

Three Leaders, Decades of Service, One Mission: Feeding Children

ROUND ROCK, TX, UNITED STATES, May 28, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- At age five, Michelle Buchanan sat down to a meal in a Head Start program run by Community Action of Southeastern West Virginia (CASEWV). Today, she serves as its Food Program Director. Stories like hers, of lives shaped by child nutrition programs and careers built in service to them, are not uncommon in this field. Michelle is one of three [National CACFP Association](#)



Michelle Buchanan, Carrie Murphy & Maves Ranola

board members whose journeys

through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) span more than a combined eight decades, and whose work ensures that thousands of children receive nutritious meals every day.

Michelle Buchanan: A Journey from Participant to Program Director

As the Food Program Director at CASEWV, Michelle has built a career devoted to connecting families with nutritious meals. CASEWV sponsors approximately 65 family child care homes, ensuring over 950 children receive healthy meals daily. Michelle's connection to the organization goes back to childhood, when she was enrolled as a Head Start participant at age five in a program run by the very organization where she now works.

For Michelle, the CACFP is more than a reimbursement program. It is a lifeline for providers, working families and the broader community. CASEWV's success as a sponsoring organization stems from the supportive, solutions-oriented environment that Michelle creates for providers, where mistakes are treated as learning opportunities.

"The CACFP impacts our small community by supporting day care providers who care for children while parents work or attend school. These providers offer healthy and nutritious meals and snacks to children, teaching them better eating habits that can lead to better health outcomes and improved readiness for school. This support not only promotes self-sufficiency

amongst the providers, but it also benefits the local economy,” said Michelle.

Carrie Murphy: From Family Child Care Home to National Advocate

Carrie is the Executive Director of Provider’s Network, Inc. (PNI), a sponsoring organization serving the entire state of Nebraska. PNI sponsors 230 family child care homes and ensures that over 1,900 children receive nutritious meals and snacks every day. Carrie came to know the CACFP after she left her career as a paralegal in 2001 to open her own licensed family child care home. She later became a PNI board member to represent the provider perspective, and later served as Board President before stepping into the Executive Director role.

Carrie credits PNI’s success to the stability and dedication of her team. Every member of her staff was with PNI before Carrie stepped into the Executive Director role, a testament to the organizational culture and commitment she inherited and has continued to build. Even more, every PNI staff member shares a child care background, giving the team a unique ability to connect with and support the providers they serve.

Beyond day-to-day sponsorship, Carrie is a vocal advocate for the CACFP statewide and nationally, participating in the Nebraska Early Childhood Policy Leadership Academy.

“I feel like I’m shouting it all the time, but there are still a lot of community members and businesses who don’t know what CACFP means and how instrumental it is to their own day care providers, to their employees’ day care providers. It really does impact every community member in one way or another — whether it’s their own children, their neighbors’ children or their grandchildren,” said Carrie.

Maves Ranola: Bringing Passion to Community Nutrition

Maves is the Director of Nutrition at Lutheran Services Florida (LSF), a statewide nonprofit dedicated to supporting vulnerable Floridians that impacts one in every fifty residents. Since the 1980s, LSF has served as a CACFP sponsor, today overseeing 24 affiliated Head Start and Early Head Start sites, approximately 396 family child care homes, and four emergency shelters — collectively providing nutritious meals and snacks to over 6,000 children. Maves brings 18 years of CACFP experience to her role. Under her leadership, LSF views the CACFP not merely as a compliance program, but as a platform for building lifelong healthy habits in children and their families.

Seeing the difference that the CACFP makes daily is what motivates Maves to continue her work. She is constantly reminded – whether it’s from a child trying a new vegetable or a parent successfully helping their child navigate a food allergy – that the work she does matters.

“CACFP is about access — ensuring every child in our program receives healthy meals that help them fuel learning and development. For many families, CACFP helps ease the stress of food

insecurity. Beyond the meals themselves, CACFP provides opportunities to teach children lifelong healthy habits,” said Maves.

The stories of these three leaders exemplify the power of CACFP sponsorship to create lasting change. By providing critical support to child care providers, they are ensuring that children across the country grow up with access to the nutrition they need to thrive.

Since 1986, the National CACFP Association (NCA) has been a leading national organization offering support to thousands within the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) community. Its overarching goal is to ensure nutrition security for families by facilitating access to vital food programs.

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