

BEE WELL

Thomas County Wellness Newsletter

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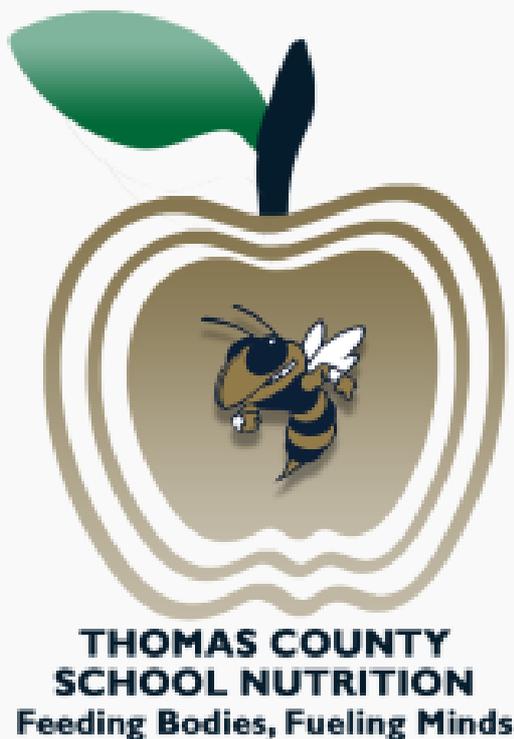
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"You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending."-

—C. S. Lewis



SCHOOL NUTRITION CAFETERIA CONVERSATIONS

What is a reimbursable meal?

Students often ask the question: Why do I have to pick up a fruit or vegetable with my lunch tray? There is a reason we require students to pick up a fruit or vegetable at lunch. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the federal department that oversees the National School Lunch Program, has regulations governing what the school nutrition program must offer to students. According to USDA regulations, school nutrition must offer each of the 5 meal components, grains, meat/meat alternate, milk, fruits, and vegetables, at lunch.

In Thomas County, we operate "Offer vs. Serve" at most of our schools (excluding Hand in Hand), which means that we offer all 5 meal components at lunch, but students only have to pick up 3 of the 5, with the caveat that one selection must be a fruit or vegetable. The USDA distributes money for the National School Lunch Program to the State of Georgia, who then reimburses the school nutrition department for the "reimbursable meals" it serves. In order to be considered "reimbursable" (by the USDA and the State of Georgia) the tray has to contain at least 3 different components, with one of those components being a fruit or vegetable. If the tray has 3 components, but does not contain a fruit or vegetable, then it is not considered "reimbursable" and school nutrition cannot claim it for reimbursement (cannot get paid for serving it).

Students in Thomas County eat for free, but only if they are consuming reimbursable meals. If a student chooses to pick up items from the lunch line, but chooses not pick up a fruit or vegetable, then those items are not considered a "reimbursable meal" and the student would need to purchase those a la carte items from their school meal account. We love being able to provide free meals to our students and we offer a variety of fruits and vegetables each day at our Offer vs. Serve schools. Please encourage your students to pick up a fruit or vegetable. Thank you all for your continued support of School Nutrition!



Adopt a Cow

Are you looking for a new classroom pet? How about a pet that you don't have to take care of? If your answers were "yes," then "Adopt a Cow" sounds like the perfect program for your classroom! It is free to join, but the deadline to register is September 15th. Once you register, you will receive bi-monthly updates about your adopted cow with the opportunity to live chat with your host farmer at the end of the school year. It is a great way to give students a firsthand look at dairy farming and you can incorporate your cow into a variety of lessons throughout the year. See the Adopt a Cow program timeline below.

Adopt a Cow Timeline of Events:

1. **October:** Host Farm and Calf announcement is emailed and posted to your Adopt A Cow portal.
2. **November:** Introductory email (sent via email) and kit with details about the host farm and calf (sent via snail mail) are sent. The first 30,000 registrants will receive this mailer, everyone else will receive their information digitally only.
3. **December:** Update #1 is emailed and posted to your Adopt A Cow portal.
4. **February:** Update #2 is emailed and posted to your Adopt A Cow portal.
5. **April:** Update #3 is emailed and posted to your Adopt A Cow portal.
6. **April/May:** An opportunity to live chat your calf and host farm via YouTube.

To register for Adopt a Cow, click [here](#).

HARVEST OF THE MONTH

The Harvest of the Month for September is **Apple**.

