



July 1, 2024

Kick-off Events held with Boys & Girls Clubs in Augusta & Macon

DECAL's Nutrition Services Division co-hosted two Happy Helpings kick-off events in June. The first event was held in Augusta with the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Augusta, and the second event was held in Macon with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Georgia.

These events bring awareness to the importance of summer meals for kids as well the significance of combining nutrition with physical activities and staying hydrated.

During the events, the kids enjoyed nutritious meals, taste-tested Georgia grown fruits and vegetables, hydrated with fruit/vegetable infused water and played various games ranging from egg races, hop scotch and jump rope.

A spike event is planned for Friday, July 12 with the City of Atlanta.

Boys and Girls Club of Greater Augusta

Kids enrolled in the Club's summer camp received free nutritious meals at the Happy Helpings kick-off event in Augusta. The event was held on June 20 at the athletic complex of the E.W Hagler Club.

Special thanks to Susan Robertson, Food Service Director for hosting an amazing event, as well as Clayton Adams, Hannah Smith and Dajuana Robinson of the Community Partnerships and Engagement team for their support.

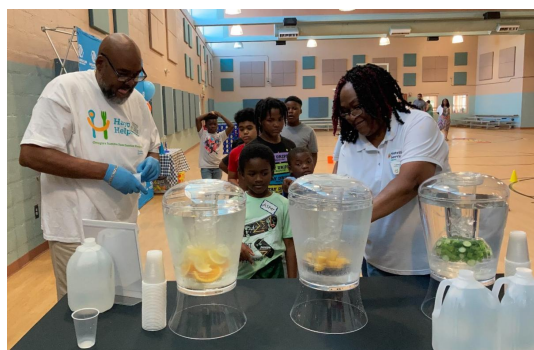




Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Georgia

The kick-off event in Macon was held at the Murphy Felton Tindall Boys and Girls Club in Macon on June 25. Seventy five meals were served to the kids attending summer camp as well as kids in the community.

Special guests attending the kick-off included Shavana Howard, Senior Advisor to the Food Nutrition Consumer Services for USDA and the team from the USDA's Southeast Regional Office (SERO) Dr. Lillie Bouie, Child Nutrition Director, Kim Betton, Regional Public Affairs Director and Izra Brown, Deputy Regional Administrator.



Many thanks to Joann Kilpatrick, Nutrition Compliance Admin for the Boys and Girls Club for partnering with DECAL for a sensational event.



We also want to acknowledge Leatha Bryant, Nutrition Services TA; Edward Rowell and Tomisher Campbell with the Community Partnerships and Engagement team for their assistance in manning the hydration station and the taste test table.

Have You Added New Sites After Application Approval?

If you have added new sites after your initial application was approved, expenses in your budget most likely have increased. This may require you to submit a budget revision to support the new sites.

Please be sure to submit all Add-A-Site information to your assigned Business Operations Specialist and get approval before submitting a budget revision. Once your new sites have been approved, your updated budget costs will be reviewed and considered for approval.

For more information, please contact nutritionbudget@decalfga.gov

Resources to Promote Meal Sites

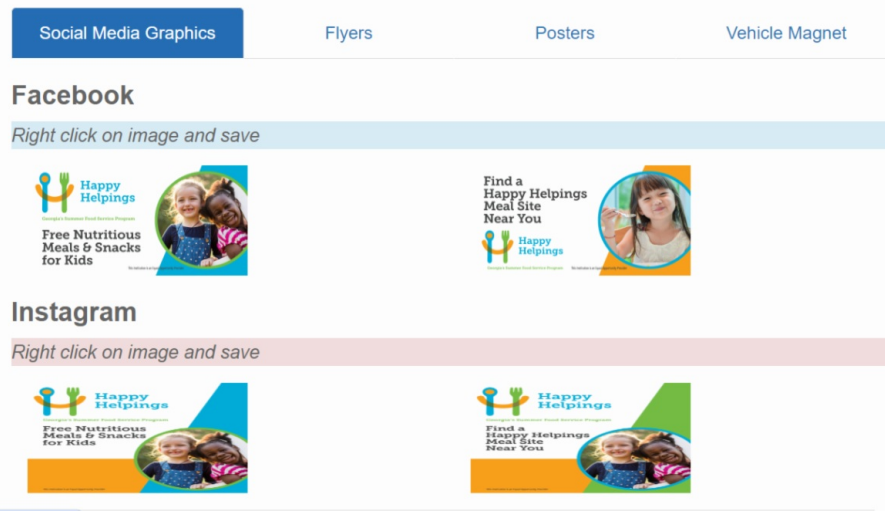
Ensuring families and guardians are aware of the availability of meals in their area is an important part of the Happy Helpings program. Nutrition Services has created several promotional resources to help sponsors gain exposure for meal sites this summer.

