



August 1, 2023

Bread of Life Development Ministries hosts Happy Helpings Spike Event in Conyers

Taking place on July 11 in Conyers, Nutrition Services teamed up with Bread of Life Development Ministries for a spike event. The purpose of a spike event is to help bring awareness to the community that summer meals continue to be available until school starts.

Along with multiple physical activities that included bean bags, hula hoops, jump ropes and hopscotch, about 55 children enjoyed a nutritious meal and learned a healthy way to keep hydrated during the summer months.

A hydration station was set up where kids selected from a variety of fruit infused water, and there were also locally grown fruits and vegetables for the kids to taste test.

"Summer meals are getting ready to wind down, but the children in these communities still need to be fed" said Tamika Boone, Director of Nutrition Services. "The BOLD Ministries staff are doing a fantastic job of making sure that children are being given nutritious meals right up until school starts back," added Boone.



The kids were excited to try the flavors of water infused with fruit at the hydration station.



Every child received a free, nutritious meal.



The heat didn't stop the kids from physical activities at the spike event.

Happy Helpings Start-up Grant Recipients Announced

Congratulations to the following sponsors that were awarded a Happy Helpings Start-up Grant for summer 2023. These sponsors have agreed to expand their meal service to unserved counties of the state.

- Bread of Life Development Ministries, Inc.
- Chance of Change, Inc.
- Fort Valley State University
- Georgia Nutritional Services, Inc.
- Heart Filled Helping Hands, Inc.
- Karing Hartz Community Development Corp.
- Love Heals Foundation, Inc.
- Progressive Steps, Inc.
- Rock of Salvation Ministries, Inc.
- Sankofa House, Inc.
- Second Harvest of South Georgia, Inc.
- Small Treasures Learning Center, Inc.
- Youth Science Academy, Inc.

Summer Meals Season Ends when School Starts

Sponsors can only operate the Happy Helpings (HH) program during the summer months when school is not in session. Once school reopens in the district where a site is located, HH operations must end.

Transitioning from Happy Helpings to CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals

Many existing Happy Helpings sites are well-positioned to offer afterschool meals during the school year through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Both organizations and communities benefit when meals are offered to children in low-income communities year-round.

Now that we are at the end of the summer season, the opportunity for sponsors to transition to At-Risk Afterschool Meals, a component of CACFP, is upon us. Here are a few things to consider:

- An application for Happy Helpings sponsors transitioning to CACFP is required upon initial entry to the CACFP. General updates and annual renewal will be required thereafter.
- As part of the current ATLAS CACFP application process, Happy Helpings sponsors are required to sign a CACFP agreement in addition to their existing agreement.
- Sponsors are required to adhere to all monitoring requirements.
- Sponsors are required to attend training.
- If you have questions or are interested in registering for training, please contact [Leslie Truman](#) at 404.657.1779.

After School Programs Required to Apply for License or Exemption to Participate in At-Risk

Afterschool programs MUST apply for license or exemption in order to participate in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program by submitting a complete license or exemption application to DECAL's [Child Care Services \(CCS\)](#).

Available Resources:

- [Applicant's Guide to Licensing](#)
- [Child Care Learning Center Information](#)
- [Exemption Overview Presentation](#)

For more information, requirements, License Orientation meeting, and state laws, contact CCS at 404.657.5562.

Get Ready for Annual Year-End Reconciliation

Here are a few reasons why reconciliation is important and needed:

- To ensure sponsors maintain continued SFSP integrity and compliance with Federal Regulations.
- To demonstrate all program funds are being used for allowable SFSP costs while maintaining accurate records for review.
- To identify excess funds and ensure sponsors have a process in place to determine how they will be utilized for allowable costs.

The Year End Reconciliation is completed after:

- The final claim is submitted to DECAL
- All invoices are paid.
- Final reimbursement is received.
- Happy Helpings functional activity is closed.
- Last operating bank statement or general ledger has **all program activity** accounted for.

When to Submit the Reconciliation Form

- The annual reconciliation form and supporting financial documentation are to be submitted no later than fifteen (15) days after the final claim is submitted or no later than October 31 of the applicable year.

As a Sponsor, What Should I do *Right Now*?

