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Celebrating a School Year of
Dedication and the Heroes Behind It



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LUNCH
HERO**



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When we say school nutrition professionals are heroes, we mean it! That's why we celebrate them every spring with School Lunch Hero Day. With this year's celebration fast approaching this week, SNA is looking back at some of our favorite photos and memories over the last five years.

Through the Years: 2020 National School Lunch Hero Day



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As the final months of the school year approach, it's the perfect time to look back and reflect on everything you've made possible. Across the country, school nutrition teams have been at the heart of it all. From first-day jitters to last-day celebrations, cafeterias are places of connection—welcoming students, hosting themed meals, stepping up during tough times and fueling kids through their days. The impact these teams make will be felt long after the final bell rings. With summer nearing, it's also a time to honor the incredible individuals who make it all happen. That's why there's no better moment to kick off the countdown to [National School Lunch Hero Day](#)—happening this Friday, May 2!

School Lunch Hero Day is a chance to shout out just how much we appreciate the hardworking school nutrition teams serving healthy meals to America's children. It's a day for gratitude, celebration and, of course, a little bit of fun.



Through the Years: 2020 National School Lunch Hero Day



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How It All Began

They might not fly or have superpowers (or maybe they do—we wouldn't be surprised!), but there's no question that school food-service workers are heroes. That's why SNA loves collaborating with children's author and illustrator [Jarrett J. Krosoczka](#), creator of the *Lunch Lady* graphic novel series, to celebrate School Lunch Hero Day year after year. This year marks the **13th anniversary** of this special observance recognizing the hard work school nutrition professionals do every day.

"School Lunch Hero Day has far

exceeded my hopes and vision for what the celebration could be," Krosoczka once said. "It has become a huge annual party, which means the world to me."

It all started when Krosoczka released his *Lunch Lady* books in 2009, reimagining the familiar figure of the cafeteria worker as a crime-fighting vigilante spy. Kids immediately connected with the humor, adventure and heart of the stories—seeing a part of their everyday world in a new light.

During the years he was writing the series, Krosoczka teamed up with SNA to officially launch the first School Lunch Hero

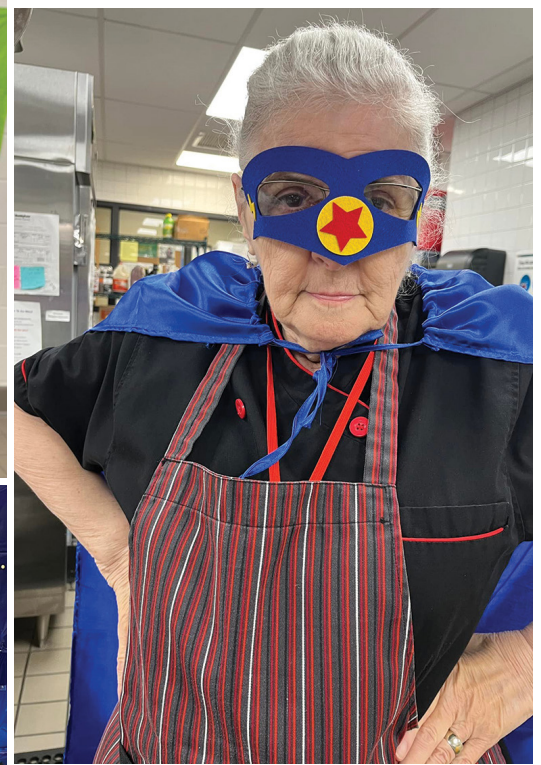
Through the Years: 2021 National School Lunch Hero Day



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Through the Years: 2022 National School Lunch Hero Day



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Day in 2012. Since then, the celebration has grown far beyond what he could have imagined.

Over the years, SNA and Krosoczka have witnessed incredible celebrations

firsthand—like the time Houston Independent School District students lined the hallways with artwork, poetry and thank-you notes, capped off by a Broadway-style production honoring their cafeteria teams.

Through the Years: 2023 National School Lunch Hero Day



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For Krosoczka, the mission is personal. His own school cafeteria staff inspired him as a child, and he's never forgotten their kindness. In fact, he invited his former lunch ladies to the *Lunch Lady* book launch—and was deeply moved when they shared how

much they loved every student who passed through their lunch line.

Through the *Lunch Lady* series and School Lunch Hero Day, Krosoczka has pushed back against tired media stereotypes of cafeteria workers, instead shining

Through the Years: 2024 National School Lunch Hero Day



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a light on their compassion, hard work and importance to school communities. He's even created a new, more inclusive group of characters in the *Lunch Lady* universe to better reflect the diversity of today's real-life lunch heroes.

And the story doesn't stop there! The original *Lunch Lady* books have been reissued in full-color editions, and a full-cast audiobook is also available (featuring **Kate Flannery** from *The Office* as the *Lunch Lady*!).

Time to Celebrate

As we gear up for this year's celebration on May 2, it's clear that School Lunch Hero Day is about more than one moment. It's about

recognizing a year (and really, a career) of small, everyday heroics: the extra encouragement for a student who needs it, the careful attention to a child's dietary needs, the daily commitment to ensuring kids have what they need to succeed.

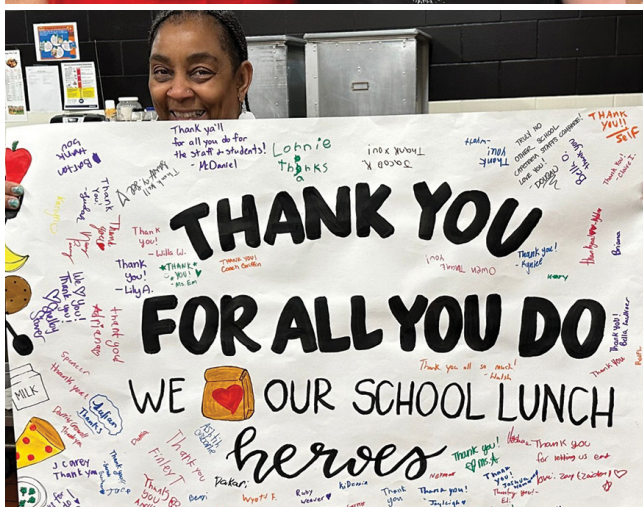
This Friday, we encourage everyone to find a way to say thank you—whether it's a simple note, a big party or a heartfelt shoutout on social media. Every bit of recognition makes a difference.

And to help get in the spirit, we're taking a look back at how school communities have celebrated in the past. Check out the photo spread featuring snapshots from School Lunch Hero Day celebrations over the

Through the Years: 2024 National School Lunch Hero Day



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last five years. These are real moments from real cafeterias across the country that showcase the creativity and joy school nutrition teams bring to their students' lives year after year.

From superhero costumes to colorful cafeteria decorations to heartfelt student thank-you notes, these memories remind us just how much heart goes into every meal served.

Whether new to the field or a seasoned pro, every school nutrition professional deserves to be recognized as a true hero. Happy (almost) School Lunch Hero Day! **SN+**

To learn more and for resources, visit schoolnutrition.org/slhd. Don't forget to tag #SLHD, #SchoolLunchHero-Day and #SchoolLunchHeroes when you post your photos.





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