These resources include:

- Editable flyer
- Editable Poster
- Social Media Graphics
- Vehicle Magnet*

**To produce a vehicle magnet, print the artwork and take it to any sign company.*

Marketing Materials to Promote Meal Sites



To locate these resources, visit the [Nutrition Page](#) on [Decal.ga.gov](#) and locate "Happy Helpings Participant Information" on the menu. Expand the menu and scroll to "Posters and Flyers." Click on the link and it will take you to a password protected section. The password is "Flyer."

If you have questions, please contact Cindy.Kicklighter@decal.ga.gov

Stay Informed: New SFSP Memos from USDA

The following memos have been issued by USDA:

- **Initial Implementation Memorandum: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.** The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance to CACFP and SFSP operators on the implementation of the final rule, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- **Geographic Preference Expansion Related to the Final Rule titled, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.** This memorandum provides a detailed explanation of the expanded geographic preference option.
- **Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs.** This memorandum provides notice to Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators regarding Sections 739, 747, 748, 769, and 770 of Division B of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (Public Law 118-42) (the Appropriations Act), enacted on March 9, 2024.

Waivers for Physical Safety Concerns

Nutrition Services received recent notification that USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will consider non-congregate waiver requests submitted by sponsors for individual sites during exceptional circumstances that cause physical safety concerns.

Exceptional circumstances can include incidents such as a violent crime occurring within close proximity of a site, determination of unsafe or contaminated water at a site, or other extreme and specific conditions or events that would severely jeopardize the safety of Program participants at a particular site.

It is important to keep in mind that waivers will only be considered for specific meal sites in close proximity to actual incidents. Blanket waiver requests for the entire state, communities, or neighborhoods will not be considered/approved by DECAL or FNS.

To apply for this waiver, sponsors should follow waiver request procedures in DECAL's memorandum [Child Nutrition Program Waiver Request Guidance and Protocol](#). Attached to the memorandum is a template waiver request form that sponsors should use to submit the waiver request to Nutrition Services.

This request should be submitted to Robyn Parham at Robyn.Parham@dec.al.ga.gov. Waivers for physical safety concerns must receive DECAL and FNS approval and non-congregate meal services may not occur until approval has been granted.

Sponsors may request waivers for specific sites for the following:

- Non-Congregate Meal Service [42 U.S.C. 1753(b)(1)(A), 42 U.S.C. 1761(a)(1)(D), and 7 CFR 225.6(i)(15)]
- Parent/Guardian Meal Pickup [42 U.S.C. 1761(f)(3), 7 CFR 225.2(Meals), and 7 CFR 225.9(d)(7)]
- Meal Service Times [7 CFR 225.16(c)(1),(2), and (3)]

Please note that sponsors would be required to publish a public notice of their waiver request on the SFSP sponsor's website or through a printed announcement in the local/state newspaper. This notice must include the regulation that is requested to be waived, such as the regulations noted above.

In addition to the request form, sponsors must submit documentation of the incident that threatens physical safety of Program participants at the site. Examples of documentation that should be submitted are as follows:

- Written and signed statements from site staff who directly witnessed and documented the event;
- Documentation of an event by a law enforcement agency of the jurisdiction in which the site exists (e.g., a police report);
- Published news reports or articles reporting of the incident in close proximity of the site; or
- In the case of contaminated water at a site, a notice from a local health authority advising of the unsafe water conditions.

Waivers will be approved for no more than 7 days. If the safety issue persists past that period, FNS may consider granting extensions on a case-by-case basis.

For questions, please contact Robyn Parham at Robyn.Parham@dec.al.ga.gov

New Waivers Available during Excessive Heat

and Air Quality Advisories

On March 26, 2024, USDA granted a Nutrition Services request to waive certain requirements in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) for summer 2024 operations. Specifically, Nutrition Services was approved to waive the requirement to serve congregate meals during times of excessive heat and air quality advisories.

Non-Congregate Meals during Excessive Heat Waiver

This waiver allows SFSP sponsors, in good standing, to operate approved outdoor meal sites without temperature-controlled alternative sites as non-congregate sites on days when the area is experiencing excessive heat. These waivers may only be used on days when the National Weather Service (NWS) has issued a Heat Advisory, an Excessive Heat Warning, or an Excessive Heat Watch for the area in which an approved outdoor meal site is located, as indicated at <https://www.weather.gov/>. These waivers are effective *May 1, 2024, through September 30, 2024*.

Non-Congregate Meals during Air Quality Advisories Waiver

This waiver allows SFSP sponsors, in good standing, to operate approved outdoor meal sites without alternative indoor sites as non-congregate sites on days when the area is experiencing certain air quality advisories. Sites may be approved for non-congregate meal service on days when the site's zip code has an Air Quality Index (AQI) "purple" flag or higher, as indicated at <https://www.airnow.gov/>. These waivers are effective *May 1, 2024, through September 30, 2024*.