- Ensure all transactions are being appropriately recorded throughout the duration of the program.
- Compare budget approval to actual costs and determine if a budget revision needs to be submitted or do you need to utilize other program revenue.
- ***Get familiar with the reconciliation form*** - Practice to see how the form works before submitting.
- Ensure the system-generated general ledger is always up to date.
- Review the Management Plan and make sure you are following your own financial record-keeping practices.

Please review the [reconciliation form](#) and [instructions](#). Contact the budget team at nutritionbudget@decals.ga.gov with any questions.

Reminder to Review Online Happy Helpings Application

Sponsors are required to review and ensure that all sections of their online Happy Helpings (HH) application in GA ATLAS are accurate at all times. Failure to maintain an accurate application could result in a finding(s) and/or an adverse action. [Click here](#) to access HH application update procedures. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your assigned Business Operations Representative.

Application Specialists	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
Jerald Savage	o (zero)-G V-Z	Jerald.Savage@dec.al.ga.gov	(707) 405-7916
Shericka Blount	H-P, Q-U	Shericka.Blount@dec.al.ga.gov	(404) 656-6411

Business Operations Representative	Institution Assignment	Email	Phone Number
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Procurement Updates

Monitoring Executed Contracts, Agreements, and Services

As the Happy Helpings program comes to a close with the end of summer, now is the time to review and evaluate executed contracts, agreements, invoices, and to assess current and potential meal sites. Reviewing contracts, agreements, and services may help with the following:

- Finding unexpected changes by the vendor on prices or supplies.
- Inspecting unanticipated changes in the number of meals served to apply in the upcoming program year.
- Discovering a need for a new vendor based on unfilled terms in the agreement or contract.
- Preparing for the end of the contract.
- Identifying there are no remaining renewal options.
- Determining an alternative procurement method to use compared to the prior year (i.e., new bid process, new agreements, amendments, change in procurement method overall, etc).

If the sponsoring organization has to execute formal procurement or a new vendor should be used for the upcoming year, remember that securing a new bid is a multi-step process.

Plan early with these steps:

- Assessing and identifying the procurement needs
- Preparing the Invitation for Bid (IFB)
- Submitting the Invitation for Bid to DECAL
- Publicizing of the IFB and publicly announcing the IFB at least 14 days before the bid opening
- Notifying DECAL of the time and place at least 14 days before the bid opening
- Publicly opening all bids received
- Submitting copies of all contracts, a certificate of independent price determination, and copies of all bids received to DECAL
- Evaluating the bids received
- Awarding the contract
- Monitoring the contract

For questions regarding procurement, please contact Tempest Harris, Procurement Compliance Specialist at tempest.harris@dec.al.ga.gov.

Celebrating Local Foods & Agricultural-based Education activities during Farm to Summer Week

DECAL's Nutrition Services celebrated Farm to Summer Week June 26-30.

On June 27, in conjunction with a Happy Helpings Kick-off Event in Bryan County, the nutrition team offered locally grown fruits and vegetables provided by the Forsyth Farmers Market in Savannah. During the event, kids were able to taste test the local fruits and vegetables and to select from a variety of water that was infused with local fruit and herbs.



Farm to Summer engages kids and families through fun, hands-on experiential learning activities, improves the quality and appeal of summer meals, and increases access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and nourishment while school is out.

The themes for the week were as follows:

- Monday – What is Farm to Summer?
- Tuesday – Gardening & Physical Activity with Young Children
- Wednesday – Cooking & Taste Testing with Young Children
- Thursday – Locally Grown in Meals & Snacks
- Friday – Literacy, Music & Movement

Try the 'Farm to Summer' themed lesson plans for **infants & toddlers** and **pre-k** children. We encourage your program to participate in Farm to Early Childhood Education (ECE)/Farm to Summer activities throughout the year.

As always, please share photos of your program participating Farm to ECE/Farm to Summer activities with us on social media using #GAFarmtoSummer or #GAFarmtoECE, or via email to morgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov.

Apply for USDA's "Turnip the Beet" Award

Nominations Open August 7; Nominations Due September 1



Nutrition Services is excited to announce that the **Turnip the Beet Award** has returned for summer 2023. The award recognizes outstanding Summer Meal Program sponsors across the nation who work hard to offer high quality meals to children that are appetizing, appealing, and nutritious during the summer months.

