



Kindergartener, Heaven Moore & Mrs. Mackey



5th graders: Emily Cooper, Jauhlik Morrison

Longview Students Enjoy Healthy Snacks!

Hickory Public Schools has been awarded the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) grant, a national award provided through the Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The grant has been designated for Longview Elementary School and is valued at \$19,294.

Within participating states, FFVP is primarily administered through State Departments of Education. This year, 169 schools in North Carolina qualified for the FFVP grant with a total of \$3,860,380 distributed in funds for the program. The grant is an annual grant which must be applied for each year.

FFVP is a healthy initiative for change in an effort to combat childhood obesity, according to Mary West, HPS director of child nutrition. "The children are discovering valuable information about healthy eating habits while they are being introduced to a variety of produce," said West. "This program reveals that our children can enjoy healthier snacks at both school and at home."

The FFVP program kicked-off at Longview Elementary School on September 20th. Student interns from Lenoir-Rhyne University are assisting with the program, working on a rotational basis. Interns Elizabeth Menke and Christopher (Chris) Cosce, the first two LRU interns to assist with the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, have created a "Passport to Healthy Eating" for every student. The one-ring, student-friendly passport offers two sections, one for fruit and another for vegetables. The passports include color photos, descriptions as to how the produce is grown, why the produce is consumed (offering various nutritional information such as the vitamins included in the produce and how the produce helps to fight cholesterol, gives energy, fights off certain diseases, and in some cases, the produce serves as a sweet alternative to candy.) Fun facts are included in the passport. For example, one interesting fact about the fruit, Guava: crushed leaves of the Guava can be placed on scrapes or bruises to help with pain. Recipes are also included in the passports.

Some of the produce includes mangos, pomegranates, sweet potatoes, tangerines, and red bell peppers. Other produce, that might be new to the students include: chicory, "ugli" fruit, jicama, clementine, satsumas, kiwi, and pluots. Pluots are a cross between a plum and an apricot.



Pluot: a cross between a plum and an apricot—but also called a “dinosaur egg.”

According to John Black, principal of Longview Elementary, the approximate 350 children at Longview and their teachers are enjoying this refreshing opportunity to learn more about healthy eating. “Additionally, the students get to see the fruits and vegetables as a whole piece—rather than the small cut pieces that are often served with a meal. They are enjoying the taste tests while learning about healthy lifestyle choices,” he said.

The fruit and vegetable tasting has gone over so well, in fact, that the Longview cafeteria team is receiving suggestion letters from some of the students. One letter, written by Kailey Wilson in Ms. Quinby’s 5th grade, requests that the Longview cafeteria start adding her new favorite fruit: “I want to ask you if some days on the menu if we can have star fruit. It was so delicious,” said Kailey. “Plus, it’s healthy. I think the majority of the school liked the apple-pineapple tasting star fruit. Please think about it. My little sister loved the star fruit and she agrees with me!”

The USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program provides fruit and vegetable snacks available at no cost to all children in participating schools.



John Black, principal of Longview Elementary joined by LRU interns: Elizabeth Menke, Chris Cosce