Additional Flexibilities Available

The following flexibilities are also available during times of excessive heat and air quality advisories. These flexibilities are effective *May 1, 2024, through September 30, 2024*

- **Parent and Guardian Meal Pick-Up**
- **Meal Service Time Flexibilities**

Guidance Available on Waivers and Approval Process

Nutrition Services has developed instructions and further guidance on applying for these waivers and flexibilities entitled Happy Helpings Excessive Heat and Air Quality Advisories Application and Instruction Guide. The guidance can be found [here](#).

All sponsors who desire to apply for these waivers are strongly encouraged to review this guidance as it offers information on required documentation to be maintained and submitted. In addition, the guidance contains instructions on how to report meals served during the utilization of these waivers.

Sponsors interested in utilizing these waivers and flexibilities must request approval via the Waiver Module in GA ATLAS. Sponsors must have approval to utilize these waivers and flexibilities prior to serving meals in non-congregate settings during excessive heat and/or air quality advisories.

For general questions on requesting a USDA approved waiver, please contact Tammie.Baldwin@dec.al.gov.

For specific policy questions pertaining to waivers, please contact Robyn.Parham@dec.al.gov.

High Quality Summer Meals Award Program

Turnip the Beet Award Nominations Open: August 1

Nomination Deadline: August 30

The **Turnip the Beet 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. Nominations will open on August 1, 2024.

This is an exciting opportunity for Happy Helpings Sponsors to demonstrate how you go above and beyond to ensure that children in your care are receiving high-quality meals that are both nutritious and appetizing.

To learn more, visit [DECAL's Turnip the Beet Award](#) webpage. Nomination forms will be available on August 1, 2024. Please complete nomination forms by **Friday, August 30, 2024**, and submit to morgan.chapman@decals.ga.gov.

Questions? Contact Morgan Chapman, Nutrition Education Specialist at

morgan.chapman@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 [Procurement Supporting Documents & Resources](#) webinar. It discussed the standard procurement methods with each procurement threshold, how to complete or create a Procurement Policy, and the required procurement documents to complete and submit to support the food cost.

Yogurt Five Ways

[MyPlate](#) has developed an infographic resource on how to offer yogurt multiple ways in your nutrition program.

[\[Read the Resource\]](#)

Child Nutrition Recipe Box

The [Institute of Child Nutrition \(ICN\)](#) shares the Child Nutrition Recipe Box to provide providers with menu ideas to:

- prepare healthy and delicious meals that are standardized and meet meal pattern requirements,
- provide meal pattern crediting information for meal pattern components made with legumes, whole grains, and vegetables, including vegetable subgroups like dark green, red, and orange vegetables.

[\[See Recipes in English\]](#)

[\[See Recipes in Spanish\]](#)

Kids Food Critic Activity

[MyPlate](#) and [USDA Team Nutrition](#) have shared a fun activity that lets kids select a new fruit, vegetable, or recipe to sample. Have them taste the food and rate it based on visual appeal, smell, taste, and texture using a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the best.

[\[Try the Activity\]](#)

Nutrition Ed Nook

Sweet Georgia Peaches

Sweet, Georgia Peaches are the July Harvest of the Month ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)) spotlight! Georgia is known as the Peach State. Georgia's production of peaches is 3rd in the



nation, behind California and South Carolina.

Peaches provide important nutrients like vitamins C, A and E, potassium, and water. Peach peels are a good source of fiber which supports healthy blood sugar levels. Enjoy peaches as a snack or with your favorite yogurt or cereal for extra flavor and nutrients.

Peach season in Georgia is May through August, when they are at peak quality and most cost effective. There are two main varieties of peaches are Freestone andclingstone. Over 40 commercial varieties of peaches are produced in our state.

Fun Fact: Peaches were first grown in Georgia during the Colonial period. After the Civil War, Georgia peach growers developed superior new varieties that boosted the commercial peach industry and made Georgia the “Peach State.”

Integration:

- [Peach Salsa](#)
- [Skillet Peaches](#)
- [Peach Yogurt Bites](#)
- [Peachy Keen Flavored Water](#)
- [Peach, Pineapple & Orange Smoothie](#)

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** peaches and another fruit. Make a list of similarities and differences. Are there more similarities or differences?
- **Read [Juicy Peach by Mary Dixon Lake](#)**. Follow along as three boys find, pick, and eat a perfect juicy peach.
- **Talk** with families about how participants can help with meal preparation such as spooning peaches into the blender to make a peach smoothie.
- **Bonus:** Send recipes home with families for them to incorporate peaches into their meals! Check [Pinterest](#) for recipe inspiration.

