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(SitNews) Ketchikan, Alaska - There are at least forty reasons why Kate Cessnun is on the Alaska Journal of Commerce “Top Forty Under 40” list.

Kate Cessnun
“Top Forty Under 40”

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Kate Cessnun, the Clinic Dietitian and Manager of Nutrition Services at PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center (KMC), has an impressive list of credentials and activities.

“We are so pleased Kate returned to her hometown,” said Patrick Branco, CEO of KMC, “I am especially thankful she joined the team at Ketchikan Medical Center. It’s wonderful, and no surprise, the Alaska Journal of Commerce chose to honor her. With her academic and proven successes along with her involvement in community projects, she exemplifies the best of her generation of Alaskans.”

Cessnun graduated magna cum laude from the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 2010 with a double major in Biological Sciences and English and a minor in Women’s Studies. She recently graduated from a combined master's degree and dietetic internship program at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health with a Master of Science in Public Health degree in Human Nutrition. This program only accepts six people annually and included rotations at Johns Hopkins hospital.

During her time at UAF she worked for the Center for Alaska Native Health Research, working with the Nutrition Core Team on a project aimed at developing an intervention to address childhood obesity in the YK Delta.

In the past year at Ketchikan Medical Center, Cessnun has been working to advance many projects, including increasing outpatient nutrition counseling, serving as part of
a Community Health Needs Assessment team, joining the medical center’s Palliative Care team, and assisting with a feasibility study on providing dialysis in Ketchikan.

She started her own business, called Nutrition Your Way LLC, which aims to provide a greater number of nutrition services to the community, including grocery store tours, cooking classes and affordable nutrition counseling options.

She also works with other community members to improve the food environment in Ketchikan. Cessnun, along with Bett Jakubek, Jergen Johannsen and others, founded the Tongass Community Food Alliance (TCFA), which recently became a task force under the Ketchikan Wellness Coalition. Cessnun chairs the TCFA’s education committee, working to establish school gardens and starting a monthly lecture series to teach people how to produce their own food in Southeast Alaska’s unique climate. To spread nutrition knowledge, Kate has also started a blog “Nutrition in the 99901”

“Kate is an excellent example of the kind of ambitious young professionals our state is producing,” said Branco. “Her desire to impact the wellness of our community both in her professional career and her philanthropic service, brings her area of expertise to the forefront of many discussions community-wide.”

Branco said, “During a time in our state when we are battling many diseases directly correlated with nutrition, Kate is an outstanding example for young health care professionals, encouraging them to share their knowledge and skills within their communities to bring about positive changes.”

The "Top Forty Under 40" will be presented in the April edition of the Alaska Journal of Commerce. A committee of Morris Media management selected the 2013 winners from more than 140 individuals and 200 submissions. Ms. Cessnun was one of only seven who was unanimously chosen by all the committee members.