



## Anywhere and Everywhere

**I**N JULY, I WROTE ABOUT MY VIEW of our country and our profession as a mosaic—a limitless mixture of textures and styles when seen close up, forming a unified and meaningful design all its own when we step back and view the big picture.

A vital aspect of our collective mosaic is how we arrive at the same “place”—serving clients, patients, and communities in so many different areas of work and so many varied geographical areas. The Academy's 2017 *Compensation & Benefits Survey of the Dietetics Profession*, available free to all members (\$250 for non-members), details 20 different primary work settings for registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) and nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered (NDTRs). We work in every state, in practice areas ranging from acute-care facilities, food manufacturers, and private practice to school foodservice, community/public health programs, and government agencies.

### “THE BOTTOM OF THE WORLD”

If you are able to travel and want to see new places, a big world is waiting. Sally B. Ayotte, RDN, of Salida, CO, discovered just how big when she worked for 12 years in Antarctica—6 of them as executive chef—where she was responsible for feeding scientists and support staff at three remote research stations for the United States Antarctic Program.

“Cooking and serving healthy food has always been important to me,” says Ayotte, a trained chef. “I've worked in foodservice management most of my career. I have run kitchens in hospitals, nursing homes, whitewater rafting companies, and elder hostel programs.

“I have always enjoyed traveling and working in unusual places,” Ayotte says. “Alaska, Honduras, and around the US. I was managing a kitchen at a small outdoor adventure company in Colorado when I learned of the

opportunity to go to the bottom of the world.”

I asked Ayotte what was memorable about her Antarctica experience. “Cooking and running kitchens in remote locations is a great opportunity for being creative with a limited supply of fresh produce,” she says.

“The food order was placed a year to a year and a half before it was to be consumed. It arrived via cargo vessel and was stored in large warehouses. At the South Pole Station, the frozen food is stored outdoors. We were very creative with frozen and canned products to keep variety in the menu and to offer fruits and vegetables to keep the population healthy.

“The people were also memorable. I worked with some skilled and interesting kitchen staff!”

### BLOOM WHERE YOU'RE PLANTED

You don't need to travel to make you mark. Anywhere, anytime, wherever you are, there are opportunities. Whatever your age, physical location, cultural background, or interests, you can bloom where you're planted. Sandra L. Pagán, RD, LD, of Aloha, OR, changed careers and now connects RDNs and NDTRs with continuing education online. “All things tech, nutrition, and learning are what keep me excited each day,” Pagán says.

How did she get from “where she was” to “where she's at?” Pagán says she was “in a place where I didn't feel my work had a direct effect on others' well-being. In other words, it was not fulfilling. After exploring the world of nutrition by reading books and volunteering in my community, I decided to make a career change.

“Over about a 5-year period, I went back to school part-time and eventually become a registered dietitian. In the 8 years since becoming an RD, I've done inpatient clinical work and have



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been the systems administrator of the nutrition software at a hospital system in Oregon. Along the way, I was open to the idea of starting my own business and when the idea for Dietitian Hub came to me, I knew I had to go for it,” Pagán says.

### JUST GET STARTED

I asked both of our fellow members for their secret recipe for personal and career fulfillment, whatever our job and wherever we work. Ayotte says to always be open to opportunity. “Flexibility has been my key to life,” she says.

“I feel we are in an unprecedented time to be able to create our own opportunities,” Pagán says. “I encourage any RDN or NDTR who has an idea of what they want to do, or create, in the world to start taking small steps toward making it happen. Take a course. Create a program for your community. Just get started with baby steps—don't put it off.”

Along with the diversity of experiences and the backgrounds of Academy members, the countless locations where we accomplish our crucial work will always be one of the very best things about our chosen profession. I love the fact that we are anywhere and everywhere.

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