

Celebrating Leaders in Child Nutrition: CACFP Sponsors Making an Impact

ROUND ROCK, TX, UNITED STATES, March 10, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [National CACFP Association](#) (NCA) is proud to highlight the inspiring work of three dedicated leaders in child nutrition: Deborah Gillison-Wilson of Georgia Nutritional Services, Susan Ison of Helping Hands, Inc., and Denise Andrews of For the Children, Inc. These individuals have dedicated decades to providing children with nutritious meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), significantly benefiting their communities.



Deborah Gillison-Wilson: Building a Family Through Nutrition

As the Founder and Executive Director of Georgia Nutritional Services (GANSI), Deborah Gillison-Wilson has dedicated her career to ensuring children and adults across Georgia receive healthy meals. GANSI sponsors a diverse range of programs, including child care centers, family child care homes, afterschool programs, and adult day care centers, serving over 320,000 meals.

For Deborah, CACFP is more than a program - it's a way of life. She has not only implemented its meal patterns in her professional work but also in her own family. Her approach to sponsorship is deeply personal, forming strong relationships with providers to create a sense of unity and shared purpose. GANSI's hands-on training methods and proactive problem-solving initiatives have strengthened its provider network, promoting compliance and cultivating a supportive community.

"I look at us as a family unit, not so much as they are GANSI's client," said Gillison-Wilson. "They come on board as clients, but as we work together and we stay loyal to each other, that means that we become a unit. We've formed a relationship in the process."

Susan Ison: A Lifetime Commitment to Feeding Children

After more than 30 years in the CACFP, Susan Ison, Executive Director of Helping Hands, Inc., is preparing for retirement this spring. Since joining the Utah-based organization in 1993, she has helped it grow into a vital resource for child care providers across the Wasatch Front. Helping Hands sponsors approximately 200 family child care homes and 12 child care centers, ensuring that 2,300 children receive nutritious meals daily.

Susan's leadership has fostered strong collaboration among Utah's five sponsoring organizations, keeping the focus on feeding children rather than competition. Her efforts have also extended to serving providers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, making CACFP accessible to those who need it most.

"The children take precedence," said Ison. "A successful child, is a successful home, is a successful community."

Denise Andrews: Turning Experience Into Advocacy

Denise Andrews, CEO and Director of For the Children, Inc., turned her own childhood experience with food insecurity into a lifelong mission to ensure children receive nutritious meals. Since 2000, her Oklahoma-based organization has sponsored over 90 family child care homes, serving meals to 925 children each day.

With a small but dedicated team, Denise has cultivated long-standing relationships with providers, some of whom have been with For the Children since its inception. Her hands-on approach, commitment to compliance, and passion for child nutrition have made For the Children a trusted partner in the community.

" Growing up in poverty, I relied on school lunches as a crucial source of nutrition," said Andrews. "This experience ignited a deep-seated passion within me to ensure that no child faces hunger."

The stories of these three leaders exemplify the power of CACFP sponsorship to create lasting change. By providing critical support to child care providers, they are ensuring that children across the country grow up with access to the nutrition they need to thrive.

Since 1986, the National CACFP Association (NCA) has been a leading national organization offering support to thousands within the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) community. Its overarching goal is to ensure nutrition security for families by facilitating access to vital food programs.

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