Apples in Georgia

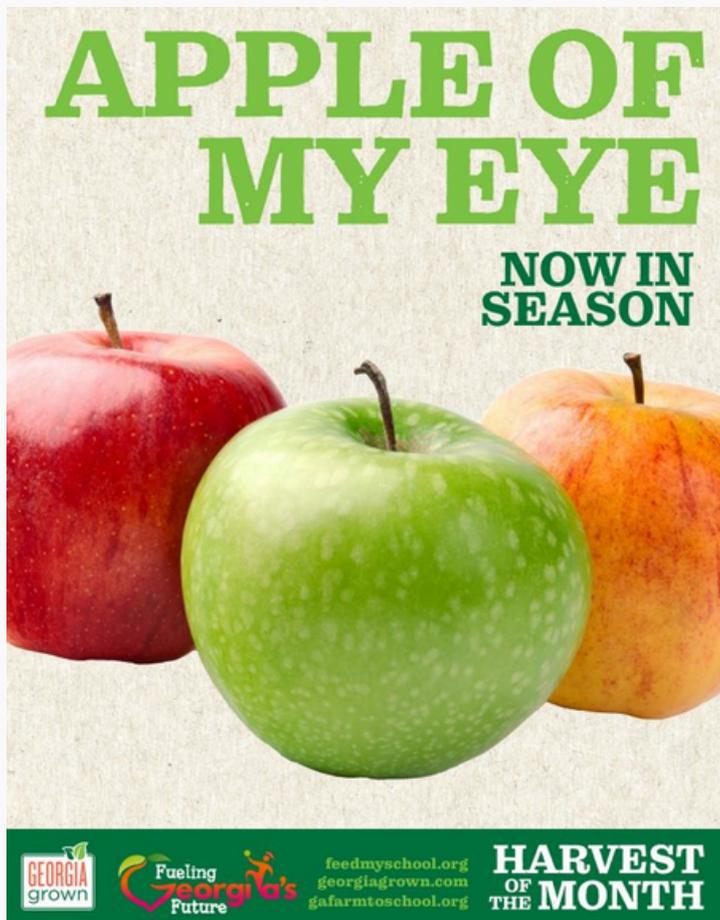
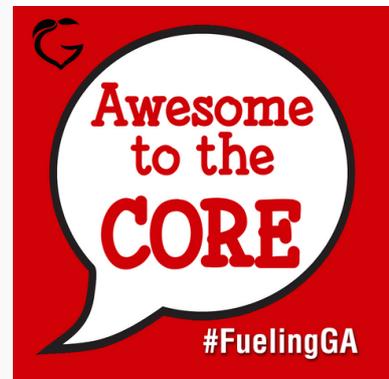
Most apple crops grown in Georgia are grown in the North Georgia mountains. Unfortunately, Thomas County is not the ideal place to grow apples. Some of the apple varieties that are grown in Georgia include Gala, Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, Fuji, Granny Smith, Rome Beauty, and Jonagold. The Georgia Apple Festival is held each fall in Ellijay, GA. This year's apple festival will be the weekends of October 14th-15th and 21st-22nd. Click [here](#) for more information on the 2023 Georgia Apple Festival.

Apple Nutrition

Apples are a Superfood as they are very nutrient-dense! One medium apple has roughly 100 calories, but contains five grams of fiber (skin on), more than 10% of your Vitamin C for the day, and micronutrients like Copper, Potassium, and Vitamins B1, B6, E, & K. Apples, like all fruits, contain no fat or cholesterol and minimal sodium.

Apple Resources

To learn more about apples, check out these [facts](#) or to preview classroom activities, click [here](#). For a fun apple math activity to use in class, click [here](#).



APPLE CINNAMON GRANOLA BAR RECIPE



KID FRIENDLY APPLE SANDWICH RECIPE



MONTHLY OBSERVANCES

National Whole Grains Month

Every September during Whole Grains Month, the Whole Grain Council campaigns to bring health information about the benefits of whole grains, whole grain recipes, and cooking tips for whole grains to people around the world. Whole grains are an important, but often overlooked part of a healthy diet, as shown by the statistic to the right. For more information and classroom resources on whole grains, check out the Whole Grain Council [website](#).