Last summer, Happy Helpings Sponsor Step of Faith Outreach, Inc. was recognized with the Turnip the Beet Award for providing quality meals. They have been serving summer meals for more than 20 years.

Tell us how your organization went above and beyond this summer to ensure children participating in SFSP received high-quality meals by completing the nomination form.

To apply, sponsors may self-nominate or be nominated by another party. The **nomination form** for this award includes short-answer questions and menu criteria based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The criteria include serving local foods, a variety of vegetables and fruit, whole grains, and

low-fat and fat-free milk. For more detailed information on the Turnip the Beet Award and the evaluation criteria, check out the [Turnip the Beet webpage](#).

Please complete and submit nomination forms by **Friday, September 1, 2023**, to morgan.chapman@decals.ga.gov.

Questions? Contact Morgan Chapman, Nutrition Education Specialist at morgan.chapman@decals.ga.gov.

Rural Non-Congregate Meal Services

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328), established a permanent non-congregate meal service option for rural areas with no congregate meal service available through the Summer Meals Programs to include the SFSP.

In response, USDA issued the guidance, "*Implementation Guidance: Summer 2023 Non-Congregate Meal Services in Rural Areas*." USDA issued additional guidance on April 20, 2023 entitled "*Questions and Answers #2: Summer 2023 Non-Congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas*."

On May 17, 2023, DECAL Nutrition issued, *Rural Non-Congregate Meal Services in the Summer Food Service Program* which provided:

- Updated resources to determine if a site is located in a rural pocket
- Updates to participant (child) eligibility requirements for home delivery
- Further guidance on bulk distribution of food items including the distinction between bulk items and multi-day meal issuance
- Notification that experienced sponsors must be in good standing to be approved to operate non-congregate service
- Guidance and requirements regarding sponsors' monitoring of non-congregate meal service sites

Please note: *Rural non-congregate meal service requests must be managed and approved by Nutrition Services' Applications Unit. Therefore, sponsors should not request use of this flexibility through the waiver module in ATLAS.*

For additional information, please refer to the resources below, which includes a newly added webinar recording:

Recorded Webinars

- [Happy Helpings SFSP Updates \(Part 2\): Rural Non-Congregate Meal Service Option](#), June 6, 2023
- [Happy Helpings SFSP Updates: Non-congregate Rural Option, Final Rule, Racial and Ethnic Data, and Tiering Status](#), April 25, 2023

Questions and Answers FAQs

- [Rural Non-Congregate Meal Service Option Q&As](#)

Policy Memoranda

- [Rural Non-Congregate Meal Services in the Summer Food Service Program](#), May 17, 2023
- [Questions and Answers #2: Summer 2023 Non-Congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas](#), April 20, 2023
- [Implementation Guidance: Summer 2023 Non-Congregate Meal Service in Rural Areas](#), February 28, 2023

Please email your questions, comments, and feedback to the Nutrition TA Mailbox at NutritionTA@decals.ga.gov. The Nutrition Services Team will respond to all questions and make the responses available.

For questions regarding policy memoranda, please contact Robyn.Parham@decals.ga.gov.

Training Resources

In Case You Missed It: Webinar Recordings Now Available!

If you missed a webinar, please visit the [Training and Technical Assistance](#) webpage for previously recorded webinars. This month's training highlight is the [SFSP Transitioning to CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals](#).

Summer Food, Summer Moves Resource Kit

Summer Food, Summer Moves is a fun, hands-on resource kit designed to get kids and families excited about healthy eating and physical activity during the summer months. The kit is designed for use by summer meal site operators and focuses on using music, games, art, and movement to motivate kids and families to choose more fruits and vegetables, choose water instead of sugary drinks, get enough physical activity every day, and to limit screen time.

- [Download Your Kit](#) - Summer Food Service Program operators may request free **printed copies** while supplies last. These materials are also available in [Spanish](#).