Conversation:

- Have your program participants eaten peaches before?
- What is their favorite way to eat peaches?
- How does the outside of a peach feel?

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

Physical Activity Corner

Hydration – Quench Your Thirst!

Drink water often and stay healthy! According to the American Dietetic Association, water makes up 60 percent of body weight. It is important to replenish the water in your body by drinking at least 8-10 cups of water a day for a healthy body and to avoid heat stroke or exhaustion.

We have all been there. The feeling of parched or dried lips and excessive sweating after a workout, run, or

even heavy gardening. These feelings are greater now in the summer, especially when we have temperatures in the 90's and humidity over 90 percent.

Here are great ideas to keep your children and family hydrated this summer and year-round while on the move!



- Drink plain or fruit & herb-infused water. Fill the pitcher with cool water. Add different combinations of flavors, such as lemon, cucumber, strawberry, orange, fresh ginger, or fresh whole leaves (mint, basil, rosemary, or parsley). Chill in refrigerator before enjoying!
- Eat foods with higher water content like cucumbers, watermelon, other melons, lettuce, celery, grapes, oranges, bell peppers, and broccoli.
- Combine ice and fruit in a blender to create a slushy, cool and refreshing drink when planning a family picnic or playing sports (i.e., soccer, baseball, basketball, etc.).
- Always carry a water bottle in the car, at home, and at school.
- Ask for water when dining out.
- Have a glass of water (8 – 10 glasses) near you when you are working out at the gym, gardening, farming, walking in the neighboring community, parks, and trails, running, hiking, and more.

Get children, families and the community moving and feeling good with sports-themed games and exercises. Drinking more water is one of the simplest things we can do to be healthier.

Integration:

- [CDC – Increasing Access to Drinking Water to ECE Settings](#)
- [USDA – Make Better Beverage Choices](#)
- [Department of Human Services – Hydrate My State Georgia](#)
- [CDC - Rethink Your Drink](#)
- [USDA – Move More. Sit Less](#)

Education:

- Read aloud, **“Drinking Water” by Mari Schuh**
- **Watch the video on “Get Healthy: Hydration” by NBC news.**
- **Talk** with families about ways to stay hydrated and drink water in the summer or all year round, whether at home, outside, in their local community, at your childcare site, or at their local recreational areas. Bonus: Share #QuenchYourThirst, #RethinkYourDrink, #StayHydrated, #SummerMoves, #DrinkWater pictures and events that are happening in your communities.

Conversation:

- What are the benefits of drinking water?
- How much water should you drink while exercising?
- What hydrates better than water in the summer?
- Why is it important to hydrate before, during, and after exercise?
- How do you beat dehydration in the summer?

Share your #QuenchYourThirst, #RethinkYourDrink, #StayHydrated, #SummerMoves #DrinkWater, stories and pictures with Physical Activity Specialist, Tina McLaren, MPH at tina.mclaren@decal.ga.gov!

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.

The Georgia Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month is a collaborative campaign to promote a different local, seasonal fruit or vegetable in child care settings each month.

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
July	Harvest of the Month: Peaches
July 4	Independence Day Holiday
July 12	Spike Event: City of Atlanta
August 1	Turnip the Beet Award Nominations Open
August 30	Turnip the Beet Award Deadline

Happy Helpings Resources:

The following documents were covered in previous newsletters:

- [And Justice for All Posters](#)
- [Notify DECAL When Updating Your Banking Information](#)
- [Stay Informed: SFSP Policy Revised](#)
- [Updated Guidance for Rural Non-Congregate Meal Services](#)
- [Updated Guidance: Rural Non-Congregate Parent/Guardian Pick up and Delivered Meals](#)
- [Procurement Methods At-A-Glance](#)
- [Have You Determined this Summer's Food Cost & Procurement Methods?](#)
- [Budget Representatives Updated April 2024](#)
- [Identifying the Difference between Pre-Award Cost Request vs. Excess Funds](#)
- [Make your Local Farmers Market a Meal Site Option](#)
- [FY24 Reimbursement Rates Released](#)
- [Increasing Access to Food Through Mobile Feeding](#)
- [Check your Email Messages in GA ATLAS](#)

How was my Customer Service?

Provide feedback on your experience with the Nutrition Team



How was my customer service?

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

NEW DECAL Download

Hot Boiled Peanuts: A Georgia Food Tour

Kelly Young-Silverman is a teacher at The Lovett School in Atlanta.

She is also an author of a new children's book. "Hot Boiled Peanuts" takes its readers on a food tour across the peach state.

On this episode of DECAL Download we talk with Kelly about Shrimp and Grits in Thomasville to Fried Chicken in Cartersville, along with her thoughts on teaching.

Listen to the [episode here](#).



Nutrition Division

Marketing & Outreach

Cindy Kicklighter

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