

Gordon Nutrition News

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Locally Grown Foods Enhance School Meals

by Lisa McKinney

Gordon County School Nutrition participates in a variety of Farm-to-School efforts, and one of the most important of these is serving Locally Grown foods.

Any product produced in Georgia or in any state bordering Georgia qualifies as Locally Grown. These foods are identified by our Locally

Grown decal on the cafeteria serving lines, and they include lots of fruits and vegetables like apples, tomatoes of all sorts and sizes, strawberries, radishes, cucumbers, and many others. What is served depends on the season and whether they are available through our contracted produce vendors, and, of course, the taste preferences of our students.



Serving foods grown in or near our school district has many benefits. It broadens students' knowledge of agriculture in our state and region, encourages healthy eating by serving seasonal produce, and supports farmers in our community, state, and region.



One of our most abundant Locally Grown foods may be one that most people wouldn't think of, because it's not a fruit or vegetable. The majority of our chicken comes from Gold Creek, a company based in Gainesville, Georgia. Gold Creek purchases whole chickens from farms surrounding Gainesville, and then prepares a variety of products like oven-fried chicken, chicken tenders, and

patties for sandwiches. When you eat chicken in our school lunchrooms, you are more than likely eating Georgia chicken.

Locally Grown foods play an important part in School Nutrition and in the education of Gordon County students, so look for the decal and try some local fruit, vegetables, or meat each time you eat in one of our school cafeterias.



Who We Are

A School Nutrition Profile: Ashley Bannister

When we asked Ashley Bannister what got her into a job in School Nutrition, her answer was simple: “My children.” Ashley has always worked with food, but it was finally a job in School Nutrition that gave her work hours similar to her sons’ school hours.

Her first job was making pizzas at Putt-Putt Golf and Games in Coosa, where she grew up. After that, she worked in fast food restaurants and grocery stores, and then spent a few years as a stay-at-home mom. When her younger son started school, she knew she wanted to go back to work, but like so many parents, she wanted to still be available for her kids. She got hired as a school nutrition substitute, and the schedule has definitely worked well for her family: Ashley and her husband, Rex Evans, have one son at Gordon Central High School (GCHS) and one at Ashworth Middle School.



Ashley at work in the GCHS kitchen.

Even when she’s not working, Ashley likes to cook: “It eases my mind,” she says. She also tries to spend a lot of time with her parents, who still live in Coosa. Her favorite past-time is camping, but she also spends time helping her husband with

his business: in addition to a full-time job as a mill supervisor, Rex also runs a junk hauling business on his days off.

When she started working for School Nutrition, Ashley worked as a substitute at a few different schools for about a month; then she came to GCHS to sub, and, “that was all it took,” she says with a smile. She had found her “home,” because she and the other ladies working there have such similar personalities. “There’s a bond that you create with each and every one of them,”



Ashley and some of her coworkers at GCHS.

says Ashley. “I don’t have sisters of my own, and so these ladies are like my sisters. We just all work well together.”

The students are the other benefit of working there. “You get to know them by name, they smile as they pick up their food; we have a lot of well-mannered children here,” says Ashley. “You make a connection with the kids, feeding them every day.”

To see more profiles of School Nutrition staff members, please visit www.facebook.com/hashtag/GCSNMeetOurStaff

Nutrition 101: Are Carbs Really That Bad?

Carbohydrates, which most of us call “carbs,” are one of the macronutrients. With protein and fats, carbs make up most of the human diet. Reducing or eliminating carbs from the diet has helped many

people lose weight; that fact has given this food group a bad reputation, and many think all carbs are bad for us and cause weight gain. However, the truth is that there are two types of carbs: whole, complex carbs and processed, simple carbs. Only one of them is bad for our diets.

Whole, unprocessed carbohydrates are found in vegetables, whole grains, and legumes like peanuts or beans. These carbs are not a problem in the diet. The whole foods that contain carbs also contain important nutrients and provide fuel for the body. They are also rich in fiber, so they help keep our digestive systems healthy.

Processed, simple carbs are the ones we all need to avoid, because they can cause obesity, they cause spikes in blood sugar, and they’re usually filled with empty calories. Foods made with white flour and those with lots of sugar are the primary processed carbohydrates.

Limiting or eliminating all carbs can help people that need to lose weight, and also those with metabolic syndrome or type 2 diabetes. However, for most people without these concerns, one key to a healthy diet is to simply stay away from the refined, processed carbs and instead choose whole, complex carbs like vegetables and grains.

National School Breakfast Week : We Scored Big!

National School Breakfast Week was March 8-12, and we did it up in Gordon County Schools. Many thanks to all the school administrators, teachers, coaches, counselors, and school board members who helped serve breakfast to our students and made it fun.



SUMMER FEEDING

COMING SOON!

JUNE 7 - JULY 30



Gordon County Schools will once again be serving all children 18 and under in our Summer Feeding program. Families can pick up breakfast and lunch each Monday through Thursday at locations all over Gordon County. (Meals for Friday will be included in Thursday's pick-up.) A list of locations will be released soon. All meals are FREE, and it is not required to be registered in Gordon County Schools to receive meals. Questions? Call 706-625-0786.

Want to know more about School Nutrition? You can find us:

On the web: www.gcbe.org/Page\2996



Gordon County School Nutrition

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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