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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 14, 2014

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**Georgia's First Lady Sandra Deal Kicks off the School Year
While Celebrating Summer Success**

Partnership Successfully Promoted Better Nutrition and Literacy during Summer Months

ATLANTA, Ga., (August 14, 2014) – Georgia's First Lady Sandra Deal will travel to the Tallapoosa Public Library next week to help kickoff the school year and cap off a successful summer of meal programs. On Thursday, August 21, 2014, the First Lady will join multiple state agencies and partners including Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), Governor's Grade-Level Reading Campaign, Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Department of Public Health, and the Georgia Public Library Service in celebrating the growth and expansion of summer meals at library sites statewide.

In all, 23 libraries opened their doors to serve as meal sites this summer ensuring students had access to nutritious meals while many students participated in library summer reading programs. This partnership highlighted the connection between healthy eating and learning.

As the agencies celebrate the success of the summer partnership, the focus moves to making sure children have access to healthy meals during the school year. The At-Risk/Afterschool component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides children healthy snacks and meals in structured environments after the school day has ended.

Georgia's First Lady Kicks off the School Year While Celebrating Summer Success – Page 2

Falita Flowers, Director of Nutrition Services for DECAL, stated “While we wrap up summer, we want parents to know of the many resources that are available to them. The At-risk/Afterschool Program provides free & nutritious meals to students in afterschool programs across the State. The goal is a seamless transition for families and widespread availability.”

If you are interested in participating in the CACFP At-Risk/Afterschool Program, please visit DECAL's website at <http://decal.ga.gov/BftS/CACFPBecomingASponsor.aspx>. The August 21, 2014, event will be held from 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM at the Tallapoosa Public Library (388 Bowdon Street, Tallapoosa, GA) and will include free and healthy meals for children, health and wellness resources, a pop-up farmer's market and more, sponsored by Georgia Food Bank Association and Get Healthy West Georgia.

About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.dec.al.ga.gov.