Nutrition Ed Nook

A Summertime Classic

Watermelon is August's Harvest of the Month ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)) spotlight! Watermelon is not just a juicy, delicious, refreshing snack, meal-maker, ingredient or summertime celebrity, it is an all-year-round, naturally-nutritious pick. At 92% water, it is a delicious way to rehydrate.



Each slice, ball or bite delivers fiber, minerals phytonutrients and vitamins. Watermelon is high in vitamins A, B6, & C, potassium, magnesium, thiamin, and phosphorous. This sweet fruit is also high in lycopene, which gives it its red color and is a powerful antioxidant that helps keep us healthy.

Watermelon season in Georgia is between June and September. A warm-season crop related to cantaloupe, cucumber and pumpkin, most watermelons are grown in Central Georgia or along our southern Coastal Plains. Georgia watermelon season kicks off with a "quality" crop expected to have the crispest, sweetest, most refreshing flavor.

Fun Facts: July is National Watermelon Month and August 3 is National Watermelon Day. Cordele, located in Crisp County is known as "The Watermelon Capital of the World."

Integration:

- [Watermelon and Fruit Salad](#)
- [Watermelon Cooler](#)
- [Watermelon Breakfast Parfait A Go Go](#)
- [Watermelon Kiwi Smoothie](#)
- [Watermelon Slushy](#)
- [Watermelon Kebabs](#)

Education:

- **Watch** the [Harvest with Holly](#) video that explores the Harvest of the Month spotlight, how these items grow, where they grow in Georgia, and how they get from the farms to school meals all across the state of Georgia.
- **Compare & Contrast** Make a list of similarities and a list of differences between watermelon and another melon, like cantaloupe or honeydew melon. Are there more similarities or differences?
- **Read** ['One Watermelon Seed' by Celia Barker Lottridge](#). In this deceptively simple counting book, Max and Josephine tend their garden while readers follow along,

counting from one to ten as the garden is planted.

- **Talk** with families about how participants can help with meal preparation such as using a plastic knife or cookie cutter to cut watermelon into cubes or fun and various shapes. **Bonus:** Send recipes home with families for them to incorporate watermelon into their meals!

Conversation:

- Have your program participants eaten watermelon before?
- What is their favorite way to eat watermelon?
- What other melons do your program participants like to eat?

Share your Harvest of the Month stories and menu integration of watermelon with Nutrition Education Specialist, Morgan Chapman, MPH, MCHc at morgan.chapman@decal.ga.gov.



Family Engagement Through Physical Activity

Family engagement during the earliest years of a child's life is one of the most powerful factors of a child's growth development.

The positive outcomes of engaging parents, staff, and caregivers increases the support for children's learning at home, empowers parents, and improves family well-being. According to the CDC, family engagement in relation to physical activity in childcare settings and schools work together to increase physical activity opportunities outside of a child's learning environment.

Family engagement improves cognitive development and academic performance, better social-emotional development, and improved health. Their families are children's first teachers, and it is the quality of parent-child relationship and interactions that create the foundational skills that children need at home, in school and their community.

Family Engagement & Physical Activity Ideas & Tips for Families:

- **Have a Family Picnic** - Social interactions boost children's cognitive and communication abilities. Have a family picnic in the backyard of your home, outside on the lawn, or at a nearby park. Consider bringing a blanket, basket, toss and catch, kickball, running, etc. to get active!
- **Plan a day outdoors** - As a family, schedule a time each day for an outdoor activity with your children. Hike a local nature trail/park or ride a bicycle path.
- **Choose toys appropriately and wisely** - Give children toys that encourage physical activity, such as balls, hopscotch, hula hoops, and jump ropes. Choose the Do it Yourself (DIY) materials on active play indoors and outdoors.
- **Limit Screen Time** - As per the CDC, one to two hours of screen time a day should be the limit for children. As a family, set boundaries, keep the television and electronics out of the child's bedroom and limit computer usage to school projects.
- **Gardening** - Caring for the plants gives the children a reason to get outside each day. Learning how to grow a garden teaches about the origins of our food and encourages healthy eating and active living habits.

Engaging families as partners early in the physical activity space allows parents to establish strong home-school and community connections that support their children's growth and development in the long-term. It is an essential component of high-quality early care and education. Let Us Keep Family Engagement Moving!

