pacific University in 2011. Julie has undergraduate degrees in Sociology, Business and History from Seattle Pacific University as well as a Certificate of Nonprofit Management from the University of Washington.

## **Katie Howard**

Katie Howard has been writing winning proposals since 2002. Over her career, she has secured more than \$65 million for community-serving organizations working in diverse sectors, including social services, health, education, and the environment. She has served as the principal consultant of KH Consulting|Think.Write.Grow. Since 2009 and has offices in Seattle and Spokane. She works with organizations of all sizes to develop programs, conduct research,

write grant proposals, and communicate with donors and the public about their work. You can learn more at [www.thinkwritegrow.com](http://www.thinkwritegrow.com).

## **Kelsey Bourn**

Kelsey Bourn recently signed on as an intern at the Washington State Department of Agriculture. She provides support for the Food Assistance Programs and economic analysis for the Executive team. While interning she also offers data processing and analysis for the Farm to School programs. She attended the University of Washington as an undergraduate majoring in International Development. She is currently pursuing a Masters degree in Public Administration through the Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington in Seattle. She is excited to be a part of such a great team at WSDA and help the department work towards fulfilling Results Washington Goal Four in its attempt to fight hunger in Washington State.

## **Kim Eads**

Kim Eads is the program manager for the Food Assistance Programs at Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). She manages the statewide operations of the state and federal Emergency Food Assistance Programs (EFAP/TEFAP) and the federal Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). These programs help feed Washington's hungry by providing state and federal resources to over 500 food banks, food pantries, meal providers, and tribes while supporting the agricultural community. She has worked with food assistance programs for over 25 years. Kim graduated from Western Washington University with a degree in Art and an emphasis in Marketing and Management. Kim and her team are passionate about developing new opportunities and partnerships to strengthen the emergency food system as we work together to reduce food insecurity.

## **Kyle Merslich, Program Coordinator WSDA**

Kyle Merslich is a program coordinator at the Food Assistance Programs for the Washington State Department of Agriculture. He attended the Evergreen State College and continued on to a Masters program at the University of Idaho specializing in community economic development and regional food systems. During this time, he worked on developing a biofuels industry in North Central Idaho, increasing processing capacity in central Washington and a year as a regional food systems planner in N. Central Idaho and South Eastern Washington. Kyle is an advocate for improved access to healthy and appropriate food for all residents and seeks to encourage partnerships that benefit both consumers and producers across Washington.

## **Rob Eastman**

Rob Eastman holds a BS in microbiology from Montana State University. In 1994, he moved to Wenatchee to work in the food safety program for the Chelan-Douglas Health District. After seven years he moved on to working for the Washington State Department of Agriculture's food safety program. In 2013, he came back to the Health District's food safety program and currently is the Food Program Lead at the Chelan-Douglas Health District.

## **Rosemary Rankin**

As the Agency Relations Manager at Food Lifeline, Rosemary Rankins provides customer service to 275 food banks, meal programs and shelters. Prior to joining Food Lifeline in 2010, she worked at the University of Washington and earned degrees in American Studies and Policy Studies. Rosemary loves food - growing it, cooking it, serving it, and eating it - and is deeply interested in increasing access to fresh, healthy food. She is absolutely thrilled to have a job that allows her to support the incredible work being done in Washington to end hunger.

## **Susan Eichrodt**

Susan Eichrodt is a program specialist for the Food Assistance Programs at the Washington State Department of Agriculture. She has been with the Food Assistance Programs for over 23 years and has worked in social service programs for over 37 years, both at a variety of private nonprofit agencies and within the public sector in Southern California and Washington. Susan is dedicated to making the agency's Food Assistance Programs more effective and responsive to both providers and the families they serve as well as increasing the amount of nutritious food available to clients as part of the Food Assistance Programs team. Susan graduated from the University of California at Irvine with a degree in psychology.

## **Suzy McNeilly**

Suzy works as the Nutrition Program Director for the Council on Aging & Human Services in Colfax, responsible for county-wide commodity distribution and operation of a central food pantry. Additionally, she provides oversight for the County Senior Nutrition program. She has worked for the University of Arizona in Iceland and North Carolina, and was the Director of the NATO Wellness Center, Keflavik, Iceland. Volunteering and a sense of community are values instilled at a very early age in her family. She has been the Key Volunteer for the 2nd Marine Division Commanding General, assisting with implementing volunteer training and stress management practices for family members. Growing up in Japan, the travel bug bit her early, so any opportunity to travel is welcomed, especially if it means seeing any of her 5 grandkids. At home, Suzy helps her husband with their Farm & Livestock operation.

## **Tony Airhart**

Tony has been the Executive Director at Coastal Harvest since January 2010, following 31 years with Weyerhaeuser Company at Cosmopolis Pulp. He is a graduate of The Evergreen State College with a BA in Community Leadership and Centralia College with an AS in Energy Technology. Despite a long history of volunteer work in the community (Boy Scouts of America, YMCA youth sports, Aberdeen Museum of History, State of Washington Boundary Review Board for Grays Harbor County), Coastal Harvest has been my first foray into the world of hunger relief. Tony lives in Aberdeen, a fourth generation Grays Harbor resident. He is happily married, has four grown children between him and his wife with too few, but well spoiled grandchildren.

## **Trish Twomey**

Trish Twomey has been involved with Seattle emergency food programs for the past 31 years. After founding and directing the University District Food Bank for ten years, she moved on to Solid Ground where she held advancing positions culminating as Director of the Hunger Action Center. In this role, she provided technical and administrative assistance to the coalition of food banks in Seattle (Seattle Food Committee) as well as oversaw several food and nutrition programs.

Trish has held many leadership positions in anti-hunger coalitions and organizations throughout the state. She served two terms as the co-chair of the Washington Food Coalition, and served five years on the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) statewide advisory workgroup. She has represented King County food banks on the county's EFSP Board for the past 28 years and is a past president of the Washington State Food and Nutrition Council and co-chair of the Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition.

Trish holds a BA in Sociology from Washington State University and a Certificate in Human Services Management from the University of Washington.