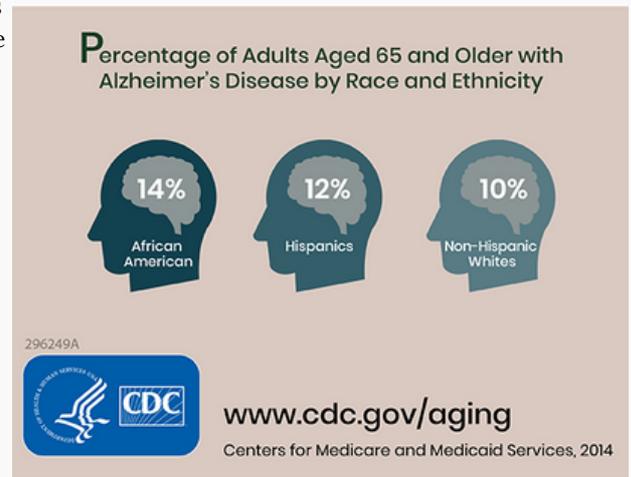
Did you know?

98% of Americans are falling short of their recommended whole grain intake ([source](#)).



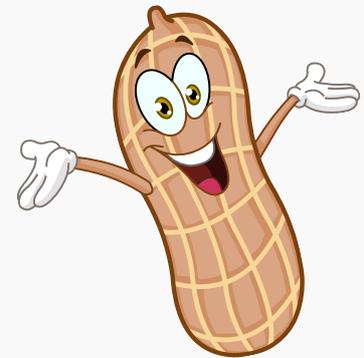
World Alzheimer's Month

World Alzheimer's Month takes place in September and World Alzheimer's Day takes place September 21st with a goal to raise awareness and educate people about Alzheimer's and dementia. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), as many as 5.8 million Americans were living with Alzheimer's disease in 2020. Memory problems are one of the first symptoms of Alzheimer's. The CDC has put together a list of 10 warning signs for Alzheimer's which you can find [here](#). Early detection is key to slowing progression of the disease and managing symptoms.



National Peanut Day

National Peanut Day is celebrated on September 13th. The state of Georgia is the number 1 producer of peanuts in the United States, providing more than 45% of the U.S. peanut crop each year. Did you know that two of our U.S. presidents once were peanut farmers? That's right Georgia's own Jimmy Carter and Thomas Jefferson were both peanut farmers. The National Peanut Board has a host of [recipes](#) to help you find the perfect dish to celebrate National Peanut Day this year.



Other September Observances

- Self-Improvement Month
- National Potato Month
- National Suicide Prevention Month
- National Rice Month
- National Food Bank Day (September 1st)
- National Waffle Week (Sept. 3rd-9th)
- National Wildlife Day (September 4th)
- National Cheese Pizza Day (September 5th)
- National Read a Book Day (September 6th)
- National Coloring Day (September 14th)
- National Cheeseburger Day (September 18th)
- International Day of Peace (September 21st)
- World Gratitude Day (September 21st)
- World School Milk Day (September 27th)



2023 Celebration
Friday,
September 29th
at 12 noon

Join in the Georgia statewide celebration of apples by crunching into an apple at noon on Friday, September 29th. Share your apple pictures on social media with the hashtags:
#GACrunch4Lunch
#FuelingGA
#GeorgiaGrown

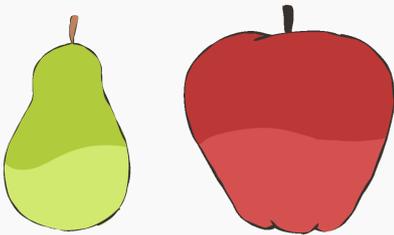
BE WELL - SHBP

September Eat Wisely Challenge

September's challenge, "Eat Wisely," starts September 1st and it challenges you to eat a well-balanced, healthy and nutritious diet for at least 21 days in September. Focusing on healthy foods like fruits and vegetables and watching portion sizes can help meet the goals of the Eat Wisely Challenge. Completing this challenge can earn you 40 points. Speaking of points, September marks 4 months left in the 2023 Be Well SHBP® well-being program year, so it's a good time for *eligible* members and covered spouses to join in a challenge to ensure you are accumulating points to earn rewards before the end of the year!

To join this month's challenge, follow these steps:

- Log in to your Be Well SHBP account and make sure you have completed your RealAge® Test for 2023.
- Once on the page, click on the "Achieve" navigational link and then proceed to the Challenges section. Switch to the "Available" view to see what is available to join.
- Register for the Eat Wisely Challenge. During the month of September, 21 green days lead to successful challenge completion.



DISTRICT WELLNESS CHALLENGE

Step it Up

We are winding down our Step It Up Challenge for the year, and with just a little over a week left TCCHS is leading the team competition! Kuddos to everyone who is participating in this year's step challenge. The step challenge ends September 11th. The 9-11 Memorial Stair Climb is a great way to get in steps on the final day. If you have not signed up for the Y's 9-11 Memorial Stair Climb, there is still time to register. Click [here](#) for more details.