Integration:

- **Bright From the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning –**

Family Engagement and Resources

- CDC – [Involve Families in Physical Activities in Schools](#)
- [Strengthening Families Georgia](#)
- CDC – [Parent Engagement \(Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health\)](#)

Education:

- **Read** aloud, “[We Move Together](#),” by Kelly Fritsch, Anne McGuire and Eduardo Trejos.
- **Watch** the video on Family Engagement: “[Molly Wright: How Every Child Can Thrive by Five](#).” | by TED Talk.
- **Talk** with families about ways to bring family together and to promote physical activity on family engagement all year round, whether at home, outside, in their local community, at your childcare site, or at their local community recreational areas.
Bonus: Share #FamilyEngagement, #InstaFitness, #MoveYourWay #OutdoorFamilyActivities, #ActiveIndoors pictures and events that are happening in your communities.

Conversation:

- What physical activities are good for family engagement?
- How do you encourage families to engage in physical activity (indoor/outdoor)?
- Why is family engagement important in children?
- How does family impact physical activity?

Share your #FamilyEngagement, #InstaFitness, #OutdoorFamilyActivities, #MoveYourWay, #ActiveIndoor, stories and pictures with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren at tina.mclaren@dec.al.ga.gov.

Eat Healthy and Live Active Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month 23-24 Calendar

Harvest of the Month (HOTM) is the Georgia Department of Education School Nutrition Program’s farm to school initiative that highlights an item each month that can be sourced locally and served in Georgia’s school meals.

DECAL’s Harvest of the Month calendar aligns with the Georgia Department of Education’s Harvest of the Month initiative and was created in partnership with Quality Care for Children, Georgia Organics, and the Farm to Early Care & Education (ECE) Coalition for ECE settings.

Visit the Georgia Department of Education's HOTM [webpage](#) and Quality Care for Children [webpage](#). Upon viewing, you can find tips and tricks for preparing produce items, curriculum connections, activity lists and book alignment for your early care classrooms.



Dates to Remember

DATE	EVENTS
August	Harvest of the Month: Watermelon
August 7	“Turnip the Beet” Nominations Open
September 1	“Turnip The Beet” Nominations Due
September 4	Labor Day
October 31	Year-End Reconciliation Deadline

Happy Helpings Resources:

The following documents were covered in previous newsletters:

- [Happy Helpings Sponsors: Submit pictures of your high-quality meals](#)
- [Stay Informed on Monitoring](#)
- [Summer Resources for Georgia's Children](#)
- ["And Justice For All" Posters](#)
- [Determining Duty Allocation in the Management Plan](#)
- [Requesting an Advance Payment for Happy Helpings](#)
- [Pre-Award Cost Request vs. Excess Funds Use Request](#)
- [Omnibus Spending Bill Signed into Law](#)
- [Capacity Builder Tool helps Sponsors Identify Locations for New Meal Sites](#)
- [FY23 Reimbursement Rates Released](#)
- [Locate Happy Helpings' Meal Sites on FoodFinder](#)
- [Apply for a No Kid Hungry Grant Today](#)
- [Be a Health Hero - Health Empowers You](#)
- [Guidance on Collecting Race and Ethnicity Data](#)
- [Updated HH Forms and Policies](#)
- [Reminder: PolicyStat is available on the Nutrition Services' Webpage](#)
- [Check your Email Messages in GA ATLAS](#)

How was my Customer Service?

Provide feedback on your experience with the Nutrition Team



Click on the icon at right to participate in the customer service survey. Responses are anonymous.

NEW DECAL Download

CAPS Update

Georgia’s Childcare and Parent Services, also known as CAPS is a federal program administered by DECAL that helps pay for the cost of child care so parents can work or attend school.

CAPS also helps families find high quality early learning environments and stability in their child care arrangements. Additionally, they connect families with resources to

help them become self-sufficient and engage in two-generation strategies that benefit the

entire family.

On this week's episode of DECAL Download, we get an update on CAPS from Deputy Commissioner of Federal Programs, Elisabetta Kasfir and Scholarship Administration Specialist, Arlene Green.

Listen to the episode [here](#).



Nutrition Division

Marketing & Outreach Team

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