



News Release

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Georgia Three-Star Child Care Nutritionists Take Field Trip with Dole Packaged Foods to the North Carolina Research Campus

Atlanta, GEORGIA – April 8, 2014 - Nutritionists from thirty of Georgia's Three-Star Quality Rated Child Care Programs recently toured the North Carolina Research Campus near Charlotte with Dole Packaged Foods to learn how to encourage good nutrition in their programs for Georgia's youngest learners. Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) partnered with Dole and Lt. Governor Casey Cagle's Healthy Kids Georgia Program to host the bus trip on Wednesday and Thursday, April 2-3, 2014.

"Even our youngest learners need to start understanding how healthy food choices and exercise lead to a path of lifelong health and well-being," said DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle. "That's why Dole Packaged Foods and Healthy Kids Georgia are making a real difference as they recognize Quality Rated child care programs committed to making health, nutrition and physical activity a priority."

During their visit, the Georgia group heard from Dr. Nicholas Gillitt, Ph.D., Vice President of Nutrition and Director of the Dole Nutrition Institute. They also toured the research campus and interacted with other leading experts in the field. Participants gave the experience rave reviews and predicted long lasting impacts on their programs.

"We work just as hard providing healthy nourishment for the children as we do providing nourishment for their brains and we love it," said Antoinette Elliott of All Our Children Private Childcare, a three-star Quality Rated program in Lithonia, Georgia. "I learned half of a banana plus water every 15 minutes during exercise is better than any energy drink; crushed or milled chia seeds are better than flax for health boosts, and are safe for adding to the children's smoothies and cereal. I now believe our children will have an increased life span simply by eating healthy."

Georgia Nutritionists Take Field Trip with Dole Packaged Foods – Page 2

Michelle Cutler-Ervin, Director of the Three-Star Quality Rated Child Development Center at Central Georgia Technical College in Warner Robins, Georgia, agreed. “I enjoyed meeting so many other early childhood professionals who were passionate about providing an appropriate, well balanced menu for our youngest learners,” Cutler-Ervin explained. “I appreciated the many partners that came together to support our continued learning regarding nutrition. The information gained from this trip will further enhance our program as we will be able to explain the nutritional science that supports the value of our menu.”

Other participating programs included Butts County Head Start Program and Pre-K in Jackson; Child Development Lab at the McPhaul Center in Athens; First Baptist Church of Ellijay Weekday Program; Hinesville Child Care Learning Center; Lanette L. Suttles Child Development Center at Georgia State University; McIntosh Trail Early Childhood Development Council; Open Arms Christian Child Development Center in Kennesaw; Open Arms Lutheran Child Development Center in Atlanta; Sheltering Arms Model Teaching Center in Atlanta; Spalding County Head Start and Pre-K in Griffin; The Sunshine House #49 in Kennesaw; Wilkes County Head Start; and Family Day Care Home Providers Linda Davis, Antoinette Elliott, and Carolyn Pleasant.

In December, 2012, Dole joined Healthy Kids Georgia and DECAL in announcing a partnership to promote good nutrition and increased physical activity in early childcare and education programs.

“We were thrilled to welcome Georgia’s top child care nutritionists to the North Carolina Research Campus,” said Marty Ordman, Marketing Communications, Dole Packaged Foods. “Even more exciting is the potential of what they can take back to their programs in Georgia --- hopefully some new and creative ways to expose young students to more fruits and vegetables on a daily basis --- the perfect fuel for learning.”

About Dole Packaged Foods

Dole Packaged Foods, LLC, a subsidiary of Dole International Holdings, is a leader in sourcing, processing, distributing and marketing fruit products and healthy snacks throughout the world. Dole markets a full line of canned, jarred, cup, frozen and dried fruit products and is an innovator in new forms of packaging and processing fruit. For more information on Dole Packaged Foods, visit dole.com.

About Healthy Kids Georgia

An initiative of Lt. Governor Casey Cagle, the Lt. Governor’s Healthy Kids Georgia is a collaboration of the Office of Lieutenant Governor, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s Healthy Schools Program, and other corporate and community partners. Formed in 2010 to address the epidemic levels of childhood obesity in Georgia and the serious physical and emotional consequences of the problem, the program encourages schools to partner with their local communities and the Healthy Schools program to confront the childhood obesity crisis by implementing health and wellness programs in Georgia’s schools. Additionally, through Public Private Partnerships, Healthy Kids Georgia is the conduit for corporate support strategies to be implemented throughout the state upholding the mission to promote healthy lifestyles.

About DECAL

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.

Georgia Nutritionists Take Field Trip with Dole Packaged Foods – Page 3

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.decal.ga.gov.