



State of North Carolina  
Department of Health and Human Services

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## **N.C. Fruits & Veggies Star Awards Announced**

RALEIGH – Thirteen organizations from across the state received awards today for their work in promoting healthy eating with fruits and vegetables.

The N.C. Fruits & Veggies Nutrition Coalition's Fruits & Veggies Star Awards were presented at an annual symposium that provides education and networking for health educators and nutrition professionals. The event was held at Johnson & Wales University in Charlotte.

The annual awards recognize successful programs in six areas: school district, individual school/child care, worksites, community/civic group, healthcare, and business/other.

The 2008 winners are:

### **Gold Star Award for School District**

*Camp Lejeune Dependents Schools Child Nutrition Department (Tarawa Terrace, N.C.)*

The school district participates in three different Farm-to-School programs, giving students regular access to everything from locally grown sweet potatoes and collard greens to the more exotic pluots and grapples.

### **Silver Star Award for School District**

*Rowan-Salisbury Schools Child Nutrition Program*

The "Rainbow Groove," a 40-minute production featuring characters such as "Ellie Eggplant," "Gigi Grape" and "Bonita Banana," was created by the Rowan-Salisbury Schools Child Nutrition Department as a fun, interactive way to teach children about the importance of fruits, veggies and physical activity.

### **Shining Star Award for School District**

*Ashe County Schools Child Nutrition Program*

Vegetable soup made with stones? Fruit smoothies made with cottage cheese? Giant broccoli and corn characters mingling with children during lunch? These are just a few of the unique and creative ways that the Ashe County Child Nutrition staff helped children get excited about fruits and vegetables.

### **Gold Star Award for Individual School/Childcare**

*St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church & School (Apex)*

Children at St. Mary Magdalene Catholic School planted a cool season vegetable garden, kindergarteners planted cantaloupe and third graders had a contest to see who could grow the biggest cabbage. Children got to taste the products of their garden during "fruit parties" and "salad celebrations."

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**Silver Star Award for Individual School/Childcare**

*Gentilesse Place (Winston-Salem)*

The children at Gentilesse Place preschool ordered fruits and vegetables from a menu at a pretend restaurant, shopped for produce in a pretend grocery store, planted a real garden, worked their way through a fruits and vegetables obstacle course, and even had a “green slime” lunch day when their food was covered with “green gook,” which was actually pureed fruits and vegetables.

**Shining Star Award for Individual School/Childcare**

*Graham A. Barden Elementary School (Havelock)*

Walk into the cafeteria at Graham A. Barden Elementary School, and you might think you’ve entered an airfield. The school created a “refueling station” in the cafeteria, which is stocked each morning with a fresh fruit or vegetable. “Student pilots” visit the refueling station each day and select their snack for the day.

**Gold Star Award for Worksite**

*LiveWELL Carolinas! (Charlotte)*

The LiveWELL Carolinas! staff worked with the employee dining facilities to offer more fruits and vegetables to employees. They run a six-month weight loss program where participants track fruit and vegetable consumption, offer free fruit to employees as an alternative to traditional vending machines, and offer healthy cooking classes.

**Silver Star Award for Worksite**

*Amdocs/ABCS Vision, Inc. (Charlotte)*

Imagine going into your break room at work and seeing fresh fruits that are washed, sliced and ready to eat, and colorful trays with an assortment of fresh vegetables for your afternoon snack. Imagine that all this is available, every work day, at no cost to you. Employees at Amdocs, Inc. in Charlotte experience this every day as part of their employee wellness program.

**Gold Star Award for Community/Civic Group**

*Inter-faith Food Shuttle (Raleigh)*

In 2007, the Food Shuttle rescued over two million pounds of raw produce for distribution to over 200 programs and agencies serving low-income people. Through the Backpack Buddies program, children take home backpacks full of food, including fruits and vegetables, for their weekend meals. The Culinary Job Training Program utilizes an onsite garden to teach students to identify and prepare fruits, vegetables and herbs.

**Gold Star Award for Healthcare**

*Southeastern Regional Medical Center Community Health Services – Project HEALTH (Lumberton)*

Project HEALTH (Healthy Eating and Active Lifestyles for Tomorrow’s Health) taught elementary school students about nutrition by having the students plant a salad garden and visit a “Healthy Snackin’” booth during an end-of-year Fun Day. Project HEALTH staff enlisted high school students to serve as teacher cadets to deliver creative, interactive nutrition lessons to elementary students.

**Silver Star Award for Healthcare**

*FirstHealth of the Carolinas School-Based Health Centers and Page Street Elementary School 3rd Graders (Biscoe)*

FirstHealth collaborated with the Montgomery County Schools to implement a four-week nutrition education program that taught students and their families about healthy snacking and making healthy choices in local restaurants.

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**Gold Star Award for Business/Other**

*Rockingham County Cooperative Extension (Reidsville)*

Fruit and yogurt parfaits, fruit salsa on quesadillas, and peanut butter dip with pumpkin hiding inside...what better way to get children excited about fruits and veggies than to let them taste these ingredients in scrumptious recipes? That was the idea behind the Rockingham County Cooperative Extension's series of Fruit and Veggie Tasting Events with two local elementary schools.

**Silver Star Award for Business/Other**

*Pasquotank County Cooperative Extension (Elizabeth City)*

At three elementary schools in Pasquotank County, second- and third-grade children received hands-on experience through the "Kids in the Garden" program. Cooperative Extension agents worked collaboratively with the schools to engage the children in interactive lessons about plants, soil, nutrition and physical activity.

"The thirteen programs that we honored today can be models for other organizations across the state to follow," said Diane Beth, N.C. Fruits and Vegetables program coordinator with the N.C. Division of Public Health. "If the message to eat more fruits and vegetables is going to reach all North Carolinians and have an impact, there has to be support at the organizational level."

Research shows that eating five or more fruits and vegetables each day plays an important role in decreasing the risk for serious chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes. Yet, 78 percent of North Carolina adults report not reaching the minimum of five servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Statewide, the cost of poor nutrition, overweight and obesity is estimated at \$24 billion a year.

The N.C. Fruits & Veggies Nutrition Coalition promotes better health for all North Carolinians by increasing their fruit and vegetable consumption. Coalition members across the state plan and implement activities at the local level, including programs and promotions in supermarkets, schools, restaurants, cafeterias, worksites, health agencies and community groups. Coalition members include representatives from government, academia, industry, media and other non-profit and private organizations. Membership is open to any organization or individual wanting to promote the message to eat fruits and vegetables for better health. The N.C. Fruits & Veggies Nutrition Program is housed in the Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch, N.C. Division of Public Health.

To learn more about the program or to become a coalition member, see the website at [www.fruitsandveggiesnc.com](http://www.fruitsandveggiesnc.com).

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